What Did Diodorus Write? Friendship and Literary Criticism at the School of Gaza*

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The so-called School of Gaza, which flourished between the fifth and the sixth centuries, represented the twilight of Greco-Roman culture in Palestine before the Muslim conquest of 635.[1] Although Procopius of Gaza is generally considered the school's most important representative, his work did not attract much attention until a decade ago, when scholars were suddenly reminded of his existence thanks to the fortunate discovery of an exchange of letters between Procopius and a contemporaneous rhetorician, Megethius, in a manuscript of the Marciana Library in Venice.[2] This renewed interest has led to a wave of studies resulting in two critical editions of Procopius's rhetorical works. Recent translations of these works into Italian and French will certainly spark more interest in Procopius and his works.[3]

Our most important source on Procopius's life is an oration that his pupil Choricius wrote after his death, which is approximately dated 536.[4] Born in Gaza between 463 and 473, Procopius received his primary education in his city and then moved to Alexandria, where he perfected rhetoric and studied philosophy probably at the school of Olympiodorus the Elder. Procopius became a sophist and a teacher of rhetoric; after teaching in Pamphylia and, perhaps, at Caesarea and in other cities, he eventually returned to Gaza, where he spent the rest of his life. Procopius's teaching attracted many

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All English translations of Greek and Latin texts are my own, unless otherwise specified.

1 On the School of Gaza, in addition to the important studies by Stark (1852), Seitz (1892), and Downey (1958 and 1963), see Westberg (2010), 10-20 and Champion (2014), 2-42 as well as the essays collected in Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky (2004), Saliou (2005), and the forthcoming volume edited by Amato, Corcella and Lauritzen (2016).

2 These letters were published by Amato (2005), with an Italian translation and a commentary, and included in Amato (2010), 428-437 (text and translation) and 501-503 (commentary).

3 The first edition (Amato 2009) was reprinted and equipped with an Italian translation and a commentary in Amato (2010), 165-287. The second edition (Amato 2014), which is the result of cooperation between the chief editor and other scholars, presents revised Greek texts, four new works (*Opp.* XII-XV), and a French translation of all texts: see Amato (2014), VII-IX.

4 Chor. Gaz. *Or. fun in Proc.*, pp. 109-128 F.-R.

students to the city; his prestige and authority also prompted his employment on several missions to the Byzantine government.[5] In addition to teaching and performing public functions, Procopius was engaged in the defense of Christian orthodoxy, i.e., the Chalcedonian doctrine, which Gaza's Church had officially adopted at least since 518 after a long-lasting support of Monophysitism.[6]

Procopius's literary production mirrors his manifold interests. His works can be divided into three categories.[7] The first category includes orations and declamations related to his activity as a teacher and public speaker. The second concerns commentaries on the Scriptures.[8] The third is represented by Procopius's letters, most of which seem to belong to the period after his return to Gaza. These letters are all in prose and of various length and constitute a precious document of his life and teaching as well as his cultural, social, and political environment. In addition to his brothers Zacharias and Philip, who were officials of the Byzantine government, Procopius corresponded with many friends, colleagues, officials, former students, and clerics living in Palestine, Egypt, Constantinople, and other Eastern Mediterranean locations. Some of his addressees can be identified: one is Gessius, known in other sources as a professor of medicine (ἰατροσοφιστής) in Alexandria and a fanatic pagan who eventually converted to Christianity.[9] For others, only hypotheses are possible. This is the case, for example, with two well-known late antique poets: Musaeus, the author of the epic poem *Hero and Leander*;[10] and John of Gaza, who wrote a poetic *ekphrasis* in the style of Nonnus of Panopolis and several anacreontic poems.[11] The contents of Procopius's letters range from recommendation to consolation, petition to complaint, praise to critique, etc.

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5 For a reconstruction of Procopius's life, see Amato in Amato (2010), 1-9; and Amato (2014), XI-XXX.

6 On the difficult Christianization of Gaza and, in general, the religious and cultural situation of late antique Palestine, see, e.g., Stroumsa (1989), 24-34; Trombley (1993), 188-245; Bitton-Ashkelony and Kofsky (2006), 213-218; and Sivan (2008), 328-347.

7 For a list of Procopius's works, in addition to *CPG* 3, 388-391, nos. 7430-7448, see Amato in Amato (2010), 10-45 and Amato (2014), XXX-LI (with abundant bibliography). Bolgova (2014) also offers a survey of Procopius's literary production with recent bibliography (I am grateful to Hava Korzakova for making me aware of this article).

8 *PG* 87. 1-2 contains texts and Latin translations of Procopius's commentaries on the *Octateuch*, *Kings*, *Isaiah*, *Proverbs*, *Song of Solomon*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Chronicles* (*CPG* 3, nos. 7430-7434 and 7554-7446). See Amato in Amato (2010), 10-12; Amato (2014), XXXI-XXXIII and the bibliography quoted therein, with the addition of Metzler (2015). Procopius has been considered the inventor of the exegetical *catenae* on the Scriptures: see, e.g., Devreesse (1928), col. 1094. This hypothesis has been analyzed by Wilson (1983), 32-33, and rejected, among others, by Haar Romeny (2007), 178-190.

9 Proc. Gaz. *Epp.* 16, 102, 122, 125, and 164 G.-L. On Gessius, see Watts (2009).

10 Proc. Gaz. *Epp.* 147 and 165 G.-L. The identification of Procopius's addressee with the epic poet, cautiously proposed by Seitz (1892), 17, was considered as possible by Kaster (1988), 313, Szabat (2007), 278, and others, and accepted by Miguélez Cavero (2008), 25-27. See Ciccolella in Amato (2010), 494-495, n. 702.

11 Proc. Gaz. *Ep.* 149 G.-L. See Ciccolella in Amato (2010), 442 n. 36 and 495 n. 709. A new edition of John of Gaza's *ekphrasis*, with French translation, has been recently published by Lauritzen (2015). On John's anacreontics, see the critical edition by Ciccolella (2000), 117-173 (with Italian translation and commentary).

Strictly personal issues and formulas like "Procopius sends his greetings to such-and-such" and "Farewell" were probably deleted when these letters were collected for school use.[12]

Procopius's letters have been transmitted by about thirty manuscripts, most of which contain school texts.[13] Letters by famous writers were in fact read in schools of rhetoric for imitation, particularly during the last centuries of Byzantium. Humanists also had a keen interest in Greek letters: in 1499, Marcus Musurus included sixty-one letters by Procopius in his two-volume Aldine edition of Greek letter writers.[14] The number of letters increased in later editions as new manuscripts were being discovered. The last critical edition, published in 1963 by Garzya and Loenertz, contains 165 letters by Procopius and one by Megethius. As of today, we know of 169 letters by Procopius, but this number will probably increase in the future.[15] Recently, an Italian translation of all of Procopius's letters, the first into a modern language, has replaced the imperfect and incomplete Latin versions printed alongside the Greek text in the *Patrologia Graeca* and Hercher's *Epistolographi Graeci*.[16]

One reason for the limited attention Procopius of Gaza's letters have hitherto received may be the rigid division into fields of competence, which makes Procopius and the other authors of the School of Gaza too Byzantine for Classicists and too classical for Byzantinists. Another more important reason is that Procopius's letters are often obscure. His pupil Choricius praised him for the purity of his Attic Greek:[17] indeed, like all the literates of the School of Gaza, Procopius pursued with zeal the study and imitation of Attic prose writers. Also, since at Gaza letters were conceived for public readings[18] and most probably as models for students of rhetoric, Procopius tried to show his culture by

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12 On the transformation of letters into literary texts in late antiquity, see in particular Fournet (2009).

13 On the manuscript tradition of Procopius's letters, see the introduction to the edition by Garzya and Loenertz (G.-L.), IX-XXVI, and Ciccolella in Amato (2010), 151-152.

14 Ἐπιστολαὶ διαφόρων φιλοσόφων ῥητόρων σοφιστῶν. *Epistolae diversorum philosophorum oratorum rhetorum sex et viginti*, etc. *editio est edita a Marco Musuro*, Venetiis: apud Aldum, 1499 mense Martio.

15 The edition by Cardinal Angelo Mai (*Auctorum classicorum e Vaticanis codicibus editorum tomus* IV, Romae 1831), reproduced in *PG* 87.2 (1865), contained 104 letters. In his *Epistolographi Graeci* (Parisiis 1873, LX-LXVI, 533-598), Rudolf Hercher included 166 letters of Procopius. After Garzya and Loenertz's 1963 edition (G.-L.), two new letters were published by Westerink (1967) and Maltese (1984), and two more came from Procopius's correspondence with Megethius (above, n.2). See Ciccolella in Amato (2010), 151-153.

16 This translation by Ciccolella (*Epp.* 1-165, 167-168 G.-L.) and Amato (Procopius's *Epp.* 170 and 172 Amato and Megethius's *Epp.* 166 G.-L., 169, 171, 173, and 174 Amato) has been published, with facing Greek texts, in Amato (2010), 206-437.

17 Chor. Gaz. *Or. fun. in Proc.* 8, p. 112, 11-15 F.-R.: οὐ λέξις αὐτὸν ἐλάνθανεν ἀλλοτρία τῆς Ἀττικῆς, οὐ νόημα πόρρω πλανώμενον τοῦ σκοποῦ, οὐ συλλαβή τις ἐπιβουλεύουσα τῷ ῥυθμῷ, οὐ συνθήκη τὴν ἐναντίαν ἔχουσα τάξιν τῆς εὐφραινούσης τὰ ὦτα, "No word unrelated to Attic usage escaped him, no idea deviating from its object, no syllable ruining the rhythm, no word order opposing the ears' pleasure." See Corcella's comment in Amato (2010), 514 n. 14.

18 Procopius himself mentions this usage, e.g., in *Ep.* 91. 47-48 G.-L.: θέατρον λογικὸν τὴν σὴν παρέσχον ἐπιστολήν, "I presented your letter as a public rhetorical show."

using obsolete Attic forms and inserting quotations, often without mentioning his sources. However, syntactic rules are broken so often that the manuscript tradition alone cannot be held responsible for that. Procopius was also very prone to use formulas and non-literary words and expressions. In this way, he conformed to late-antique manuals on letter writing, according to which, since the purpose of letters is communication, epistolary style should be a happy medium between the literary and colloquial levels.[19] At the same time, Procopius's imperfect Attic Greek allows us to glimpse a more human and less artificial side of his personality. Although he tried to portray himself as a serious moralist, a committed teacher, and a philosopher, his letters reveal imagination, irony, and even a nice sense of humor, which are absent from most of his other works.[20]

The mixture of Classical and post-Classical Greek makes Procopius's language complex but still intelligible. For example, like most Byzantine letter writers, Procopius used the verbs λαλεῖν, "to converse," as "to exchange letters"[21] and σιγᾶν or σιωπᾶν, "to keep silent," as "not to reply" to a letter.[22] Also, his use of παῖδες, "children," for "speeches" and θυγατέρες, "daughters," for "letters" is typical of late antique rhetoricians and letter writers.[23] More serious problems, however, arise from Procopius's special language, which he apparently shared with his circle of friends. The many allusions and quotations interspersed in his writings demonstrate his intimate knowledge of a wide range of authors and texts exceeding those that constituted the foundations of the education of his age. The following analysis, by focusing on the multiple registers of Procopius's language and uncovering the allusions it contains, will attempt to decode the meanings hidden in Procopius's allusive language as well as reconstruct the interests and tastes of the community of scholars that constituted his actual and intended audience.

A perfect example of Procopius's *Sondersprache* can be found in his letters concerning exchanges of objects with his addressees. Letters written to thank someone for a gift or to announce the sending of a gift are quite common in every collection of letters from antiquity onwards.[24] However, when, in *Ep.* 54. 16-19 G.-L., Procopius thanks his brother Zacharias for sending him ῥόδα, "roses," we have all the reasons to doubt that he may be talking about real flowers:

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19 For example, according to Philostratus of Lemnos (*De epistulis* 2, pp. 257.28-258.28 Kayser), δεῖ ... φαίνεσθαι τῶν ἐπιστολῶν τὴν ἰδέαν ἀττικωτέραν μὲν συνηθείας, συνηθεστέραν δὲ ἀττικίσεως καὶ συγκεῖσθαι μὲν πολιτικῶς, τοῦ δὲ ἀβροῦ μὴ ἀπᾴδειν, "the epistolary style must in appearance be more Attic than everyday speech, but more ordinary than Atticism, and it must be composed in accordance with common usage, yet not at variance with beautiful style" (text and translation by Malherbe [1988], 43).

20 For an analysis of Procopius's epistolary style, see Ciccolella in Amato (2010), 142-150.

21 See, e.g., *Epp.* 7. 9 and 23. 3 G.-L. As observed by Koskenniemi (1956), 35, this term indicates that letters were perceived as conversations between friends.

22 See, e.g., *Epp.* 10. 4 and 8; 17. 1 and 4; 29. 1; 31. 1 and 2 G.-L.; etc. On the "silence-motif" in Byzantine letters, see, e.g., Hunger (1978), 221-222.

23 For παῖδες, see, e.g., *Ep.* 87. 15-16 G.-L.: οἱ δὲ ἐμοὶ παῖδες – οὕτως γὰρ ἐκάλεις τοὺς λόγους – κ.τ.λ. For θυγατέρες, *Ep.* 54. 2-3 G.-L.: ῥήτορες ἡμεῖς καὶ θυγατέρων πατέρες πολλῶν. See Hunger (1978), 226 and n. 101.

24 See Williams (2014).

> τὰ δὲ σὰ ῥόδα λαβὼν ἥσθην ἐπὶ τούτοις οὐχ ἧττον ἢ Ὀδυσσεὺς τὴν Ἀλκίνου φιλοτιμίαν ὁρῶν· ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ τὸ λαβεῖν εἶχε μόνον τὴν ἡδονήν, παρ' ὑμῖν δὲ ἄμφω, ὅτι σὺ μὲν δίδως, ἐγὼ δὲ λαμβάνω.
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> When I received your roses, I rejoiced at them no less than Odysseus seeing Alcinous's magnificence; indeed, in that circumstance, only receiving caused pleasure, while for us it applies to both your giving and my taking.

Roses were a *Leitmotiv* in the culture of Gaza, where every year the ἡμέρα τῶν ῥόδων, the "Day of the Roses," was celebrated. This Christian festival with pagan roots related to the coming of spring[25] most probably included public readings of verse or prose compositions dealing with the myth of the rose that was originally white but became red after the goddess Aphrodite pricked herself while chasing Adonis. This myth occurs in several declamations by Procopius and Choricius.[26] Also, the "Day of the Roses" was apparently the occasion for Procopius's ἔκφρασις εἰκόνος (*Op.* IX Amato)**,** John of Gaza's ἔκφρασις τοῦ κοσμικοῦ πίνακος and *anacr.* 4-6 Ciccolella,[27] and Pseudo-George the Grammarian's *anacr.* 1-6 Ciccolella.[28] Consequently, the "roses" Zacharias sent to Procopius may have been literary compositions, either in prose or in verse, centered on the myth of Aphrodite, Adonis, and the rose.

Reading others' literary works and having one's works read by others were common practices among Gazan scholars: several of Procopius's letters deal with exchanges of books and writings.[29] In this letter, the reference to the Phaeacian king Alcinous and his treatment of Odysseus indicates that Zacharias's gift was regarded as an act of φιλοτιμία, 'generosity', 'magnificence'. However, if we take Zacharias's roses as metaphors for 'poems', we may wonder if we should interpret in a similar way other objects exchanged between Procopius and his friends.

Three of the seventeen letters Procopius addressed to his friend Diodorus[30] deal with the gift of shoes. In *Ep.* 98 G.-L., after rejecting his friend's accusation of 'being silent' (1-7), Procopius thanks Diodorus for sending him 'extraordinarily beautiful shoes' (7-21):

> [...] καὶ τὸ μέγιστον, ὅτι φιλοτιμησάμενος ὑποδήματα καλά τε λίαν καὶ περὶ πόδα μᾶλλον, ὡς τῇ κωμῳδίᾳ δοκεῖ, καὶ ταῦτα γραμμάτων ἔρημα πέπομφας, μήτε τὸ δέξαι μήτε τὸ χαίρειν εἰπών. καίτοι μεῖζον, ὡς εἰκός, ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐφρόνησας ἢ Κροῖσος ἐκεῖνος τὰς

25 See Amato in Amato (2010), 56-70.

26 On the treatment of this myth at Gaza, see Westberg (2009) and, especially, Lupi (2012) and the bibliography cited therein.

27 For modern editions of these poems, see above, n. 11. A connection between the "Day of the Roses" and the *ekphraseis* by Procopius and John of Gaza has been established by Renaut (Lauritzen) (2005), 214-216.

28 See Ciccolella (2000), 175-237. The nine anacreontic poems attributed to George the Grammarian in Matranga's *editio princeps* (1850), 571-575 and 648-669, are actually anonymous in the only manuscript transmitting them: see Ciccolella (2005). Lauxtermann (2005), 5-7 has suggested identifying the author of these poems as the poet who composed *AP* 9. 449-480.

29 E.g., *Epp.* 3, 28, 63, and 71 G.-L.

30 *Epp.* 8, 23, 29, 31, 32, 72, 77, 94, 98, 110, 111, 127, 128, 129, 133, and 140 G.-L. The editors considered Diodorus as the addressee of *Ep.* 118 also.

> θαυμαστὰς δὴ πλίνθους τῷ Πυθίῳ δορούμενος. δηλοῖ δὲ τὸ πάλαι σε ταῦτα παρὰ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ κομισάμενον μέλλειν ἀεὶ καὶ καταστοχάζεσθαι τοῦ καιροῦ, ὅπως ἂν ἐρχομένης τῆς πανηγύρεως ταῦτα λαβὼν προέλθω τοῖς ὁρῶσι τὴν φιλοτιμίαν βοῶν. ὅθεν σου τὸ πάθος μαθὼν προῄειν κατὰ τὸν Ὁμηρικὸν Αἴαντα μακρὰ βιβάς, καὶ κατεκρότουν τὴν γῆν ἐπιστρέφων πρὸς τοὺς πόδας τὸν θεατήν, καὶ εἴ τις ὁρῶν οὐκ ἐβούλετο, ὑβριστὴν τοῦτον ἐδόκουν καὶ τέλος ὁρᾶν κατηνάγκαζον, καὶ μηδενὸς ἐρωτῶντος ὁπόθεν ἔχω λαβών, "Διόδωρος ὁ δούς" ἀνεκήρυττον. καὶ διὰ πάντων ὑπῆρχεν ἐπ᾽ ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀπειροκαλίας γέλως, ἐπὶ σοὶ δὲ τῆς εὐνοίας ἡ φήμη. τοιαῦτά σοι τῶν καλῶν ὑποδημάτων ἀπέλαυσα, μικροῦ δεῖν ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν βαδίσας, ὅπως ἐν καλῷ τῆς θέας ἔσται τὸ δῶρον.
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> [...] Most importantly, in an outburst of generosity, you have sent me some extraordinarily beautiful shoes even better fitting my foot, as according to the comedy, without a covering letter, without telling me either "take them" or "greetings." Still, apparently you prided yourself on them more than famous Croesus when he donated the wonderful bricks to Apollo.[31] But it is clear that you, who had purchased them from the craftsman in advance, were always on the lookout to seize the right time, so that, on the day of the festival, I might step forward with them, proclaiming your generosity to the viewers. Therefore, knowing your feelings, I went on taking long strides like Homer's Ajax[32] and struck the ground attracting the viewers' attention to my feet, and if anyone refused to watch, I considered him presumptuous and eventually forced him to watch. And, without anyone asking me from where I had gotten those shoes, I proclaimed: "Diodorus gave them to me." And derision for my rudeness and high esteem for your kindness were spreading everywhere. These were the advantages I received from your beautiful shoes; I have almost walked upside down, so that your gift might be well visible!

In this letter, we find again the term φιλοτιμία and, additionally, the related verb φιλοτιμοῦμαι. Thanks to his in-depth knowledge of Attic prose, Procopius was certainly aware of the ambiguity of φιλοτιμία, which means both 'love of honor, ambition' and 'liberality, generosity'.[33] While in this letter he may still be referring to real footwear, *Ep.* 140 suggests a different interpretation for Diodorus's 'shoes':

> Ὀβολοῦν τῶν Εὐριπίδου ῥακίων τὴν ἐμὴν οἰκίαν ἀνέπλησας, ἀδωνάρια πέμψας ἄρρυθμα, καθά σοι φίλον καλεῖν, καὶ βλαύτας ἀμούσους καὶ ἰφικράτιδας, ἐφ᾽αἷς ἦ κε μέγ᾽ οἰμώξειεν ὁ στρατηγὸς Ἰφικράτης οὐδὲν τῆς Ἀττικῆς φερούσαις τεκμήριον. οὐδὲ γὰρ χάριν τινὰ καὶ πεῖραν μελίττης Ὑμηττίου παρέχονται, οὐδὲ βοῶσι τῇ θέᾳ τὴν Ἀττικήν, ἐν ᾗ Μαραθὼν καὶ Σαλαμὶς καὶ ἄνδρες ἐλευθερίας καὶ φρονήματος ἐρασταὶ οὐ μὰ Δία τῇ παρ᾽ ὑμῖν Μούσῃ τετελεσμένοι· τὰ γὰρ ὑμέτερα ... ἀλλ᾽εὔστομα κείσθω, μή τι καὶ λάθω φθεγξάμενος.

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31 See Hdt. 1. 50

32 Cp. *Il.* 7. 213.

33 Frazier (1988), 111 has excellently explained this ambiguity commenting on Aristotle's treatment of φιλοτιμία in *EN.* 2.7.1107b. 8 and 4.4.1125b. 1-6: 'Aucun texte ne met mieux en valeur les deux pôles axiologiques de la notion qui oscille entre une noble ardeur lancée à la conquête des honneurs et inspiratrice de *kala erga* et un attachement excessif à ces honneurs, source des actions les plus basses, des rivalités les plus impitoyables.' Christian writers also used φιλοτιμία in both senses: see *PGL,* s.v. For an analysis of the uses of φιλοτιμία in Greek literary texts, see Frazier (1988), 111-127; and Deene (2013), with the bibliography quoted therein. On φιλοτιμία in late antiquity, see Brown (1978), 31.

> For two obols, you filled my house with Euripides's rags, sending me un-rhythmical *adonaria*, as you like to call them, as well as un-artistic slippers and Iphicratids, for which general Iphicrates would scream aloud, because they bear no proof of Attic origin. Indeed, neither do they show any grace or trace of the bee of Hymettus, nor, with their appearance, do they proclaim Attica, the place of Marathon and Salamis, home to men who love freedom and pride and who–by Zeus!–were not initiated in your Muse. For your... but let a religious silence be maintained, lest something may escape me.

Procopius complains that Diodorus has sent him ἀδωνάρια ἄρρυθμα, 'un-rhythmical *adonaria*', together with βλαῦται ἄμουσοι, 'slippers with no Muses', and therefore 'un-artistic'. The term βλαῦται indicates rather fine slippers, probably white in color and decorated; they were worn to participate in banquets and, for this reason, were usually associated with luxury and leisure.[34] Diodorus's third gift, ἰφικράτιδες, 'Iphicratids', refers to the light and cheap boots that the fourth-century Athenian general Iphicrates had devised for his soldiers.[35] Although, to my knowledge, the term ἀδωνάριον does not occur anywhere else,[36] I would argue that Diodorus's ἀδωνάρια were compositions either in Adonic verse (corresponding to the ending of the dactylic hexameter: a dactyl followed by a spondee or trochee) or on the myth of Adonis and Aphrodite, or perhaps both. The word ἄρρυθμα, 'without rhythm', suggests that they were written in accentual instead of quantitative metrics or in prose without the proper rhythm, which Gazan rhetoricians generally pursued.[37] Consequently, the 'slippers without Muses' and the 'Iphicratids' should be some kind of literary works, perhaps written in Attic Greek. The letter is indeed full of allusions to fifth-century-BCE Athens, starting from the first word, the dual ὀβολοῖν, an Attic form that was obsolete at Procopius's time. The 'two obols' are a reference to both the μισθός, the compensation for public offices in fifth-century Athens, and the fee that, in Aristophanes's *Frogs*, Charon asks Dionysus for carrying him to the underworld.[38] A quotation from Aristophanes regarding the 'rags' of Euripides follows.[39] Then we have the mention of Attica and references to other places located in its territory: Mount Hymettus, Marathon, and Salamis. The letter also contains two quotations from Herodotus, the celebrator of the glory of Athens: the first is the

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34 See Bryant (1899), 83-84, and Morrow (1985), 177.

35 See D.S. 15.44.4: τάς τε ὑποδέσεις τοῖς στρατιώταις εὐλύτους καὶ κούφας ἐποίησε, τὰς μέχρι τοῦ νῦν ἰφικρατίδας ἀπ'ἐκείνου καλουμένας, 'He made soldiers' boots that were easy to untie and light and they continue to this day to be called 'Iphicratids' after him' (text and translation by Sherman [1971], 71). As Cornelius Nepos noted (*Iphicrates*, in *Vitae excellentium imperatorum* 11. 1), Iphicrates's reforms of the military equipment made Athenian infantry more active (*expeditores*) by diminishing the weight of their armor (*pondere detracto*). The invention of the 'Iphicratids' may have led to the belief that Iphicrates was the son of a shoemaker, as according to Plutarch, *Mor.*187 (*Regum et imperatorum aphophthegmata*). See Morrow (1985), 179.

36 According to *LSJ*, s.v. ἀδωνάρια, the term indicates 'a kind of shoes (probably with play on ἀ- privative, Lat. *donarium*, *worthless gifts*)', whereas Sophocles (*GLRBP*, s.v. ἀδωνάριον) doubtfully interprets it as 'sonnet', suggesting a connection with the verb ᾄδω, 'to sing'. Both lexica mention Procopius's passage only.

37 See Hörandner 1981, 73-78.

38 Ar.*Ra.*140.

39 Ar.*Ach.*414-415; see also *Ra.*1063-1064.

Homeric expression ἦ κε μέγ' οἰμώξειεν, 'he would scream aloud',[40] while the second, εὔστομα κείσθω, 'let a religious silence be maintained',[41] builds a very effective *aposiōpēsis* that concludes the letter. Perhaps Procopius was making fun of his friend's literary works, consisting of compositions in Attic prose or verse but 'without Muses', with no artistic value, as light and insipid as Iphicrates's shoes, and as full of sentimentalism as Euripides's plays.

If this interpretation is correct, we may extend it to other exchanges of gifts between Procopius and Diodorus, including the one in the above-mentioned *Ep.* 98 G.-L. According to this letter, Diodorus sent Procopius his 'shoes', his literary compositions, which had been prepared in advance by a 'craftsman' (δημιουργός: a professional scribe?). Diodorus asked Procopius to deliver them during a festival. After the festival, Procopius, with this letter, reported his efforts to attract the public's attention to his friend's works.

Shoes are also mentioned twice in *Ep.* 133 G.-L.:

> Δέδεγμαί σου τὰς καλὰς ἰσχάδας καὶ κρείττους, οἶμαι, τῶν Ἀττικῶν, δι' ἅς φασιν ὁ μέγας κεκίνητο πόλεμος, ὅτε βασιλεὺς ἐπῆει γῆν ἐπεμβάλλων θαλάττῃ καὶ διατέμνων ὄρος εἰς θάλατταν· δέδεγμαι δὲ καὶ ὑποδήματα καὶ λίαν καλά· πλὴν "ἀλλ'οὐ συμβλήτ' ἐστὶ κυνόσβατος οὐδ' ἀνεμῶναι πρὸς ῥόδα"· ἀσταφὶς γὰρ μακρὰ καὶ συμμέτρῳ στύψει τὴν ἔμφυτον παραμυθουμένη γλυκύτητα ποίων μὲν ἰσχάδων Ἀττικῶν ποίων δὲ πλακούντων, ἐφ' οὗς ἀεὶ τὴν γλῶτταν προτείνεις, οὐ κρείττων καθέστηκε; πέπομφα δὲ καὶ στρουθοὺς ἐξ ἅλμης, ἀδηφάγου γαστρὸς παραμύθιον. ἆρ' οὐ κρείττω πολλῷ τὰ ἡμέτερα; πᾶς ἄν τις, οἶμαι, τένθης φήσειε δικαστής. πλὴν ἴσως τὰς μελλούσας βλαύτας ἐρεῖς. ἐγὼ δὲ κέχηνα μὲν πρὸς αὐτάς· ἐπειδὰν δὲ πέμψῃς ... ἀλλ' οὐ βούλομαι λέγειν οἷα δὴ καὶ σκώπτειν πειράσομαι
>
> I have received your beautiful dried figs: they are even better, I believe, than the Attic ones, because of which, as they say, the great war had been waged, when the king came, throwing earth on the sea and cutting a mountain transforming it into sea;[42] I have also received shoes, and extraordinarily beautiful ones indeed. However, "neither a dog-rose nor anemones are comparable to roses."[43] Indeed, which Attic figs, which flat breads, toward which you always stretch your tongue, are not surpassed by big raisins, which temper their natural sweetness with a moderate astringent taste? But I have also sent some pickled birds, a comfort for a gluttonous belly. Isn't our stuff much better? Every gourmand judge, I believe, would say it. But perhaps you will say the same of <your> future slippers. I am all agape for them; still, whenever you send them... but I do not want to say how I will try to make fun of you.

The λίαν καλὰ ὑποδήματα, 'extraordinarily beautiful shoes', which Procopius has received, are perhaps the same as in *Ep.* 98 G.-L. If the μέλλουσαι βλαῦται, the 'future slippers' he is waiting for, are identical to the ἄμουσοι βλαῦται of *Ep.* 140 G.-L., it is clear that *Ep.* 133 was written before *Ep.* 140; interestingly, both letters end with an *aposiōpēsis*. However, *Ep.* 133 also contains references to food items — Attic dried figs,

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40 Hdt.7.159, from *Il.*7.124.
41 Hdt. 2.171.1.
42 See Hdt.7.22-25 and 36
43 Quotation from Theoc.5.92-93.

flat bread, raisins, and pickled birds — which can hardly be interpreted as indicating literary compositions.[44]

Nothing certain is known of Diodorus's identity. From the other letters Procopius addressed to him, it appears that he was a σχολαστικός, a 'lawyer', who was born at Gaza and practiced his legal profession in Caesarea.[45] Procopius considered him one of his best friends, probably because they had studied together at Alexandria. In his letters, he often asks Diodorus to put his profession at the service of people in need and do justice to those who have been wronged.[46] Also, sometimes Procopius recommends to Diodorus his students who, after completing their instruction in rhetoric, wish to have a career in the practice of law.[47] At the same time, the light and humorous tone that Procopius consistently uses when addressing Diodorus reveals a sincere friendship based on common experiences and acquaintances.[48]

A Diodorus σχολαστικός is also the addressee of two letters of another member of the School of Gaza: Aeneas. A pupil of the Neoplatonist Hierocles of Alexandria, Aeneas was slightly older than Procopius and equally engaged in the defense of Christianity. In his most important work, a dialogue entitled *Theophrastus*, Aeneas opposed the Christian dogma against the Neoplatonic views on the pre-existence of the soul and the eternity of the world.[49] Aeneas's twenty-five letters increase our knowledge of the community of scholars, clerics, and officials who constituted the actual and intended audience of the Gazan scholars.[50]

Aeneas's *Epp.* 7 and 22 Massa Positano, addressed to Diodorus, show that he had an argument with Diodorus for some reason but eventually made peace with him. While *Ep.* 22 is short and rather insignificant, *Ep.* 7 provides some interesting details:

> Διήλλαξεν ἡμᾶς ὁ καλὸς Ἡρόδοτος ἅτε μουσικὸς τυγχάνων· ὑπὲρ τὸν Ὀρφέα καὶ τὸν Θάμυριν ἐκεῖνον ἡ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς μουσική. νῦν γοῦν ἔγνωμεν ἀλλήλους ὥσπερ ἐν νυκτομαχίᾳ πρότερον πολεμοῦντες, καὶ εἰρήνη συχνή. ἀλλὰ κρατῆρα στήσαντες οἷον ἐν εἰρήνῃ σπονδὰς ποιησώμεθα θεῶν μὲν Ἑρμῆ, ἀνθρώπων δὲ Ἡροδότῳ, οἳ τὴν στάσιν ἡμῖν μόλις διέλυσαν. τούτοις ἄγοντες τὴν ἑορτὴν τὴν μὲν κωμῳδίαν, ἢ ἀναιδῶς περιτρέχουσα

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44 According to Williams (2014), 353, '[s]ending an edible gift offered a means by which to extend commensality where the physical act of eating together was not possible'.

45 See *PLRE* 2, 359, s.v. 'Diodorus 3'.

46 See *Epp.* 31, 32, 72, 111, and 118 G.-L.

47 For example, in *Ep.* 8 G.-L., Procopius agrees to provide Orion, one of his former students (*Ep.* 144), with letters of recommendation for Diodorus. On Orion ('Orion 3' in *PLRE* 2, 813), see Laniado (2005).

48 For example, *Ep.* 29. 14-15 G.-L.: παῖζε πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὰ συνήθη καὶ τῆς σῆς χάριτος ἄξια, 'keep joking with me as usual and worthy of your grace', hints at frequent exchanges of jokes between the two friends. See also *Ep.* 94.10-11: ταῦτα δέ μοι πεπαίχθω πρὸς σέ, τὴν ὑμετέραν χάριν ἐκμιμουμένῳ, 'let me tell you these words as a joke, imitating your grace'.

49 After Colonna's critical edition and Italian translation (1958), Aeneas's *Theophrastus* (*CPG* 3, no. 7450) has been recently translated into English by Dillon and Russell in Gertz, Dillon and Russell (2012), 1-90. For a study of the philosophical and theological issues contained in Aeneas's dialogue and its relationship with Gazan Neoplatonism, see Champion (2014), 49-55, 136-197, and the bibliography quoted therein.

50 Aeneas's letters (*CPG* 3, no. 7451) have been edited and translated into Italian by Massa Positano (1962).

> ἐκλαλεῖ τὰ τῶν φιλτάτων ἀπόρρητα, αὐτῇ σκευῇ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν ἐξελάσομεν, εἰσκαλεσάμενοι ὃ πᾶσαν φιλίαν δορυφορεῖ, τὴν πειθώ, τὴν χάριν, τὴν ἡδονήν, τὸν κρότον, τὸν ἔπαινον. τούτοις καθίσωμεν σεμνότερον θέατρον, ἀπειπόντες κωμῳδίᾳ μηδὲν ἐνοχλεῖν.
>
> Excellent Herodotus achieved our reconciliation because of his art, which is superior to that of Orpheus and the infamous Thamyris. Now, finally, we have gotten to know each other, while previously we were fighting as in a night-battle, and peace is lasting. But let us set up a bowl, as is usual in peace, and let us pour libations among the gods to Hermes and among men to Herodotus, who have just put an end to our discord. While celebrating them, we will banish comedy with its equipment from our letters—for, running around, it shamelessly reveals the secrets of our dearest friends—and we will invite what keeps guard over every friendship: persuasion, grace, delight, support, praise. Through them, let us establish a more dignified public, preventing comedy from giving any trouble.

Aeneas and Diodorus, after fighting ὥσπερ ἐν νυκτομαχίᾳ, "as in a night-battle,"[51] can celebrate peace. They will pay honors to Hermes, the god of rhetoric and a metaphor for rhetoric itself, as well as Herodotus, who was the author of their reconciliation thanks to his art, which surpasses that of Orpheus and Thamyris, i.e., poetry.[52]

It is not clear in which sense Herodotus's art may have solved the conflict. However, the rest of the letter suggests that the reason for the fight was Diodorus's attack on Aeneas using the tones of ancient comedy. Perhaps Aeneas had written a (historical?) work in the style of Herodotus and Diodorus had ridiculed it in verse; an exchange of angry letters from both sides may have made matters worse. Herodotus was in fact one of the favorite literary models for Gazan scholars. For example, in *Ep.* 161 G.-L., Procopius

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51 In her commentary on this letter, Massa Positano (1962), 85 interpreted these words as 'without knowing each other's true personality', as in Libanius, *Ep.* 10. 204. 15 Foerster. In *Ep.* 77 G.-L., Procopius complains that Diodorus, 'although dreaming of the Maïumas' (2: κἂν ὄναρ ἴδῃς τὸν Μαϊουμᾶν, i.e., a night festival probably involving public declamations along with other forms of entertainment), did not participate in the 'festival of the martyrs' (πανήγυρις τῶν μαρτύρων) with his friends at Gaza (see also *Ep.* 110 G.-L.); consequently, Procopius urges him to abandon his resentment. Procopius's words (6-7) ὁρῶν γάρ σε διὰ τοὺς λυποῦντας καὶ τὸν τόπον ἀποστρεφόμενον κ.τ.λ., 'seeing that you were avoiding this place because of those who made you suffer, etc.' may refer to Diodorus's controversy with Aeneas, which perhaps forced Diodorus not to return to his native city for a while. If this interpretation is correct, the mention of the Maïumas suggests that the 'night-battle' of Aeneas's letter may have been an actual rhetorical competition between the two, held at a night festival. For an interpretation of Procopius's *Ep.* 77 G.-L., see Ciccolella (2016) and the bibliography quoted therein.

52 According to the *Iliad* (2.594-600), the Thracian poet Thamyris boasted that his singing was superior to that of the Muses. After being defeated in a competition with them, he was blinded and deprived of his poetic art. For other versions of the myth of Thamyris, see, e.g., Apollod.1.3.3; D.S.3.67; and Plin.*Nat.*7.207. Aeneas's reference to Thamyris probably contains a veiled critique to Diodorus's over-ambition and recalls Procopius's ambiguous use of φιλοτιμία (see above, p. 108).

calls Herodotus γλυκύς, 'sweet', and demonstrates that Gazan literates considered him a model for prose writing together with Demosthenes and Thucydides.[53]

In this letter, Aeneas says that comedy, since it reveals ἀπόρρητα, 'secrets', and breaks friendships, should be banished from letters αὐτῇ σκευῇ, 'with its own equipment'.[54] The generic term σκευή may refer to the features of ancient comedy, particularly that of Aristophanes: humor, personal attack, colloquial language, etc. However, it may also apply to the 'external', 'visual' aspects of comedy, such as the attire of actors, their masks, and even their shoes, as suggested by Aeneas's image of comedy περιτρέχουσα, 'running around'.[55] Considered within this context, 'shoes' may be an effective metaphor for short verse compositions or perhaps just witticisms or quips, which could easily spread to everyone's lips and convey their biting contents far and wide.

Aeneas's remarks offer a key to interpreting the many references to both Herodotus and comedy appearing in Procopius's three letters to Diodorus. When, in *Ep.* 140 G.-L., Procopius establishes a difference between Attica, 'home to men who love freedom and pride', and Diodorus's 'Muse', he may be opposing Aeneas's serious work, which purported high moral values, to Diodorus's humble comic compositions. Also, these letters are interspersed with references to comedy. Unfortunately, the sources of some of them are not identifiable because Procopius probably still read plays that are lost to us. This is the case, for example, with the quotation at the beginning of *Ep.* 98 G.-L.: its source may be a lost comedy entitled *Σκευαί* ('Equipments') that, according to Athenaeus (*Deipn.*14.628e), the grammarian Chamaeleon attributed either to Aristophanes or to the comic poet Plato.[56] In any case, the mention of footwear is quite frequent in Aristophanes's plays, and many passages from them are applicable to Procopius's context. For example, Diodorus's poetry may be as trivial as Socrates's senseless research in the *Clouds*, where he makes Περσικαί, 'Persian slippers', dipping

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53 *Ep.* 161. 2-4 G.-L. (a reply to Evagrius, who has excessively praised Procopius for his literary style): ὡς γὰρ ἐν τοῖς σοῖς γράμμασιν οὐ τοὺς νῦν μόνον ἐνίκων, ἀλλὰ καί, ὃ μὴ θέμις εἰπεῖν, καὶ Δημοσθένης ἥττετο, καὶ Θουκιδίδης εἶχε τὰ δεύτερα, καὶ ὁ γλυκὺς Ἡρόδοτος μετὰ τούτων ἐτάττετο, 'For, according to your letter, not only did I surpass my contemporaries, but also — which is unfair to say — even Demosthenes was inferior, Thucydides held second place, and sweet Herodotus placed after them'.

54 Massa Positano (1962), 86 justified her interpretation of αὐτῇ as dative of accompaniment meaning '(with) its own' on the ground of similar usages of αὐτός in Aeneas's prose. See also Smyth (1984), 350 no. 1525.

55 Shoes and rags are related to the staging of comedy in *Ra.*405-409, where the chorus addresses 'Iacchus (i.e., Dionysus) lover of dances' (Ἴακχος φιλοχορευτής) saying: σὺ γὰρ κατεσχίσω μὲν ἐπὶ γέλωτι / κἀπ' εὐτελείᾳ τόδε σανδάλιον / καὶ τὸ ῥάκος, / κἀξηῦρες ὥστ' ἀζημίους / παίζειν καὶ χορεύειν, 'For you tore my humble sandals and rags for fun and thrift, and found a way for us to play and dance scot-free'. On this passage, see Del Corno's commentary in (1985), 179.

56 Pl.Com. *fr.*137 K-A: καὶ τοῖς τρόποις ἁρμόττον ὥσπερ περὶ πόδα (could the σκευή in Aeneas's letter be a reference to the title of this comedy?). Atheneaeus's passage is quoted *ibid.*, in the apparatus on *fr.* 138.

the feet of a flea in wax;[57] or his compositions may be as dangerous and threatening as the shoe with which, in the *Lysistrata*, an old woman of the chorus wishes to strike an old man.[58] Also, the dried figs and flat breads of *Ep.* 133 G.-L. appear together in Aristophanes's *Wealth* among the gifts Carion attributes to Plutus, the god of wealth.[59] 'Raisins and figs causing sweet dreams' are mentioned in a fragment of Hermippus's *Φορμοφόροι* ('Porters') as luxury goods coming to Athens from Rhodes,[60] while, in Cratinus's lost play entitled *Νόμοι* ('Laws'), raisins will rain in a future golden age.[61] The 'pickled birds', if not taken from a comedy, have kept their reputation as delicacies in the Eastern Mediterranean up until modern times.[62]

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57 Ar.*Nu.*149-151; see also *Ec.*319. In *Lys.*229 and 250, women swear not to lift their Persian slippers to the ceiling (οὐ πρὸς τὸν ὄροφον ἀνατενῶ τὼ Περσικά). Procopius walking on his hands to show Diodorus's shoes at the end of *Ep.* 98 G.-L. (see above, p. 108) is probably an allusion to this image, albeit without Aristophanes's sexual *double entendre*. On the Περσικαί in visual arts, see Morrow (1985), 37, 147, 178, and the references quoted there.

58 Ar.*Lys.*657-658: Εἰ δὲ λυπήσεις τί με, / τῷδε σ' ἀψήκτῳ πατάξω τῷ κοθόρνῳ τὴν γνάθον ('If you annoy me, I will slap your jaw with this unpolished shoe'). On shoes in Aristophanes's plays, see Compton-Engle (2015), 65-66. We are also reminded of the artistic representations of Aphrodite threatening Eros with a sandal in statuettes, some of which are from Syria: see Delivorrias, Berger-Doer, and Kossatz-Deissmann (1984), 121; and Jentel (1984), 163-164 and 166. In a panel of the mosaic of the so-called Hippolytus Hall in Madaba (500-550 C.E.), Aphrodite sits next to Adonis and holds a rose in one hand and a sandal in the other, threatening a winged Eros that a Χάρις (Grace) is presenting to her. Five more Erotes are present; one of them dives into a basket from which petals — presumably of roses — are falling. The presence of Aphrodite, Adonis, and the rose suggests a connection with the Day of the Roses. See, e.g., Piccirillo (1989), 52-58; Bowersock (2006), 55-58; and Dunbabin (2014), 236-238. Displaying the sandal and particularly the sole could also indicate a seductive intent (for example, prostitutes' sandals had the words 'follow me' written inside), as is probably the case with a Hellenistic statue of Aphrodite wielding her slipper against Pan (the 'Slipper Slapper'), now at the Archaeological Museum of Athens (I owe this information to Yulia Ustinova, whom I warmly thank); see also Elderkin (1941).

59 Ar.*Pl.*191 πλακοῦντων ... ἰσχάδων. Chremylus and his slave Carion list Plutus's goods alternately in *antilabai*: Carion mentions food items and Chremylus moral values (189-192). Interestingly, after Carion's 'dried figs' Chremylus names φιλοτιμία. Procopius quotes Chremylus explicitly in *Ep.* 75.1 G.-L. Together with *Clouds* and *Frogs*, *Wealth* was included in the so-called Byzantine triad of Aristophanes and became the play most commonly read in Byzantium: see Sommerstein (2009), 8; and Wilson (1983), 112. In Aristophanes's plays, dried figs also appear, e.g., in *V.*297 (a delicacy), *Ach.*804-808 (food the "piglets" love), *Pl.*798 (comic poets throw them at the audience to make them laugh), and *Eq.*755 (Demos sits agape as chopping dried figs). 'Flat breads' (πλακοῦντες) appear in *Ach.*1092 as a course at the final banquet, as well as *ibid*., 1125 and 1127, in the exchange between Dikaiopolis and Lamachus.

60 Hermipp. *fr.*63.16 K-A: ἡ Ῥόδος ἀσταφίδας <τε> καὶ ἰσχάδας ἡδυονείρους κ.τ.λ. See Ceccarelli (1996), 149-151.

61 Cratin. *fr.* 131 K-A: ὁ δὲ Ζεὺς ὀσταφίσιν ὕσει τάχα. See Baldry (1953), 53 and Ceccarelli (1996), 132.

62 See, e.g., Hdt.2.77.5 ὀρνίθων δὲ τούς τε ὄρτυγας καὶ τὰς νήσσας καὶ τὰ μικρὰ τῶν ὀρνίθων ὠμὰ σιτέονται προταριχεύσαντες: '[Egyptians] eat quails, ducks, and small birds raw after pickling them'; (see *LSJ* s.v. προταριχεύω, 'salt or pickle beforehand', etc.: salt and water

The mention of luxury goods and the general symbolism of shoes in other contexts suggest that Procopius's words may also imply a moral message. In Plato's *Phaedo*, shoes are among the vanities that philosophers should esteem lightly;[63] Socrates himself was barefoot according to Aristophanes's *Clouds*, Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, and Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.[64] At the same time, Procopius certainly knew several Biblical passages in which shoes symbolize possession and power and, more generally, the earthly as opposed to the holy.[65] Both Plato's praise of frugality (for example, in the *Republic*) and the Christian idea of voluntary poverty (for example, in the Gospels) have left several traces in Procopius's letters, where the condemnation of the passions generated by wealth and greed concurs to define Procopius's *persona* as a philosopher and teacher of morality.[66] Procopius's own frugality and rejection of gluttony, proclaimed in several of his letters and praised by Choricius,[67] highlight the irony implied in the delicacies mentioned in *Ep.* 133 G.-L.

The same preoccupation with morality appears at the end of Aeneas's letter. Aeneas's conclusion that banishing comedy from letters will contribute to establishing a σεμνότερον θέατρον, a 'more dignified public', is inspired by the negative attitude toward ancient drama that is typical of late antique Christian and Judaic societies. Aeneas's words also contradict the view of Choricius, who defended the depiction of human vices in ancient theater as morally harmless, let alone beneficial, and corresponding to human behavior.[68] Indeed, the practice of rhetoric, which involved public declamations, was in itself a form of drama.[69]

An intertextual approach to Procopius's and Aeneas's letters shows that uncovering their 'mosaic of quotations'[70] turns out to be fundamental to glimpse the intellectual world of an entire generation of scholars who lived at the crossroad between several cultures and experienced the important stage of human history that is commonly called 'the end of antiquity'. Although deeply involved in their Christian faith and intensively participating in the religious and philosophical debates of their time, Gazan scholars

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were the ingredients for brine). The controversial use of capturing and killing songbirds to eat them pickled, grilled or boiled is still common in some Mediterranean areas.

63 Pl.*Phd.*64d.

64 Pl.*Smp.*174a3-5, 220b; *Phdr.*229a3-4; Ar.*Nu.*103-104, 362; X.*Mem.*1.6.2. See also D.L. 2.28.

65 On shoes in the Old Testament and Jewish texts, see Nacht (1915), Chinitz (2007), and the passages quoted therein. For the New Testament and Christian writings, see *PGL* s.v. ὑπόδημα and Oepke (1972).

66 On Procopius's moral attitude as expressed in his letters, see Ciccolella in Amato (2010), 131-134.

67 Choricius (*Or. fun. in Proc.* 23, p. 118, 5-7 F.-R.) underlines the sobriety of Procopius's meals: ἔτι τοίνυν αὐτῷ δίαιτα ἦν οὐ πολυτελής, οὐ παρατρέχουσα Λάκωνος τράπεζαν, 'his diet was not costly, nor did it exceed a Spartan table'. For Procopius's critique of gluttony, see, e.g., *Epp.* 99, 131, and 141.

68 Chor.Gaz.*Apol mim.*, pp. 344-380 F.-R., on which see Webb (2006); Webb (2008), 168-173; and White (2013).

69 On the relationship between rhetoric and drama, see, e.g., White (2010), 387-392 and the bibliography quoted therein.

70 See Kristeva (1980), 66.

perceived classical antiquity as the foundation of their culture and the background upon which to project their human and intellectual experiences.[71] Consequently, in their writings, antiquity appears more as a living reality than as a heritage to be treated with reverence: after ten centuries, they could still write works in the style of Herodotus and make fun of each other using the vocabulary of Aristophanes. As in the works of his contemporaries, in Procopius's letters "old" and "new" merge in a synthesis that, in its complexity, expresses the conflicts and contrasts of an age of transition.

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