

# Nicolaus Reads Euphiletus: A Note on the *Nachleben* of Lysias 1

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Konstantinos Kapparis has recently examined possible echoes of Lysias 1 in Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*.<sup>1</sup> While the parallels cited by Kapparis are problematic,<sup>2</sup> an as yet unnoticed recollection of Lysias 1 in the first century BC does suggest the possibility of the speech's influence on later prose narrative.

The convoluted account of Gyges' rise to power offered by Nicolaus of Damascus (*FGrH* 90 F 44–47) bears relatively little resemblance to the better known narratives at Herodotus 1,8–13 and Plato, *Republic* 359b6–360b2.<sup>3</sup> In Nicolaus' version, Gyges' tale begins with the misfortunes of a certain Dascylus, a member of the Mermnadae and trusted adviser of King Ardys. Dascylus is murdered by Ardys' son (Sadyattes or Adyattes),<sup>4</sup> who fears that Dascylus might displace him as Ardys' successor. When an official inquiry fails to uncover the murderer's identity, Ardys invokes a curse upon those responsible for the deed, proclaiming that they are to be killed with impunity. In the meantime, Dascylus' wife flees to Phrygia, where she gives birth to a son, also named Dascylus. Upon reaching adulthood, this second Dascylus moves to the Black Sea region, marries, and has a son of his own,

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<sup>1</sup> Kapparis 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Porter 2003.

<sup>3</sup> On the different versions of the Gyges tale in antiquity and later, see Smith 1902 and 1920, Speyer 1984, Fausti 1991, Schwabl/Krones 1997, van Zyl Smit 1998, Spina 1999, Dorati 2000, Laird 2001. (I have not seen Pichler 1986.) On the fragmentary Gyges drama (*P. Oxy.* 2382 = *TrGF* Adesp. F 664), see Holzberg 1973 and, more recently, Garzya 1993, Belloni 2000, and Travis 2000.

<sup>4</sup> On the confusion of these two names, see Parmentier-Morin 1995, 87 and n. 12. Cf. the similar confusion regarding the identity of the king murdered by Gyges: below and *Hdt.* 1,7,2.

Gyges. When we first meet Gyges he is a handsome eighteen-year-old endowed with extraordinary looks and abilities who has been recalled to Lydia by a childless uncle and adopted by him. Gyges' outstanding qualities soon bring him to the attention of the king (in Nicolaus' version, a second Sadyattes/Adyattes rather than Candaules) and he is appointed to the royal bodyguard. The king eventually comes to see the boy as a potential rival, however, and attempts to encompass his death by setting him a series of dangerous tasks, each of which Gyges accomplishes with ease. Won over by Gyges' prowess, Sadyattes/Adyattes rewards him richly and elevates him to a privileged position in the court. Soon thereafter the king decides to marry. Gyges is sent to fetch the bride and, overwhelmed with desire, attempts to seduce the girl, who rejects his advances altogether. The tale then continues (*FGrH* 90 F 47,7–8):

ὡς δὲ ἀφίκετο παρὰ τὸν βασιλέα, πάντ' ἔφρασεν ὅσα ὁ Γύγης ἐποίει καὶ ὡς μιγῆναι οἱ ἤθελεν. ὁ δὲ ὀργισθεὶς ὤμοσε τῇ ὑστεραία Γύγην κτείνειν. ταῦτα ἤκουσε θεράπεινα παροῦσα ἐν τῷ δωματίῳ στέργουσα σφόδρα τὸν Γύγην· ἡ δὲ πάντ' ἐκείνῳ παραχρῆμα ἤγγειλεν. ὁ δὲ νυκτὸς ἔτι οὔσης περιδραμῶν τοῖς φίλοις κοινοῦται τὸν λόγον καὶ ἀξιῶι βοηθεῖν ὀρμῶν<τι> κτείνειν τὸν βασιλέα. προσανεμίμησκε δὲ καὶ τῆς Ἄρδου ἀρᾶς, ὅτι ἐπηράσατο τοῖς Δασκύλου φονεῦσι. κρίνων δ' οὖν ἐκ τῶν παρόντων ἀνελεῖν Ἀδυάτην μᾶλλον περ ἢ αὐτὸς ἀποθανεῖν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ἐπεὶ τοὺς πιστοτάτους τῶν φίλων ἠὲ τρεπίσατο, ἴεται σὺν ζίφει ἐπ' αὐτόν· τῆς δὲ θεραπαίνης τὰς θύρας τοῦ δωματίου διοιξάσης, ἐπεισελθὼν κτείνει καθεύδοντα Σαδυάτην βασιλεύσαντα ἔτη γ'.

When she reached the king, she told him of everything Gyges had done and that he had wished to have intercourse with her. Enraged, the king swore that he would kill Gyges on the following day. A slave girl who happened to be in the bedroom and was madly in love with Gyges heard this: she immediately reported the whole matter to him. While it was still night, Gyges went running about to share the news with his friends and demand that they help him in a plot to kill the king. He reminded them, in addition, of the curse of Ardys and how the king had invoked destruction on the murderers of Dascylus. And so, thinking it better, under the circumstances, to kill Adyattes rather than himself be killed by him, he outfitted the most trusted of his friends and made an assault against the

king with his sword. The slave girl having opened the doors of the bedroom for him, Gyges entered the chamber and killed Sadyattes in his sleep after the latter had reigned for three years.

The story offers a pleasantly melodramatic version of Gyges' ascent to the throne but is not without a certain sophistication in its exploitation of specific narrative models. In his initial presentation of Gyges, Nicolaus elicits, only to invert, the myth of Bellerophon (a myth that Nicolaus himself treats in an earlier section of his history: *FGrH* 90 F 9). In this version, the seemingly innocent youth first wins the king's trust through his valorous acts only then to be revealed as a treacherous seducer who is *justly* accused by the king's bride.<sup>5</sup> The account of the king's murder offers a similar inversion of the high-point of Euphiletus' narrative in *Lysias* 1, with the adulterous Gyges cast in the rôle that, in *Lysias*, is played by the outraged husband. Like Euphiletus, Gyges is summoned by a slave girl who is able to inform him when the couple is together in bed (cf. *Lys.* 1,23). Like Euphiletus, he then goes scurrying about in the black of night (*Lys.* 1,41) gathering what friends he can (*Lys.* 1,23–24 and 41–42), bursts into the bedroom (again aided by the slave, who has opened the doors of the chamber for him: *Lys.* 1,24), and comes upon his rival while the latter is still in bed.

Many of the narrative elements shared by these two accounts represent generic components of what I have elsewhere termed the 'comic adultery scenario'.<sup>6</sup> The parallels are so direct, however, and so seemingly methodical in their elaboration that a deliberate borrowing on the part of Nicolaus (or his source) appears to be all but certain. Moreover, a particular motive for the borrowing is suggested by the ironical inversion of *Lysias*' model, which (like the inversion of the Bellerophon tale in the earlier section of the narrative) the author seems to wish his audience to notice. In each instance, the inversion highlights the curious ambiguity of Gyges' position as both the justly aggrieved innocent and the conniving usurper. The Gyges who emerges is, as result, a murkier figure than Herodotus' bumbling dupe or Plato's quick-witted peasant: his rise to the throne is marked by a peculiarly

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<sup>5</sup> For other mythopoetic motifs in the story as presented by Nicolaus, see Smith 1902, 377–380 and Ruiz de Elvira 1973, 44–48. Cf. the more general reflections of Parmentier-Morin 1998, 524–528.

<sup>6</sup> Porter 1997, 421–433.

tainted form of justice which no doubt struck a chord in those readers familiar with the various intrigues of Herod's court.<sup>7</sup>

Nicolaus is often held to have relied heavily, although not exclusively, on the fifth-century historian Xanthus in composing his account of Lydian history.<sup>8</sup> The echoes of Lysias 1 noted here would seem to indicate that a good deal of embellishment is entailed, since the details of Lysias' narrative are too carefully suited to the specifics of his case to believe that they too could derive from an earlier account by Xanthus: while the individual elements of Lysias' narrative are familiar from the general tradition, this particular constellation of those elements must be credited to the logographer.<sup>9</sup> The subsequent use of the speech in refashioning Gyges' tale is probably to be attributed to Nicolaus himself, although the possibility of an intermediate Hellenistic source cannot altogether be discounted.<sup>10</sup>

Nicolaus' account offers evidence that the virtues of Lysias' narrative — and its potential as a model for tales of sexual intrigue — were familiar to at least one author of the first century BC. That Lysias 1 was admired by educated readers of the time is confirmed by Demetr. *Eloc.* 190 (which suggests, by its very allusiveness, a general familiarity with the speech) and, perhaps, P. Rutilius Lupus, *De figuris sententiarum et elocutionis* 1,21 (based on an original by the first-century BC rhetorician Gorgias).<sup>11</sup> Nicolaus trumpets his thoroughly Hellenic education in his autobiographical fragments (*FGrH* 90 F

<sup>7</sup> Professor Mark Toher notes (personal communication) that Nicolaus was heavily involved in the conspiracy, intrigue, and murder that dominated Herod's domestic life, and likely had a particular interest in literary depictions of such matters. See, however, Parmentier-Morin 1998, 502–506. Murray 2001 [1987], 42–43 suggests the possible influence of Persian historiographical traditions.

<sup>8</sup> The more relevant discussions include: Bickel 1921, 343–344; *FGrH* II C 233–235 and 244–246; Pearson 1939, 109–138; Diller 1956; von Fritz 1967, 2,348–377. Further bibliography in Toher 1989 (esp. 160) and Parmentier-Morin 1995, 85 n. 2.

<sup>9</sup> The care and economy with which Lysias marshals the details of his narrative have been much studied: see Porter 1997, 421–422, with the sources there cited.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. above, n. 7. Toher 1989 examines other instances of Nicolaus' creative refashioning of his source material and presents an effective challenge to those who dismiss Nicolaus as a mere redactor: cf. Parmentier-Morin 1998 (esp. 502–542) and, more recently, Toher 2003a and 2003b. The figure of the wife is particularly interesting in this regard. While her association with Gyges' rise to power is already firmly established in earlier versions of the tale, Nicolaus' account of her rôle differs significantly from those of his predecessors and may well be original to him: cf. Ilan 1996, esp. pp. 234–235, on the portrayal of women in Nicolaus' historical writings.

<sup>11</sup> See Porter 1997, 446–447. For the possible influence of Lysias 1 on later prose fiction, see esp. Trenkner 1958, 155–160.

132) and, as Josephus' portrayal of him indicates,<sup>12</sup> was himself an accomplished orator: it is therefore highly unlikely that he would not have been familiar with the speech.<sup>13</sup> The ends to which this Lysianic model is employed, however, point to one of the ironies of literary fame: Nicolaus eschews the virtues that commend Lysias' account — the simplicity and restraint of its narrative, its selective use of detail, the subtle touches of ethopoeia — in favor of a more subjective, melodramatic, and generally superficial treatment of the material.<sup>14</sup> The artfulness of his version lies rather in the clever interweaving and manipulation of various narrative and mythological prototypes.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *FGrH* 90 T 4-9.

<sup>13</sup> I am indebted to Mark Toher for this observation and the accompanying references.

<sup>14</sup> A similar effect is evident in Rutilius' adaptation of the Lysias' narrative (if in fact Rutilius' excerpt is based on Lys. 1: above n. 11). There too the simple elegance of the Lysianic speech has been obliterated in favor of a more intensely personalized depiction of situation and character akin to that found in later prose fiction: cf. Barabino 1967, 98 and 133.

<sup>15</sup> I would like to thank Charles Chiasson, Konstantinos Kapparis, Mark Toher, and the anonymous reviewer of *Ancient Narrative* for their generous assistance with this note.

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