How Brasidas Was Honoured at Skione (Thucydides 4.121.1)

Konstantine Panegyres
Trinity College, Oxford, United Kingdom
konstantine.panegyres@trinity.ox.ac.uk

Received October 2020 | Accepted November 2020

Abstract

The crux at Thucydides 4.121.1 has recently come under renewed scrutiny from scholars, but decisive conclusions were not reached. This article argues that commentators have not yet taken into account all relevant considerations, and that as a result the passage still remains incompletely understood. The verb προσήρχοντο is derived from προσέρχομαι, not προσάρχομαι. The unusual imperfect form προσήρχοντο (instead of expected Attic προσήχεον) can perhaps be regarded as an instance of poetic verbal inflection (compare Pi. O. 9.93 διήρχετο), a type of diction suitable in the context of Thucydides’ heroic-poetic depiction of Brasidas. Modern scholars’ focus on the textual criticism of this one word has in general caused them to neglect matters of verbal interpretation. As a consequence, some important aspects of Thucydides’ language and the cultural context of the scene remain underappreciated.

Keywords

Thucydides – the Peloponnesian War – Brasidas – Skione – poetry and history – cult

1 Introduction

In the summer of 423 BC the city of Skione, in Pallene, revolted from the Athenians, and its citizens came over to the side of the Spartan general Brasidas. On the night of the revolt, Brasidas crossed from Torone to Skione in a little rowboat, protected by a friendly trireme sailing ahead of him. When he
reached the city, he gave a speech praising the Skionaians for taking the side of freedom. Brasidas promised that he would always regard the Skionaians as loyal allies and honour them in other respects.1

The people of Skione responded to these words with elation. A famous line in Thucydides’ narrative of the episode describes how they honoured Brasidas after the speech: καὶ τὸν Βρασίδαν τὰ τ’ ἄλλα καλῶς ἐδέξαντο καὶ δημοσίᾳ μὲν χρυσῷ στεφάνῳ ἀνέδησαν ὡς ἑλευθεροῦντα τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἰδίᾳ δὲ ἔταινίουν τε καὶ προσήρχοντο ὡσπερ ἀθλητῇ (4.121.1).2 These words, and in particular the meaning of the verb προσήρχοντο, have for centuries been the subject of much scholarly debate. Indeed, Hornblower has called the line “a crux of great importance”.3

The problem centres on the question of how to account for the form of the verb προσήρχοντο, which is found in the medieval direct tradition and in a citation in Priscian where it is associated with adeo (18.277 = vol. 2, 353.15-16 Hertz).4 Pollux offers as a variant προσῆσαν (προσήσαν), but mistakenly attributes the citation to Xenophon: τὰ δὲ τῶν ἐνεργοῦντων ῥήματα ἀνειπεῖν, ἀνακηρύξει, ἀναγορεύει, ἀναδῆσαι, στεφανῶσαι, ταινιῶσαι· Ξενοφῶν γὰρ εἴρηκεν 'ἔταινίουν τε καὶ προσῆσαν ὡσπερ ἀθλητῇ' (3.152 = vol. 1, 202.6-8 Bethe). Beyond this, there is also an interpretative difficulty of perhaps greater interest. Several commentators have paused to ask why a verbum adeundi such as προσέρχομαι should be found in this context, and some have emended it.

The strictly linguistic aspects of the crux have now been reconsidered again, though definitive conclusions were not reached.5 As far as the interpretative issues are concerned, little has been done and, as shall be seen, much remains to be clarified. The aim of the following pages is, first, to examine the case for and against the view that the Pollux variant προσῆσαν is the true ancient reading and should be printed in the text, and, second, to make a detailed argument as to why the verbum adeundi προσέρχομαι is suitable in the context.

2 The Form of the Verb

The unanimous reading of the verb in the medieval direct tradition is προσήρχοντο. Elmsley seems to have been the first to point out that this imperfect is inappropriate as a classical Attic form, because in classical Attic the imperfect

---

1 Th. 4.120.1-3.
2 This is the text of Alberti 1992, 207.
3 Hornblower 1996, 49.
4 There are currently no papyri covering this passage; it is possible that something will turn up one day.
ought to be formed from προσήγα, so that one should expect to find προσήγαν.\textsuperscript{6} Rutherford’s attempt to recuperate προσήρχοντο as an “early Attic” form was not supported by any evidence,\textsuperscript{7} and he himself abandoned the idea.\textsuperscript{8}

Taking the same view as Elmsley, some later scholars thought that the verb transmitted indirectly in Pollux, προσήσαν (προσήσαν), which is the expected and correct Attic form, should be treated as the true ancient reading. A clear enunciation of the case for reading προσήσαν was put forward by Cobet, who referred to the following rule for classical Attic: “ἡα, non ἡρχόμην”.\textsuperscript{9} Some years later, Cobet accepted his own restitution of the Pollux reading into the text, and began citing 4.121.1 as ἰδίᾳ δὲ ἐταινίουν τε καὶ προσήσαν ἐπερ ἀθλητῇ.\textsuperscript{10} This solution was favoured by Wilamowitz.\textsuperscript{11} Liberman has recently put forward renewed support for the restitution of προσήσαν into the text.\textsuperscript{12}

It is certain that προσήρχοντο is not the standard Attic prose form of the imperfect of προσέρχομαι. With the sole exception of Thucydides 4.121.1, this form of the imperfect of προσέρχομαι is not found again until its appearance in the New Testament, and then becomes common in later Greek. In Attic inscriptions, the form is not attested until the second century AD, where one first finds κατήρχοντο (if rightly reconstructed).\textsuperscript{13}

The notion that Thucydides might not have used the proper Attic conjugation of the imperfect seems rather unlikely. The manuscripts of Thucydides have the Attic forms of the imperfect elsewhere: e.g. προσῆσαν at 2.47.4; 2.81.3; 2.81.4; and 8.66.5. Moreover, as several scholars have observed, another un-Attic verb form at 4.120.1, ἐπήρχοντο, is probably the result of similar corruption, unless it is an interpolation which should be removed altogether.\textsuperscript{14} After Thucydides, the next most secure appearance of ἐπήρχοντο is not until P.Oxy. XLI 3003.10 (‘Homeric Narratives’, assigned to the 2nd c. AD by Parsons). Other Attic texts

\begin{enumerate}
\item Elmsley 1813, 68. Later, Poppo 1829, 231, and Boehme 1862, 180, credited Elmsley with noticing this first. For a slightly expanded list of non-Attic forms in classical authors based on Elmsley’s discussion, see Blyades 1899, 78. In Kontos 1909, 195-208, there is a complete overview of the forms of ἔρχομαι and εἶμι in the Attic dialect with a summary of older scholarship (see 203 on Th. 4.120.1 and 4.121.1).
\item Rutherford 1881, 107.
\item Rutherford 1889, 132.
\item Cobet 1858, 827.
\item Cobet 1862, 111.
\item Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1915, 617 (= 1969, 374).
\item Liberman 2020, 676.
\item Threatte 1996, 480 and 639, citing κατήρχοντο (\textit{Hesperia} 13 [1937], 108 no. 22, line 5, post 131 AD).
\item Cobet 1858, 425; Rutherford 1881, 107-108; van Herwerden 1904, 90; von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1915, 617 (= 1969, 374).
\end{enumerate}
conjugate the imperfect from ἐπήσα, and this is what we find everywhere else in Thucydidean manuscripts: e.g. ἐπῆσαν at 2.49.3; 2.65.11; 3.11.4; 4.33.1; 4.43.3, 4.44.3; 4.96.1; 5.65.2; 5.72.4; and 6.31.6.

The form προσήρχοντο at 4.121.1 could on the above grounds be explained as an intrusive anomaly from a later period, of a kind not unknown in Thucydides, where an Attic form is supplanted by a normalized variant. At 1.82.2, for instance, the correct Attic form πεφαρμένοι was displaced by non-Attic πεφαρμένοι.15

This evidence related to the Attic formation of the imperfect of προσέρχομαι ought to be taken into account, and would strongly permit a future editor to reject προσήρχοντο and print προσῆσαν.16 An editor who still wished to keep προσήρχοντο would have to give a valid reason for printing an unusual form, when a safe alternative is already handed down by the indirect tradition in Pollux.

3 A New Explanation of the Manuscript Reading

The evidence presented above all seems straightforward. There is, however, cause for doubt. If one wished to retain προσήρχοντο, there is a different, and so far overlooked, justification for doing so. To the best of my knowledge, this has not yet been suggested before, at least not in print.

The verb could be explained as a poetic form of the imperfect of προσέρχομαι: compare Pi. O. 9.93 S.-M., where one finds the imperfect διήρχετο (διέρχομαι).17 In Attic, the imperfect of διέρχομαι is conjugated from διῄειν, but Pindar’s text shows that a different inflection of the imperfect was possible. The same point obviously applies also to the form at 4.120.1 (ἐπήρχοντο), unless that is an interpolation.

Thucydides might have chosen to use a form of inflection known to him from poetry, rather than the normal Attic form. This interpretation of προσήρχοντο cannot be completely ruled out for the Old Attic dialect of Thucydides, which allowed for more archaic and poetic language.18 In later poetry we find

15  Theodoridis 2012, 413-414.
16  Liberman 2020, 676.
17  This form of the imperfect of διέρχομαι has not been queried by Pindaric editors or commentators, and no variants occur in the manuscripts. After Pindar, it does not appear again until the 1st/2nd c. AD.
18  On poetic vocabulary in Thucydides, see Poppo 1821, 251-255; Hesse 1877, 17; Wichmann 1878, 16-17; Ehler 1910, 43; Dover 1973, 12. On verb forms in Thucydides differing from those in standard Attic literature and inscriptions, see Diener 1889, 2-8.
ἐπήρχετο (Q.S. 9.160) and διηρχόμην (Nicet. Eugen. 3.136).\(^1\)\(^9\) Hippocrates also has ἀνήρχετο (Epid. 7.1.35 Littré, if not inauthentic). Old Attic is thought to preserve traces of Ionic.\(^2\)\(^0\)

The poetic imperfect will have been used to elevate the language of the passage about Brasidas, which is heroic and poetic in its presentation and subject matter.\(^2\)\(^1\) The ancient literary critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus commented that Thucydidestw as a style which mixed elements of prose and verse,\(^2\)\(^2\) and Marcellinus claimed that Thucydidestw often used poetic words and metaphors because of his elevated diction (διὰ γ᾽ ὁυν τὸ ψηλὸν ὁ Θουκυδίδης καὶ ποιητικαῖς πολλάκις ἐχρῆσατο λέξει καὶ μεταφοραῖς τισίν), and that the manner of Thucydidestw's writing was poetical (τὸ εἶδος τῆς συγγραφῆς ... ποιητικῆς).\(^2\)\(^3\) It is fitting that Pindar supplies the parallel form διήρχετο. In ancient scholarship, Thucydidestw was regarded as an imitator of Pindar,\(^2\)\(^4\) and \(O. \ 9.93\) shares with Th. 4.121.1 a similar athletic scenario: there the victor went through (διήρχετο) the circle of celebrating spectators.

The leading objection to this idea is that it is not obvious why a poetic form would be used at 4.120.1 (ἐπήρχοντο) and 4.121.1 (προσήρχοντο), but the usual Attic form προσήρχομαι everywhere else. As it stands, then, this explanation of προσήρχοντο is worth considering but not completely convincing. It does mean that one would have a reason to keep προσήρχοντο, printed with a reference in the apparatus given to διήρχετο (Pi. \(O. \ 9.93\)). There is some overlap in the imperfects of προσέρχομαι and προσάρχομαι, and this might be one source of

---

19 Struve 1854, 53.
20 Struve 1854, 53; but Epid. 7 is now often considered inauthentic. On the relation of Old Attic to Ionic, see the detailed material in Smyth 1894, 66-73, as well as the more recent comments in Colvin 2008, 61 (“Thucydidestw is writing in ‘international’ or expanded Attic: i.e. a form of Attic much influenced by the lexicon and innovative morphology of Ionic prose”), and Horrocks 2003, 68, 73. Ancient scholars believed that Old Attic was influenced by Ionic (for the collected testimonia, see Smyth 1894, 66).
21 Hornblower 2004, 47 n. 191, suggested that Thucydidestw's presentation of Brasidas is Homeric and poetic, citing the detailed study in Howie 2005. On poetry in Thucydidestw, see Jung 1991. Variation (μεταβολή) of linguistic form in Thucydidestw is the first category of style discussed in Ros 1938.
22 D.H. Amm. 2.2.
23 Marcell. Vita Thucydidis 41.
24 The scholia mention Thucydidestw's imitation of Pindar, cf. Σ Th. 4.135.2: ἵστεν ὃτι εἰς τὸ καυμάτι τῆς φιάσκου Θουκυδίδης Αἰσχύλον καὶ Πινδάρον ἐμιμήσατα. On the text of the scholia, see Schwabe 1881, 72, 143, connecting it with the related comment in Marcell. Vita Thucydidis 35; ἵστεν ὃ Θουκυδίδης εἰς τὴν ἁρμονίαν Ὀμήρου, Πινδάρου δὲ εἰς τὸ μεγάλος καὶ ψηλὸν τοῦ χαρακτῆρος. There is discussion of these passages in Hornblower 2004, 257.
confusion (as Valckenaer warned). Thucydides might have mixed conjugations of the imperfects of these verbs—alternating between prosaic and poetic inflections.

A future editor is therefore faced with a simple set of choices. The issue is whether to print poetic προσήρχοντο or change it to the Attic form προσήσαν. That is a matter of judgement. The idea that Thucydides might have elected to use elevated poetic forms ἐπήρχοντο (4.120.1) and προσήρχοντο (4.121.1) is intriguing but might not appeal to all scholars. In some ways, it is surprising that no previous editor has printed προσήσαν.

4 Problems with Herbst’s Solution: Why προσήρχοντο Cannot Be a Form of προσάρχομαι

An alternative solution has been suggested, namely that προσήρχοντο belongs to a verb other than προσάρχομαι.

In an old and now neglected piece of commentary, Bauer argued that προσήρχοντο falls flat in the context, and that it could perhaps be corrected to προ-ήρχοντο, προκατήρχοντο, or προενήρχοντο, on the grounds that Thucydides might be referring here to the custom of offering first-fruits: “primitias, praecipuas partes ei offerebant, quasi hero, aut regi, libabant, offerebant de epulis festis et sacris: primum et praecipue inuitatum coebant?”. Over half a century later, when Herbst put forward his influential interpretation of this passage, he probably had Bauer’s idea in mind when he proposed reading προσήρχοντο as an imperfect derived, not from προσέρχομαι, but rather from a different verb, προσάρχομαι, which he took to mean ‘offer first-fruits’. This proposal has since found considerable favour.

An active verb προσάρχειν does exist. It is a hapax and has been ignored by modern editors of dictionaries; its meaning is probably ‘to hold one office in addition to another’ or ‘to hold in cumulation’. If an active form is attested, the possibility that a middle form existed cannot be ruled out entirely; but

25 Valckenaer 1815, 452: “Ap. Atticos ab ἔρχομαι ductum ἡρχόμην, ἡρχου, ἡρχετο rarissime inueniatur ... nempe ne confunderetur cum alio imperfecto, ἡρχόμην, ab ἄρχομαι formato”.
26 Gottleber, Bauer, and Beck 1790, 675.
27 Herbst 1857, 7-10; 1892, 111-116.
28 See the detailed argument in support of Herbst’s interpretation in Meyer 1970, 15-17. Significantly, the interpretation of Herbst was accepted in the famous etymological work of Curtius 1873, 189.
evidence for the middle form presents difficulties. The most promising parallel is at Pl. *Thet.* 168c3, where the manuscripts have the form προσηρξάμην. This has been treated as corrupt by most modern editors and commentators.30 However, scholars of an older generation despised it less. In his study of the verb ἄρχομαι and its etymological relatives, Buttmann explained προσηρξά-μην in this way: “[d]er bildliche Ausdruck von einer Weihe ist klar; durch das eigentlich entbehrliche πρός wird die Beziehung derselben auf die Person nur noch deutlicher gemacht”.31 Dissen also defended the usage of προσηρξάμην by comparing *h.Ap.* 124-125, ἀλλὰ Θέμις νέκταρ τε καὶ ἀμβροσίην ἐρατεινὴν | ἀθανά-τησιν χερσὶν ἐπήρξατο.32 Neither Buttmann nor Dissen made any connection between προσηρξάμην in Plato and προσήρχοντο in Thucydides, and so they presumably took the latter to be from προσέρχομαι, like other scholars writing on the subject before Herbst.33

The evidence for προσάρχομαι seems inconclusive. The Platonic passage obviously cannot be used as certain proof for Herbst’s explanation of προσήρχοντο as a form of προσάρχομαι, but nor is it so corrupt that (as Hornblower and others supposed)34 it can be dismissed from consideration outright. The fact is that, even if the verb προσάρχομαι were proven to exist, this would not at all make it certain that it offers the right explanation for the Thucydidean passage. The question of the existence of the verb προσάρχομαι and the solution to the Thucydidean crux are separate matters of individual interest, and should not be thought to provide a mutual solution for one another.35 The verb in Plato, if not corrupt, supplies the only parallel for the middle form of the verb in the work of a classical author. Other alleged instances come from the Byzantine period, but these are probably orthographic variants of προσέρχομαι.

---

31 Buttmann 1818, 103. Buttmann took it to have the same sense as ἐπάρχομαι. See further Schneider 1819, 388; Passow 1852, 1172a, s.v. προσάρχομαι; Herbst 1857, 9. There is a critical discussion of Buttmann’s argument in Moraitis 1913, 222. After Buttmann, Gardikas 1912, 87, also regarded προσέρχομαι and ἐπέρχομαι as more or less synonymous (in opposition to ἀπέρχομαι).
32 Dissen 1839, 208.
33 Otherwise προσήρχοντο at 4.121.1 would surely have been mentioned in Buttmann 1818, 103, alongside ἄρχομαι, ἐπάρχομαι, κατάρχομαι, ἀπάρχομαι, and the disputed Platonic instance of προσάρχομαι.
34 See, for instance, Heindorf 1829, 346-347; Moraitis 1913, 222; Hornblower 1996, 383; Panegyres 2019, 868.
35 It would be erroneous to accept Herbst’s proposal simply because such a verb existed. If the verb did exist, this would only make our Thucydidean passage even more prone to confusion in the textual tradition.
Herbst’s proposal is therefore based on an insecure foundation. It cannot be proven right or wrong, and so must be regarded as a presently unverifiable conjecture. The leading objection to his case comes from the earliest ancient grammatical testimonia to the text of 4.121.1, where προσήρχοντο is treated as if from the verb προσέρχομαι. In the citation in the second-century work of Pollux, ἑταίριον τε καὶ προσῆκον ὡσπερ ἅλλη (3.152 = vol. 1, 202.6-8 Bethe), the reading προσῆκον cannot have come about except by association with προσέρχομαι. It is also relevant that, in the fifth century, Priscian listed the Thucydidean phrase alongside other verbs with the sense ‘approach’, where we read: Attici ‘προσέρχονται αὐτῷ’ καὶ ‘αὐτὸν’ καὶ ‘πρὸς αὐτὸν’. Δημοσθένης κατὰ Άισχίνου τοῖς μὲν ὅν ἄλλοι, ὅσοι πρὸς τὰ κοινὰ δικαίως προσέρχονται. Θουκυδιδῆς προσήρχοντο ὡς ἅλλη (37 Terentius in Andria: adeon ad eum? Virgilius in X: regem adit et regi meminat nomenque genusque. Idem in bucolico: adit oppida pastor. Aristomenes βοηθοῖς ἐπειδὴ τοὺς πρυτάνεις προσήλθομεν. Terentius in Phormione: adi magistratus (18.277 = vol. 2, 353.13-22 Hertz). There are, therefore, strong grounds for thinking that an ancient scholarly tradition held προσήρχοντο at 4.121.1 to mean ‘they approached’ or ‘they came up to’. If we adopt the proposal of Herbst, then the ancient variant transmitted in Pollux, προσῆκον, makes no sense at all.

5 The Meaning of the Verb: A Perceived Problem

As προσέρχομαι is the correct verb, no matter whether one prints προσήρχοντο or προσῆκον, the question to ask is why it is used in this particular context. Various scholars have disagreed over this point, and some clarity is needed.

To the best of my knowledge, Bauer was the first to cast doubt on the appropriateness of the meaning of προσέρχομαι at 4.121.1: “nam profecto friget illud

---

36 Panegyres 2019, 868, found προσαρχήμενος in Georgius Pachymeres, De Andronico Palaeologo 1.32 Bekker, where Bekker regarded the form and meaning as uncertain (see Bekker 1835, 32), and, following Possino 1729, 21, printed προσαρφύζομενος. Another instance looks like a misprint: Acta S. Hypatii Abb. in Rufianis 39 (Henschen and Papebroch 1867, 264): ei σὺν δ’ Κύριος ἀπαίτει τὴν πίστιν τοῦ προσαρχήμενον, with the translation si enim Dominus postuluit fidem ab ipsis qui venebant ad se.

37 For the text of Priscian’s citation of 4.121.1, Kreil 1820, 153, suggested reading ὡς (eis) ἅλλητιν for ὡς ἅλλητιν, but this contradicts the very rule of Attic usage referred to by Priscian. Perhaps read ὡς (πρὸς) ἅλλητιν, if any change is necessary (compare Arist. HA 620.32-33, τὰ δὲ μικρὰ ἰχθύδια προσέρχονται ὡς πρὸς φυκία ἀφ’ ὧν τρέφονται, with Aubert and Wimmer 1868, 268).
προσήρχομαι". Not long afterwards, Poppo remarked in a review that προσήρχομαι is here used “in einem besonderen Sinne”, but without elaborating. Later on, Herbst brought up the same issue as Bauer: “Wer kann sich dabei beruhigen, den Schriftsteller sagen zu lassen ‘wie einen Hieroniken schmückten sie den Brasidas und gingen zu ihm’?”. Hornblower, rejecting Herbst’s ‘offer first-fruits’ solution, returned to “the idea of going up to or approaching an athlete”. Seemingly not entirely content with this basic meaning, Hornblower then went further: “[c]ontained here is ... the idea of aduentus i.e. of going out to greet a homecoming athlete”. This has convinced some scholars, but not others.

Clearly, there is some uncertainty and disagreement about the meaning of the verb προσέρχομαι in the context of Th. 4.121.1. This is probably the main reason why some scholars decided to emend the text. Bauer offered προήρχοντο, προκατήρχοντο, and προενήρχοντο. Rutherford deleted τε καὶ προσήρχοντο, arguing that it was “a fairly early adscript to ἐταινίουν”. Spratt suggested προσίκοντο, and Richards προσηύχοντο.

In the following pages, an attempt is made to defend the presence of the verbum adeundi προσέρχομαι.

6 The verbum adeundi in Athletic Contexts

Th. 4.121.1 is one of a group of rare passages in which military or political leaders are celebrated as if they were victors in agonistic contests, crowned with wreaths and decked with flowers and ribbons (compare Paus. 4.16.4; X. HG 5.1.3; Plu. Per. 28.5; Nep. Alc. 6.3; Arr. An. 6.13, Ind. 42.8; Demochares ap. Ath. 6.253b-d = BNJ 75 F 9). There is no doubt that Thucydides’ portrayal of Brasidas falls...
within the tradition of leaders being celebrated in the manner of victorious athletes. This is the context in which the verbum adeundi προσέρχομαι should be interpreted, for such a verb is found in other descriptions of crowds honouring athletic victors.

In a study of how athletic victors of the classical period were celebrated by crowds, Jüthner reached the following conclusions. Immediately after the competition, the victor was crowned and proclaimed in an official ceremony. Then, members of the crowd would rush forward and surround the winner, shaking his hands, kissing him, and decorating him with their own wreaths and ribbons (these were in addition to the official crown). Finally, the celebration continued outside the stadium, where the crowd sometimes lifted the victor on their shoulders and threw flowers and ribbons at him over and over again.

These facts are demonstrated by several examples. In another passage of Thucydides, there is a description of how the Lacedaemonian Lichas, son of Arcesilaus, rushed onto the course to tie a ribbon on the charioteer in celebration when his own chariot won the race: προελθὼν εἰς τὸν ἀγῶνα ἀνέδησε τὸν ἴμιοχον, βουλόμενος δηλώσαι ὅτι ἑαυτοῦ ᾤν τὸ ἄρμα (5.50.4). The best contemporary literary parallels are in Pindar, where the victors find themselves encircled by cheering crowds.

Members of the crowd obviously had to approach victors after the competition in order to be able to surround them and get close enough to touch or kiss them, and unsurprisingly προσέρχομαι, or close equivalents, appear in some of these passages: e.g. προσέλθων (Th. 5.50.4), prosequebantur (Nep. Alc. 6.3), adire (Liv. 33.33), συντρέχοντες ... προσίοντες ... προσελθεῖν (Plu. Alc. 3–4), ἐπέλαζον (Arr. An. 6.13). A vase which Jüthner thought closely relevant to Th. 4.121.1 is one

50 Jüthner 1898.
51 Evidence in Jüthner 1898, 42-43. Some of the relevant material is also covered in Baehler 1822, 233, and Bötticher 1853, 9-10.
52 The story is also mentioned in Paus. 6.2.2: τὸν δὲ ἴμιοχον νικήσαντα ἀνέδησεν αὐτὸς ταξιά.
53 O. 9.91-93: φώτας δ᾽ ἐξυρεπεῖ δόλω | ἀπτωτὶ δαμάσσαις διήρχετο | κύκλων δοσά βοῖς: P. 9.121-125: ἐνθ᾽ Ἀλεξίδαμος, ἐπεὶ φύεται λαιψήραν δρόμουν, | παρθένοις κεδνὰν χειρὶ χειρὸς ἔλων | ἐμεῖν ἐπετύμ- ται Νομάδων δι᾽ ἐμιλόν. | πολλὰ μὲν κεῖνοι δικῶν | φωλλὰ ἐπι καὶ στεφάνως πολλὰ δὲ πρόσθεν πτερὰ δέκα νικάν; and P. 4.239-242: πρὸς δ᾽ ἐταῖροι καρτεροὶ καρπεῖον ἀνδρὰ φίλας | ἔπελαζον χειρας, στεφάνωις τὰ τί νος ἐρέπτον, μελίχυς το τό λόγος | ἀγαπάζοντ᾽. The last example is cited by most old commentators, beginning with Wasse and Duker 1731, 308. An anonymous epigram gives an especially vivid picture of this type of scene, where a celebrant kisses the victor's bloodied face: πυγμῇ νικήσαντα τὸν Ἄντικλεος Μενέχαρον | λημνίσκοις μαλακοῖς ἐστεφάνωσα δέκα, | καὶ τρισσῶς ἐφίλησα πεφυρμένον αἵματι πολλὰ. | ἀλλ᾽ ἐμοὶ σμύρνης | κείνο μελιχρύστερον (AP 123). The epigram was cited in connection with Th. 4.121.1 in Nicolai 1739, 18.
in which two young men in cloaks, both carrying tainiai, approach a crowned ephebe already holding tainiai as a reward for his athletic victory (Fig. 1).54

7 The verb adeundi in Contexts of Liberation

Hornblower suggested that 4.121.1 conveys the idea “of going out to greet a homecoming athlete”.55 One does sometimes find passages in which an individual returns home triumphantly from long trials abroad and receives celebrations usually bestowed on athletes (E. El. 870-873; Paus. 4.16.4; Plu. Alc. 3-4, Per. 4-5; Opp. H. 1.197-200). However, an important distinction should be made. Skione was not the home of Brasidas, and so 4.121.1, if treated as a homecoming celebration, would be anomalous among the other passages where homecoming leaders or victors are celebrated.

One might go so far as to say that the idea of homecoming in fact undercuts the significance of 4.121.1. It is surely more remarkable for a foreigner such as Brasidas to be greeted in the way Skionaians greet him. Gomme is one of the few commentators to grasp this fascinating point about Brasidas: “curiously almost the only other instance from the fifth century, of a man being enthusiastically received in another state, was Themistokles in Sparta” (see Hdt. 8.124.3; Th. 1.74.1, 1.91.1; Plu. Them. 17.2-3).56 In other words, Hornblower’s explanation of the use of the verb (“going out to greet a homecoming athlete”) needs revision. The verb is instead used in the context of going out to greet a liberator. A couple of examples will suffice for illustration.

In poetry, one example is the reception given to Theseus after capturing the Marathonian bull. Callimachus portrays how the countryfolk threw flowers on Theseus (βάλλον) and surrounded him on all sides (ἐκυκλώσαν) το περισταδόν, suppl. Gomperz), and then the women crowned him with girdles, στόρνῃ σιν ἀνέστεφον (Hec. fr. 260.11-15 Pf. = fr. 69.11-15 Hollis).57

In historical texts, there is also a parallel of some interest. Long ago, in a note on Th. 4.121.1, Nicolai noticed that a reception similar to that given to Brasidas was put on for T. Quinctius Flamininus at the Isthmian games of 196 BC, when

54 Jüthner 1898,42; Gargiulo 1845, plate 71. The vase was found at Nola, and existed in a private collection in Russia at the time when Gargiulo was writing; the original cannot be located. See also Stephani 1877, 134-135.
56 Gomme 1956, 610.
57 I owe this example to the kindness of Gauthier Liberman.
he was hailed by the excited crowd as the saviour of Greece. Flamininus, like Brasidas, was celebrated in the manner of an athlete, and made into the object of a cult. These may well be the only surviving texts closely describing how a (foreign) liberator was honoured by the people of the city-states of Hellas.

In Th. 4.121.1, the emphasis on liberation is made clear by Thucydides through the use of verbal repetition. At 4.108.2 it is said that Brasidas had pronounced his intention to free Hellas (ὁ γὰρ Βρασίδας … ἐν τοίς λόγοις πανταχοῦ ἐδήλου ὡς ἐλευθερώσων τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐκπεμθείη). The expression ἐλευθερώσων τὴν Ἑλλάδα is surely what is echoed again at 4.121.1 in καὶ τὸν Βρασίδαν τά τ᾽ ἄλλα καλῶς ἐδέξαντο καὶ δημοσίᾳ μὲν χρυσῷ στεφάνῳ ἀνέδησαν ὡς ἐλευθεροῦντα τὴν Ἑλλάδα. The liberation of Hellas was a slogan of the Spartans generally and of Brasidas in particular, and Thucydides here has the people of Skione repeat this propaganda earlier uttered from the mouth of Brasidas. There is then a good case for thinking that the celebrations the people of Skione give to Brasidas were those typically paid to a victorious liberator qua victorious athlete. The rarity of the occasion lies in the fact that Brasidas was a foreigner, and it is otherwise remarkable to find such a person celebrated as if he were returning home as a victor.
The idea that the verbum adeundi at 4.121.1 conveys a sense of religious adoration was proposed long ago by Stephanus: “peculiari autem signif. dicuntur qui supplices accedunt, ut cum ad orandum Deum uenimus ... nec male fortasse haec quoque Thuc. addiderim 4,121 ἰδίᾳ δὲ, ἐταινίουν τε, καὶ προσήρχοντο ὡσπερ ἀθλητῇ, suspicor enim quamdam divini honoris signif. τῷ προσέρχεσθαι hic includi”.64 Gottleber later picked up the same idea, and for the religious sense of the verb compared Aristides. Or. 29,11 Keil, ὥσπερ τοίς θεοῖς.65

The same suggestion and example were repeated by some later commentators, but not pursued further. Herbst, for instance, mentioned the idea only to cast doubt on it: “oder hätte προσήσαν etwa einen speciellen, gottesdienstlichen Sinn, durch den sich die nötigste Steigerung ergäbe? Solchen Sinn hat bis jetzt niemand für προσέρχομαι oder προσίέναι nachgewiesen, auch Abresch zu dieser Stelle nicht durch Hinweisung auf Aristides, wodurch sich nichts anderes erweist als das selbstverständliche, dass das Hinantreten an die Altäre der Götter auch durch προσίέναι ausgedrückt werden könne”.66

The evidence for προσέρχομαι in a devotional sense towards human beings is limited. Sometimes it is found in combination with verbs of reverence: Callisthenes made the mistake of going up to Alexander without paying obeisance to him (προσελθόντα ἐθέλειν φιλῆσαι οὐ προσκυνήσαντα, Arr. An. 4.12.4), and Tiridates came up to and worshipped the images of Nero (προσῆλθέ τε αὐταῖς καὶ προσεκύνησεν, D.C. 62.23.3). A better example unhappily involves only a synonym. When the soldiers saw that Alexander was still alive, they drew near to him (ἐπέλαζον), touching his hands and knees and showering him with ταινίαι and flowers (Arr. An. 6.13).67 The meaning is well established for Latin adire, which sometimes referred to greeting a leader in reverence (TLL 1.621.7), and the same meaning has been carefully studied in biblical texts for προσέρχομαι, where the verb has cultic undertones.68 Otherwise, the verbum adeundi usually appears in cases where the god(s) or temple(s) are being approached.69

64 See the Thesaurus Graecae Linguae VII, 1912CD, s.v. προσέρχομαι.
65 Gottleber, Bauer, and Beck 1790, 675.
66 Herbst 1857, 7.
67 Stephani 1877, 135; Behm 1911, 114.
68 See Kingsbury 1981, 76: “in forty-nine instances Matthew utilizes the verb proserchomai, which in the LXX is cultic in coloration and in Josephus is used of stepping before a king, in order to portray persons as approaching Jesus with the same reverence that would be due to a deity or king”. For a full study of this usage in the New Testament, consult now Boscolo 2009.
69 Ar. An. 852-855: συμπαρανέσας ἔχω | προσόδια μεγάλα σεμνὰ προσίεναι θεοῖν, ἃμν ἐν προ- σέτι χάριτος ἑνεῖχα προβατόν τι δύειν; Timae. FGrHist 555 F146b (= Tz. ad Lycothronem
This material is not particularly convincing, and there is a dearth of evidence for this sense of the verb in relation to human beings (rather than gods) in literature of the classical period.

If the verb at 4.121.1 had some religious significance, this is not expressed explicitly by the verb itself (προσέρχομαι never has the intrinsic sense ‘revere’), but only arises from the use of the verb in a context conducive to this reading. If προσήρχοντο reflects religious devotion on the part of the people of Skione, it could anticipate the well known fact that Brasidas was to be worshipped as an object of cult at Amphipolis after his death.\(^70\) Aristotle mentions τὸ θυεῖν Βρασίδα (EN 1134b23), and Aristides says: Ἀμφιπολῖται Βρασίδα θύειν ἥξουν ὡς ἧρωι καὶ οἰκιστῇ, ὅτι αὐτοὺς Ἀθηναίων ἀπέστησεν (12.95).\(^71\) In Sparta there was a τάφος κενὸς for Brasidas (Paus. 4.14.1).\(^72\) Moreover, as we saw above, Brasidas was called σωτήρ (5.11.1).\(^73\)

A victorious athlete was indeed sometimes regarded as a divine figure. A famous illustration of this concept is found in Empedocles DK 31: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὑμῖν θεὸν ἄμβροτον, οὐκέτι θνητόν, | πωλεῖ ῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικα, | ταινίαις τε περιστεπτὸς στέφεσίν τε θαλείοις.\(^74\) The honours accorded to Brasidas, the wreathes and ταινίαι, were themselves part of common religious worship.\(^75\)

Celebrations accorded to athletes naturally also had some inherent religious significance, as the festivals at which such competitions were held were sacred. Some athletes were adulated as heroes or divine figures.\(^76\)

The verb at 4.121.1 would serve to paint a vivid picture of the ecstatic manner in which the Skionaians displayed their devotion to Brasidas, as if he were heroic or divine. For a similar case of someone being crowned with a golden crown and honoured as a hero after death, see D.L. 5.91: Ἡρακλείδης εἰ δέ τινες ἐκφύγοιεν, ἀνελθοῦσι τῇ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς ἱερᾶς ἐστὶν, ἐσαιρον αὐτὸ καὶ ἔραινον, τῇ δὲ ἑως ὄντες προσήρχοντα ποιήσας τούτου ἱεροῦ ἐξήρχονται, ἐπὶ μὴ γίνεται (compare Apollod. 2.21: καὶ τῇ μὲν θεᾷ οὐ προσήρχοντο, τῷ δὲ ἱερῷ ἐσαιρόν τε καὶ ἔραινον); Men. Dyskolos, 433 Arnott: Πανός· σιωπῇ, φασί, τούτῳ τῷ θεῷ | οὐ δεῖ προσιέναι; Poll. 1.25 (vol. I, 7 Bethe): δεὶ δὲ προσελεύσεται καὶ ἱεροῖς παλαιοῖς, ἐπὶ τῇ γνώμῃ, ὅτι ἱεροῖς προσελεύσεται καὶ ἱεροῖς παλαιοῖς.\(^77\)

\(^{1141}\): εἰ δὲ τινες ἐκφύγοιεν, ἀνελθοῦσι τῇ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς ἱερᾶς ἐστὶν, ἐσαιρον αὐτὸ καὶ ἔραινον, τῇ δὲ ἑως ὄντες προσήρχοντα ποιήσας τούτου ἱεροῦ ἐξήρχονται, ἐπὶ μὴ γίνεται (compare Apollod. 2.21: καὶ τῇ μὲν θεᾷ οὐ προσήρχοντο, τῷ δὲ ἱερῷ ἐσαιρόν τε καὶ ἔραινον); Men. Dyskolos, 433 Arnott: Πανός· σιωπῇ, φασί, τούτῳ τῷ θεῷ | οὐ δεῖ προσιέναι; Poll. 1.25 (vol. I, 7 Bethe): δεὶ δὲ προσελεύσεται καὶ ἱεροῖς παλαιοῖς, ἐπὶ τῇ γνώμῃ, ὅτι ἱεροῖς προσελεύσεται καὶ ἱεροῖς παλαιοῖς.

\(^{70}\) Hornblower 1996, 449.
\(^{71}\) Baege 1913, 209-210; Leschhorn 1984, 153-155.
\(^{72}\) Wide 1893, 358; Baege 1913, 210.
\(^{73}\) In his study of the use of the term σωτήρ before Christianity, Moehlmann 1920, 35, observed that “the earliest known instance in which the title soter is applied to historical persons is that of the Spartan Brasidas”.
\(^{74}\) As noted by Muretus 1830, 183; Hornblower 2004, 200.
\(^{75}\) On crowns, see Karikoulas 1880. On ταινίαι, see Pley 1911.
\(^{76}\) See Fontenrose 1968.
ο Εὐθύφρονος χρυσῷ στεφάνῳ στεφανωθείη πρὸς αὐτῶν, ἀποθανὼν δὲ ὡς ἥρως τιμῶτο. The idea that saving a city is an act worthy of the divine is mentioned by Cicero: neque enim est ualla res, in qua propius ad deorum numen virtus accedat humana, quam ciuitatis aut condere nouas aut conservare tam conditas (Rep. 1.12).

9 The Scene

The language of Thucydides in 4.121.1 ought not to give the impression that all the people came up at one and the same time. Brasidas could be publicly crowned only once, hence the aorist in χρυσῷ στεφάνῳ ἀνέδησαν ὡς ἐλευθεροῦντα τὴν Ἑλλάδα. It is the golden crown given to someone whom the people came to view as ἥρως and σωτήρ. In the locution ἀναδῆσαι ὡς, the alleged reason for the celebration is given: ὡς combined with a participle, ἐλευθεροῦντα τὴν Ἑλλάδα, reflects the judgement of the Skionaians. The following imperfects, ἐταινίουν and προσήρχοντο, refer to the continual celebrations bestowed on him by various individual citizens of Skione after the official ceremony of crowning. The imperfects might therefore be of the so-called iterative type, so one could translate ἐταινίουν τε καὶ προσήρχοντο ὡςπερ ἀθλητῇ as ‘they kept throwing garlands and going up to him’, or ‘they were repeatedly throwing garlands and going up to him’. For the notion of honouring an individual with tainiai (ἐταινίουν) as if he were someone other than who he really is, compare ἀνέδουν καὶ ταινίαις ὥσπερ ἀθλητὴν νικηφόρον (Plu. Per. 28.5), ταινίαις υμᾶς ἀναδοῦμεν, ὡς εὐεργέτας, δευτέρους οἰκιστὰς ὀνομάζοντες, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ πλέον ἐπάθδοντες (Firmus Caesariensis, Ep. 17).

The sequence ἐταινίουν τε καὶ προσήρχοντο is surprising and demands special comment. The best explanation is that of Liberman, who suggested that this is an example of the figure of hysterologia, and compared σὺ τοι Ἀχαιεσκεϊμόνιοι ἀπὸ τού ὦδατος πρὸς τὸ Ἡράκλειον πάλιν ἐσ το αὐτό στρατόπεδον ἱόντες ὃργως δί’ ὄλγου τούς ἔναντίους ἐν τάξει τε ἡθὴ πάντας καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ λόφου πρεσιληθύτης (5.66.1).
The expected sequence of verbs has been reversed in order to alert the reader more vividly to the excitement of the Skionaian crowd.82

10 Conclusion

Thucydides 4.121.1 has been one of the most widely discussed textual problems in scholarship on the author. Even so, a close study of the problem has still been able to yield new results. This should be encouraging for those who continue to work on the text of Thucydides, because other problems might bear similar fruit. Of course, by paying attention to a single word in a single passage it is possible to reach conclusions that have consequences not only for the ekdosis of the text but also for its exegesis.

The results of this investigation can be summarised in the form of a critical text with double apparatus:

4.121.1. καὶ τὸν Βρασίδαν τὰ τ’ ἄλλα καλῶς ἐδέξαντο καὶ δημοσίᾳ μὲν χρυσῷ στεφάνῳ ἀνέδησαν ὡς ἐλευθεροῦντα τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἵδια δὲ ἐταινίουν τε καὶ προσήρχοντο ὡςπερ ἀθλητή.

ὡς … Ἑλλάδα cf. Βρασίδας … ἐλευθερώσων τὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐκπεμφθείη 4.108.2 || ἐταινίου … ἀθλητή cf. ἐταινίουν τε καὶ προσήρχοντο ὡςπερ ἀθλητή] Poll. 3.152 (lectionem προσήρχαν probb. Cobet, Wilamowitz, Liberman et al. fort. recte), προσήρχοντο ως ἀθλητήν Prisc. 18.277, frequentauerunt Valla


The text should no longer be regarded as a crux. It merely requires a decision (worthy of debate) about whether to keep the poetic form προσήρχοντο or adopt the Attic form προσήσαν.

The broader interpretation of the passage, beyond the small details, deserves final comment. There could be a hint of tragic irony in this over-excited and over-joyful scene. Only a few years later, in 421, the city of Skione was captured by Athens, its citizens killed or enslaved, and handed over to the rule

---

82 Liberman 2017, 153: “Nous sommes peut-être là au cœur des intentions de Thucydide dans cette dialectique de la symétrie et de la dissymétrie: tenir le lecteur en éveil et le frapper”.

Hysterologie sehr selten”. The rarity of the figure in prose would make its use more effective and surprising to a reader.
of the Plataeans (5.32.1). Any reader, ancient or modern, who knows the final outcome of these events, could easily be repelled by the lack of self-control displayed by the Skionaians in this scene, and by their credulous and fawning acceptance of Spartan propaganda.83 It is a measure of Thucydides’ brilliance and subtlety to say nothing of this explicitly, but to leave readers to supply it for themselves.84

Bibliography


83 Gomme 1956, 619.
84 I am grateful to Professor Gauthier Liberman for corresponding with me about this problem and for his generously helpful comments on earlier drafts of the article. I also thank the two anonymous reviewers for their important criticisms and suggestions.


Classen, J. (1867). *Beobachtungen über den homerischen Sprachgebrauch.* Frankfurt am Main.


Moehlmann, C.H. (1920). The Combination Theos Soter as Explanation of the Primitive Christian Use of Soter as Title and Name of Jesus. Michigan.


Nicolai, J. (1698). Tractatus de phyllobolia, seu, flororum et ramorum sparsione in sacris et ciuiibus rebus usitatissima. Frankfurt am Main.

Nicolai, J. (1739). De lectu Christianorum, seu de ritibus ad sepulturam pertinentibus. Leiden.


