HELIODORUS AND PLUTARCH ON THE EVIL EYE

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THE VERBAL SIMILARITIES between Plutarch's *quaestio convivalis* on βασκανία (*Mor.* 680C–83B) and the explanation of the belief given by Calasiris in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* (3. 7–9) can be due to only one of two possible causes: either Heliodorus depends on Plutarch, or both depend on a common source.[1] The only extensive discussion of the matter is that of W. Capelle, who argued that Heliodorus does not follow Plutarch but that both authors draw on a common source, the historian Phylarchus.[2]

Capelle gave two reasons for thinking Plutarch was not Heliodorus' source: first, there is material in Heliodorus that Plutarch does not have; second, Heliodorus probably did not read works dealing with complicated scientific problems such as the *Quaestiones convivales*.[3] This latter judgment Capelle based on his low estimation of Heliodorus' intellectual and literary tastes.[4] For very much the same reason he rejected out of hand the possibility that Heliodorus had read Didymus, as he understood Rohde to have suggested.[5] Capelle gave a number of reasons to support his supposition that Phylarchus was the source whom both Plutarch and

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1. The similarity was noted but left unexplained by O. Jahn, *Über den Aberglauben des bösen Blicks bei den Alten,* Berichte der kgl. sächs. Gesell. der Wiss. zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Cl. 7 (Leipzig, 1855), p. 33; Dar.-Sag. 2 (1896): 983–84 (G. Lafaye); E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*[3] (Leipzig, 1914), p. 486, n. 2; B. Kötting, "Böser Blick," *RAC* 2 (1954): 477; Y. Yatromanalakis, "*Baskanos Eros:* Love and the Evil-Eye in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica,*" in *The Greek Novel A.D. 1–1985*, ed. R. Beaton (London, 1988), p. 201. Heliodorus dependent on Plutarch: G. Sandy, *Heliodorus* (Boston, 1982), p. 66; on Plutarch or a common source: R. M. Rattenbury and T. W. Lumb, eds., *Héliodore, Les "Éthiopiques,"* vol. 1 (Paris, 1934), p. 109, n. 1. The dating of Heliodorus is uncertain (for a survey of opinion, see T. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity* [Oxford, 1983], p. 249), but no one has suggested he precedes Plutarch (the earliest dating, that of E. Feuillatre, *Études sur les "Éthiopiques" d' Héliodore: Contribution à la connaissance du roman grec* [Paris, 1966], pp. 147–48, would place him in the reign of Hadrian; but Feuillatre has convinced few).

2. "Zwei Quellen des Heliodor," *RhM* 96 (1953): 175–80.

3. Ibid., p. 178.

4. Ibid., pp. 166–67. His indictment owes much to his conviction that Heliodorus was not a "real" Greek but a Hellenized Syrian from Semitic Emesa. Capelle had taken a similar line forty years earlier with Lucian and his Syrian background; see "Der Spötter von Samosata," *Sokrates* n.s. 2 (1914): 606–21, and cf. N. Holzberg, "Lucian and the Germans," in *The Uses of Greek and Latin: Historical Essays,* Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, vol. 16 (London, 1988), pp. 199–210. I owe this last reference to Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones.

5. "Zwei Quellen des Heliodor," p. 178, n. 25. This does not seem to have been Rohde's view; see *Der griechische Roman*[3], p. 486, n. 2, and below at n. 13.

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Heliodorus shared: Plutarch in fact cites Phylarchus (*FGrH* 81 F 179a) as the source of a story about the ability of the Tibii, a people who dwelt to the south of the Black Sea, to fascinate those on whom their gaze fell, whom their breath touched, or to whom they spoke (*Mor.* 680E); the description of the psychosomatic aspects of love (*Mor.* 681A–C = *Aethiop.* 3. 7) reflects Phylarchus' interests;[6] and a longer version of Plutarch's and Heliodorus' account of the χαραδριός (*Mor.* 681C = *Aethiop.* 3. 8) found in Aelian (*NA* 17. 13) a few pages after that author has several times cited Phylarchus as his authority (17. 5) suggests that Phylarchus was the source of the story about the χαραδριός as well.

Capelle also thought the source of what he took to be Phylarchus' materialistic account of the Evil Eye could not be Democritus, whose rationalistic explanation of βασκανία Gaius mentions at the end of Plutarch's *quaestio* (*Mor.* 682F–83A). His reason was that neither Plutarch nor Heliodorus refers to the εἴδωλα, which are the vehicle according to Democritus by which the Evil Eye transmits its maleficent force.[7]

I shall argue against Capelle that Phylarchus is not the common source of Plutarch and Heliodorus but that Plutarch's explanation is of his own devising, though inspired by Democritus, and that Heliodorus gets from Plutarch the idea of offering a scientific explanation of βασκανία. He is also indebted to Plutarch for some of his illustrative examples and for some details of phraseology. His explanation itself, however, is radically different from Plutarch's and incompatible with it; it is inspired by an air-borne theory of contagion such as Galen expounds. Because the illustrative examples drawn from Plutarch fit Plutarch's theory, not his own, Heliodorus' account is internally inconsistent. The internal inconsistency is probably not to be attributed so much to carelessness or misunderstanding, though these may both be factors, as to playfulness: Calasiris does not seriously put forward the theory; his purpose in advancing it is to dupe the gullible Charicles with a parade of high-flown medical and scientific talk, thereby causing him to think that his daughter is sick with βασκανία.

I. THE SOURCE OF PLUTARCH'S ACCOUNT

That Plutarch should have taken the story about the Tibii directly from Phylarchus is not in itself unlikely. He does after all make considerable use of Phylarchus in his *Agis and Cleomenes* and in his *Aratus*.[8] It is, however, a good deal harder to believe that his indebtedness to Phylarchus goes beyond the particular anecdote to include the rationalizing, materialistic explanation that he gives for the Evil Eye. Phylarchus' *Histories* do contain frequent digressions, some of an anecdotal nature,

6. Phylarchus did dwell inordinately on the theme of love, to judge from his fragments; cf. *FGrH* 81 F 21, 24, 30, 32, 34, 45, 69, 70, 71, 81. But nothing in any of these fragments remotely resembles the material in Plutarch and Heliodorus.

7. "Zwei Quellen des Heliodor," p. 179.

8. Cf. *FGrH* 81 F 32b (*Ag.* 9), F 51 (*Cleom.* 5), F 59 (ibid. 27), F 60 (ibid. 30), F 52 (*Arat.* 38), F 48 (*Pyrrh.* 27). Plutarch also cites Phylarchus in these other works: *Cam.* 19 (F 74), *Dem.* 27 (F 75), *Them.* 32 (F 76), *De Alex. fort.* 342D (F 77), *De Is. et Os.* 362B–C (F 78).

others recounting a myth; but none of these excursuses has a remotely philosophical tone. Furthermore, Phylarchus exhibits only a credulous wonder in the many other tales he tells about strange and amazing phenomena; a desire to explain these contraventions of the natural order scientifically is not evident.[9] Of the eighty-three fragments of Phylarchus assembled by Jacoby, eleven are products of an interest in paradoxography.[10] Statistics based on the fragmentary remains of lost historians are not particularly meaningful, but the relatively high proportion of paradoxographical fragments ascribed to Phylarchus does give the impression that he was not of a strongly skeptical and scientific turn of mind.

Although Plutarch might have got the story about the Tibii directly from Phylarchus, certain considerations make it more likely he found it elsewhere. Pliny the Elder recounts essentially the same story about the Tibii and, like Plutarch, attributes it to Phylarchus (*HN* 7. 17). He tells that story along with several other stories about the Evil Eye in a section of the *Natural Histories* devoted to strange human phenomena. These other stories he ascribes to the authority of Isigonus, Nymphodorus, Apollonides, and Cicero. In his study of Pliny's sources, F. Münzer suggested that Pliny had not himself read these authors but had lifted this body of material from a paradoxographical work of Varro, the *Gentium mirabiles figurae*.[11] Münzer was also inclined to doubt whether Varro himself had read all these authors. It is likely that Münzer's theory is in principle correct: Pliny did not compile his list of authorities from his own reading but followed the common ancient practice of citing authorities from someone else's compilation as though he had consulted them himself. The tale about the Tibii apparently circulated long before Plutarch's time, anthologized in works devoted to paradoxography. Plutarch may have taken it from such a work. He does after all treat the whole phenomenon of the Evil Eye (*Mor.* 680C–D) as something seemingly inexplicable that is therefore a source of wonder (θαυμάσιον) and cause for incredulity (ἄπιστον); that is, he uses the language of paradoxography.[12] Moreover, there are a number of other anecdotes about the Evil Eye in Plutarch's *quaestio:* the chances are high that he found them, and with them the story about the Tibii, conveniently assembled in a work of paradoxography or in a work that drew on a paradoxographical source.

There is a further possibility to be considered, and it may be what Rohde had in mind when he proposed Didymus as Plutarch's source:[13] Plutarch used Didymus' *Symposiaca* and lifted the Phylarchus-passage from that work. Stephanus of Byzantium (s.v. Θιβεῖς) gives very much

9. Cf. F 4, 10, 17, 26–28, 35, 36, 61, 63.

10. F 17 (= Apollonius *Mir.* 14), F 35 (= ibid. 18), F 79 (= Plin. *HN* 7. 17).

11. *Beiträge zur Quellenkritik der "Naturgeschichte" des Plinius* (Berlin, 1897), p. 161. M. Rabenhorst, *Der ältere Plinius als Epitomator des Verrius Flaccus: Eine Quellenanalyse des siebenten Buch der Naturgeschichte* (Berlin, 1907), pp. 20–31, argued that Verrius Flaccus was the source of *HN* 7. 9–32.

12. On the terminology of paradoxography, see K. Ziegler, "Paradoxographoi," *RE* 18.3 (1949): 1138; A. Giannini, "Studi sulla paradossografia greca: Da Omero a Callimacho: motivi e formi del meraviglioso," *RIL* 97 (1963): 251.

13. *Der griechische Roman*[3], p. 486, n. 2.

the same story as Plutarch about the magical powers of the Tibii. He ascribes the story to the second book of Didymus' *Symposiaca* (frag. 1 Schmidt). Didymus will have got the anecdote from Phylarchus,[14] or from some intermediate source. It is too great a coincidence that both Didymus and Plutarch should in their respective *Symposiaca* have quoted the same passage of Phylarchus. We do not know the subject-matter of that part of Didymus' work, but that it was the Evil Eye is not implausible and is even likely.

Besides Plutarch's treatment of the topic there is also a section of Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* devoted to the theme (9. 4. 7–8). Though it is probably no more than a paraphrase of Pliny's discussion of the phenomenon,[15] it independently shows that the Evil Eye was an appropriate theme for a miscellany, a literary genre of which *symposiaca* were a subclass. If the Evil Eye was one of the subjects Didymus addressed in his *Symposiaca,* then the likelihood is heightened that Plutarch took the story about the Tibii from this work.[16]

M. Schmidt, who assembled Didymus' fragments, was convinced that Plutarch had drawn heavily on the *Symposiaca* and had followed the common practice of plundering the scholarship of the previous generation without acknowledging his debt to it.[17] Plutarch mentions Didymus Chalcenterus only once, in his *Solon* (1. 1). That this voluminous writer had nothing else to offer him does seem strange. As H. Bolkestein remarked, it can hardly be chance that three of the nine fragments of Didymus' *Symposiaca* deal with subjects treated by Plutarch in his *Symposiaca.*[18]

II. THE TONE AND CONTEXT OF CALASIRIS' EXPLANATION

Capelle's attitude toward, and analysis of, Calasiris' discussion of the Evil Eye in the *Aethiopica* is heavily influenced by his conception of Heliodorus' aims as a novelist. He assumes—as was generally assumed until recently—that Heliodorus had attempted to write a serious novel and that the tone of the work is uniformly serious.[19] Rohde, for example, believed that the excursuses in the *Aethiopica* were the product of a genuine desire to inform: Heliodorus is for him a true schoolmaster.[20] These assumptions, allied to the assumption that Heliodorus mechanically transcribed his source, led Capelle to regard Calasiris' comments as

14. So R. Fuhrmann, *Plutarque: Oeuvres morales,* vol. 9.2: *"Propos de table," Livres IV–VI* (Paris, 1978), p. 175, n. 5.

15. Somewhat differently J. P. D. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 27–31, with M. L. West, "Megasthenes on the Astomi," *CR* 14 (1964): 242, and L. Holford-Strevens, *Aulus Gellius* (London, 1988), pp. 50–51.

16. So H. Bolkestein, *Adversaria critica et exegetica ad Plutarchi "Quaestionum convivalium" librum primum et secundum* (Amsterdam, 1946), pp. 9–10.

17. *Didymi Chalcenteri Grammatici Alexandrini Fragmenta Quae Supersunt Omnia* (Leipzig, 1854), p. 370.

18. *Adversaria critica,* p. 9. Cf., e.g., *Mor.* 615A–C with Didym. frag. 2, on the etymology of σκόλιον; *Mor.* 654B–C with frag. 4, for sayings of Thales.

19. On such assumptions, see G. Anderson, *Eros Sophistes: Ancient Novelists at Play* (Chico, Ca., 1982), p. 1.

20. *Der griechische Roman*[3], pp. 485–88.

a more or less faithful rendering of Heliodorus' source and to treat any material in Heliodorus that was not in Plutarch as a welcome addition to our knowledge of that source. A rather less mechanical approach to the problem is called for, one that allows for the possibility that Heliodorus is not entirely serious and has no real interest in educating his audience.

The context of the passage does nothing to encourage the idea that Heliodorus wants his readers to take Calasiris' discussion of the Evil Eye seriously. Calasiris is an Egyptian priest. As the narrator of this episode, he recounts how at Delphi he had seen Theagenes leading a procession of Thessalians in honor of Neoptolemus. Charicleia, the adopted daughter of Charicles, had also taken part in this ceremony. After the procession Calasiris had encountered Charicles, a local intellectual and a priest of Apollo, whose acquaintance he had made earlier, and had been invited to go with him to visit Charicleia in the residence in the temple-precinct where she was living. There they had found Charicleia languishing, indisposed with a headache. She had asked to be left in peace. Charicles had been disturbed and asked Calasiris what he thought was wrong. Calasiris, who knew that the girl had fallen in love with Theagenes, bade Charicles not to be amazed if she had drawn the Evil Eye on herself while taking part in the procession. Charicles had laughed unbelievingly and asked Calasiris whether he was one with the masses in believing in the Evil Eye. Calasiris had replied that if there was anything in which he believed, it was the Evil Eye, and had gone on to explain how the Evil Eye worked (3. 7–9).

Calasiris knew Charicleia was indisposed because she had seen Theagenes leading his section of the offertory procession in honor of Neoptolemus and had fallen in love with him. He also knew Charicles would like nothing better than such a match. There is then much irony in his convincing Charicles that the Evil Eye is the problem, and not love.[21] Calasiris' larger aim is to take Charicleia away from her foster-father and return her to her native Ethiopia.

Calasiris himself is an ambiguous figure. The renown in which Egyptian priests and holy men were held in the Greco-Roman world for their superior wisdom is well attested.[22] Not everybody paid them that respect, however; there were more robust spirits in whom Egypt and its religious practices aroused loathing.[23] There were also skeptical souls such as Lucian who treated the reputation of these Egyptian holy men as a subject for merriment and mockery. In Lucian's eyes they were frauds and charlatans who preyed upon the gullible. In the *Philopseudeis* we hear about a temple-scribe from Memphis who allegedly rode on the backs of crocodiles, swam with them, and had them fawning on him and crouching

21. Anderson, *Eros*, pp. 36–37, sees even greater irony in the incident than this.

22. See G. Sandy, "Characterization and Philosophical Decor in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*," *TAPA* 112 (1982): 146–54; id., *Heliodorus*, p. 70; and G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 14–15.

23. See esp. Juv. 15 and cf. Lucian *Iupp. trag.* 42, *Deor. concil.* 10, *Imag.* 11, *Pro imag.* 27, Cic. *Tusc.* 5. 78.

at his feet wagging their tails; he was able with a three-syllable spell to turn inanimate objects into servants who performed his bidding (34. 34–35). In the *Gallus* a cock who was formerly Pythagoras tells his interlocutor that as Pythagoras he had gone to Egypt to consort with the prophets for the sake of their wisdom and had entered the temples and learned the books of Isis and Horus by heart. He had then sailed away to Italy, where he got the resident Greeks to treat him as a god. Asked why he had laid down a prohibition against the eating of meat and beans, he said there was no good or profound reason behind it but that he had done so in order to mystify men by the strangeness of his practices and so win their respect and esteem (18). Pythagoras was for Lucian a fraud and a charlatan: by implication the wisdom he had picked up from the Egyptian holy men and from that country's sacred books was equally fraudulent.

Calasiris has a good deal in common with the fraudulent holy men whom Lucian mocks.[24] Exploiting the cachet that attaches to the Egyptian priesthood, he is ready to impress the gullible. In the light of these considerations Heliodorus may well not be concerned to give an accurate account of the Evil Eye, whoever the source might be. He needs to have Calasiris make impressively scientific noises to convince Charicles that there is indeed something to the Evil Eye and that the Evil Eye is responsible for his daughter's malaise. In these circumstances, we might expect a version of a theory simplified to the point of the ridiculous; the joke is that much better if Charicles is taken in by a theory that verges on the preposterous. In sum, it seems prudent, as we examine the relationship between Plutarch's account of the Evil Eye and Heliodorus', to allow for the possibility that Heliodorus has his tongue in cheek.

That there is supposed to be an element of hocus-pocus to Calasiris' speech is also suggested by the appeal he makes to what is written in the sacred books of Egypt. After adducing ophthalmia, plagues, and love to support his account, he says that if Charicles desires a more scientific account (λόγον τινὰ φυσικώτερον), there is what is written in the sacred books concerning animals (3. 8. 1). He then proceeds to the χαραδριός and the basilisk: the former, because its eyes are able to draw jaundice into itself out of those who suffer from that complaint; the basilisk, because its gaze and breath wither and destroy whatever they strike. It is difficult to see how we should take Calasiris seriously when he appeals to Egyptian sacred texts for a more authoritative explanation and then proceeds to cite well-known Greek animal lore. Calasiris is having fun at

24. On this aspect of Calasiris, see Sandy, "Characterization in the *Aethiopica*," pp. 143–46. For the view that Calasiris, though duplicitous, is ultimately pious and sincere, see Sandy, ibid., and *Heliodorus*, pp. 65–70; J. J. Winkler, "The Mendacity of Kalasiris and the Narrative Strategy of Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*," *YCS* 27 (1982): 93–158. For elements in Calasiris' portrait inconceivable in an Egyptian priest, see J. R. Morgan, "History, Romance, and Realism in the *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus," *CA* 1 (1982): 250. The picture of the holy man given by G. Fowden, "The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society," *JHS* 102 (1982): 33–59, leaves little room for the deviousness and mendacity that characterize much of Calasiris' conduct. Some of Calasiris' lies do have a benign intent, but in other cases he hoodwinks the gullible for his own enjoyment.

Charicles' expense, and part of the fun lies in appealing to the spurious authority of Egyptian priestly writing.

This is the second occasion in the *Aethiopica* in which Calasiris alleges the sacred books as the authority for an explanation. On the earlier occasion, after arriving in Delphi and having his credentials established by Apollo, he tells us that he became an object of curiosity and veneration for the local intellectuals, who plied him with questions about Egypt. He says he omitted nothing from his answers, since Greeks find nothing so appealing as hearing about Egypt (2. 27. 3). Asked about the Nile, he says, he based his answers in part on his own knowledge and in part on what he, as a priest, had been privileged to read in the sacred books (2. 28. 1–2).[25] The Nile, he told the Greeks, has its beginning where the eastern zone of the world ends and the southern zone starts, in the heights of Aethiopia and on the boundaries of Libya. It increases in summer, not because it is driven back by the etesian winds blowing against its mouth, but because at the summer solstice the winds from the north drive the clouds south until they come to a torrid zone whose excessive heat drives them back. All the moisture that has gradually collected and been compacted vaporizes and then breaks forth in fierce rainstorms, which cause the Nile to swell, leave its channel, and fertilize the fields that it has turned into a sea. Its water is most sweet to drink, gentlest to the touch, no longer hot, and limpid, because rain from heaven is its source; this heavenly source is also the reason why alone of rivers it does not produce breezes (2. 28. 2–5). This is hardly the sort of material that would in fact have been found in an Egyptian sacred text.[26]

Calasiris' explanation of the Nile flood closely resembles Democritus'.[27] Democritus maintained that the mass of snow that piled up in the north remained frozen throughout the rest of the year but melted in summer. Because of this melting many thick clouds formed about the highest points from vapor rising into the air. These clouds were driven south by the etesian winds until they struck the highest mountains in the world, those in Aethiopia. They broke violently against them and gave birth to very heavy rains, which caused the river to fill.[28] Calasiris' account also has something in common with that of Agatharchides, who believed that rains falling in summer over the mountains of Aethiopia were the cause of the Nile flood (Diod. Sic. 1. 41. 4–9). The theory rejected by Calasiris at

25. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman*[3], p. 486, n. 2, rightly finds Calasiris' answer rather pompous.

26. For possible Egyptian antecedents for some of these theories, see D. Bonneau, *La cru du Nil* (Paris, 1964), pp. 143–45, 151–52, 195–96. Diodorus Siculus does ascribe an explanation of the Nile flood to "some of the philosophers in Memphis" (1. 40); on its Greek flavor, see A. Burton, *Diodorus Siculus, Book I: A Commentary* (Leiden, 1972), p. 140.

27. *Pace* Feuillatre, *Études*, p. 41, and Rattenbury and Lumb, *Héliodore*, 1:84, n. 2, it is not quite true that Calasiris rejects the theories of Anaxagoras and Democritus that make melting snow the cause of the Nile flood. According to Democritus, melting snow in the north is ultimately, but not directly, responsible for the flood, whereas for Anaxagoras it is directly responsible. Heliodorus almost certainly has only Anaxagoras in mind when he makes Calasiris (2. 28. 5) reject melting snow as the cause of the flood.

28. See Diod. Sic. 1. 39. 1–6, and cf. Aet. *De plac. phil.* 4. 1. 4 (= 68 A 99 D.-K.), [Plut.] *Placit. phil.* 898A; differently schol. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4. 269–70.

the beginning of his account—that the Nile flood is caused by the etesian winds driving water back upstream—is that of Thales (Hdt. 2. 20, Diod. Sic. 1. 38. 4, Diog. Laert. 1. 37). The theory that he rejects at the end of his account—that the flood is caused by melting snow—is Anaxagoras' (Diod. Sic. 1. 38. 3; cf. 59 A 42, 91 D.-K.).

There is something very odd about an Egyptian priest regaling a Greek audience with an explanation of the Nile flood that is an amalgam of the theories of Democritus and Agatharchides, and passing it off as what he had read in Egyptian sacred books to which only priests had access. To appreciate his point fully, Heliodorus' readers would have had to know that Democritus and Agatharchides were the inspiration for Calasiris' account—not an unlikely eventuality, since these theories were conveniently summarized and collected in such compendia as pseudo-Plutarch *De placitis philosophorum* (*Mor.* 897F–98B); the same theories are also to be found collected by Diodorus Siculus (1. 38. 4–41. 9), who may be Heliodorus' source.

The spectacle of Calasiris, besieged by credulous intellectuals such as Charicles—indeed, it is his performance on this occasion that recommends Calasiris to Charicles (2. 29. 1)—and plied with questions about Egypt, has something of the ridiculous about it. The absurdity of the scene is in no way lessened by the willingness of Calasiris' audience to accept as Egyptian what is in fact Greek. Essentially the same thing happens again when Charicles happily accepts Calasiris' explanation of the Evil Eye. Heliodorus must have thought he had sufficiently alerted his readers to the fact that Calasiris is playing on his hearers' credulity when he adopts his priestly pose and regales them with supposedly sacred lore.

III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ACCOUNTS OF HELIODORUS AND PLUTARCH

The divergences between Plutarch's and Heliodorus' accounts of the Evil Eye are explicable if Plutarch was Heliodorus' main source and Heliodorus reworked the material from Plutarch without regard for internal coherence and consistency; with this reworking he will have sought to create a pompous pseudo-scientific discourse with which Calasiris can mystify Charicles.[29] Unless some such hypothesis is posited, it is very difficult to make sense of the differences between the two accounts, since it is not simply a question of Heliodorus' having material that Plutarch does not; the accounts are in fact incompatible with each other and provide radically different explanations of the Evil Eye. The case that I shall make in support of this thesis is based on the following elements: (1) what Plutarch himself says about the origins and character of his explanation; (2) a structural resemblance between the accounts that seems explicable

29. Cf. S. Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel: The Reader and the Role of Description in Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 154–55: Calasiris' digression on the Evil Eye "is in reality—as he lets us know—merely a trick piece of pseudoscience." But Calasiris does not exactly let us know this.

only if Heliodorus had Plutarch in front of him; (3) differences between the two versions that make sense only if Heliodorus reworked material taken from Plutarch.

After Plutarch has finished explaining how the Evil Eye works and has dealt with an objection, one of the company, Gaius, declares that no one has taken any account of Democritus' theory: the Evil Eye does its harm through εἴδωλα, which transmit the malice and envy of the persons emitting them (*Mor.* 682F–83A). Plutarch replies that he is amazed: it has evidently escaped everybody's attention that he has done nothing more than deprive these effluxes (ῥεύματα)—he means the εἴδωλα—of lives and intentions of their own, so as not to upset his hearers by conjuring up ghosts and shades (φάσματα καὶ εἴδωλα), now that evening is far advanced (*Mor.* 683A). It follows from this response that Plutarch's own explanation of the Evil Eye is simply a version of Democritus' theory, cleansed of certain implausible and embarrassing elements. If Plutarch is speaking in good faith and it is indeed his own version of Democritus' explanation that he gives, then it can only be Plutarch whom Heliodorus follows.

There is good reason to take Plutarch at his word, since his explanation of the Evil Eye is a peculiar amalgam of Democritean effluxes, pneumatic theory, and material from pseudo-Aristotle *Problemata* 887a22–27 that no one else is likely to have concocted. Plutarch had a certain fondness for pneumatic theory and presses it into service on numerous occasions.[30] He also draws on a collection of physical, medical, and zoological problems that he thought were Aristotelian but that in fact contain post-Aristotelian material.[31] This collection of problems must be the basis for the two extant collections of problems that go under Aristotle's name.

To explain the peculiar power of the eye, Plutarch argues that effluxes leave all bodies, and that a larger number of effluxes flow off living bodies because of their warmth and mobility. Thus far the argument is Democritean.[32] The explanation for the mobility of living bodies that follows belongs to the Pneumatic School: their movement is created by the pulse-like agitation to which breathing gives rise. That respiration has a pulse-like action to it was the view of Erasistratus, amongst others.[33] Plutarch goes on to say that the eyes give off the most effluxes of all, since they are peculiarly susceptible to being set in motion (πολυκίνητος); as a result, they dispense a wondrous potency in conjunction with respiration, which gives off a fiery beam (*Mor.* 681A). This potency means that men can

30. Cf. *Mor.* 87B, 101C–D, 130B, 337A, 652D, 663A, 689D, 697A, 995A. On pneumatic theory, see M. Wellmann, *Die pneumatische Schule bis auf Archigenes,* Philologische Untersuchungen 14 (Berlin, 1895), pp. 137–53; W. Jaeger, "Das Pneuma im Lykeion," *Hermes* 48 (1913): 29–74.

31. V. Rose, *Aristotelis fragmenta*[3] (Leipzig, 1886), p. 167, thought Plutarch had used two collections, one based on the writings of the older Peripatetics, the other made up of more recent material. W. Capelle, "Auf Spuren alter *Phusikoi,*" *Hermes* 45 (1910): 327, n. 2, believed Plutarch had used a single collection, made up of old and new material.

32. Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 735A = Democr. 68 A 77 D.-K.

33. Cf. D. J. Furley and J. S. Wilkie, *Galen on Respiration and Arteries* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 1–39; H. von Staden, *Herophilus: The Art of Medicine in Early Alexandria* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 260.

effect much through the eyes and are liable to be much affected through them; thus men experience pleasures and pains corresponding to what is seen (*Mor.* 681A). Plutarch proceeds to illustrate the eyes' special ability to effect change and their susceptibility to other eyes (*Mor.* 681B–D). The examples he gives are all examples of eyes affecting and being affected through an exchange of looks.

The notion that the eyes can have an effect on others through their own eyes because the eyes are especially susceptible to movement Plutarch gets from pseudo-Aristotle *Problemata* 887a22–27, a passage that explains why consumption, ophthalmia, and mange are contagious. There the problem of ophthalmia is understood in this way: the eye is very susceptible to movement (εὐκινητότατον) and becomes like what it sees; thus, because the eye moves in response to what is in movement, an eye that exchanges looks (ἀντιβλέπων) with another eye in a state of disturbance becomes itself disturbed. The idea that an eye takes its condition from the eye it looks at is essentially what Plutarch has in mind when he says that man is affected by pleasures and pains that correspond to what is seen (*Mor.* 681A ἡδοναῖς τε γὰρ συμμέτροις καὶ ἀηδίαις ὑπὸ τῶν ὁρατῶν τρεπόμενος), though he does not make it altogether clear that the eye affects and is affected only through the mutual interchange of looks. That point, however, is plainly implied by his first example, ἔρως: the mutual interchange of looks (αἱ ἀντιβλέψεις) by those who are fair, and the light or stream emitted by their eyes, cause the lovers to waste away and perish (*Mor.* 681B).[34] The harm that βασκανία does occurs, according to Plutarch, because the eyes, which are positioned close to the soul, draw into themselves the evil with which φθόνος has filled the soul. As a result, when men rest their eyes in envy on something, their glances fall like poisoned darts on that object (*Mor.* 681E).

Furthermore, even if it be granted that most of the resemblances between Plutarch's and Heliodorus' accounts could have their origin in a common source, there is still a point of resemblance that cannot easily be thus explained, since the resemblance is in the structure of the episodes in which the respective explanations are given and is not in the content of the explanations themselves. When Calasiris suggests that Charicleia had drawn the Evil Eye upon herself, Charicles laughs at the suggestion and asks whether Calasiris is like the masses in believing in the Evil Eye (3. 7). Calasiris then goes on to give his explanation. In Plutarch, when the topic of the Evil Eye comes up in conversation the company scoffs at the idea. Mestrius Florus, the host of the occasion, proceeds to defend its reality on the ground that the facts support it (*Mor.* 680C–F). It is left to Plutarch to provide the explanation. Thus in both cases ridicule of belief in the Evil Eye leads to an explanation of the phenomenon.[35]

34. Cf. *Mor.* 681C αἱ γὰρ τῶν καλῶν ὄψεις κἂν πάνυ πόρρωθεν ἀντιβλέπωσι.

35. Gerald Sandy draws my attention to the technique of having a skeptic's doubts motivate a tale about the fabulous; see his "Petronius and the Tradition of the Interpolated Narrative," *TAPA* 101 (1970): 469–70. This does not decisively weaken my argument.

Heliodorus' theory bears some resemblance to Plutarch's but is fundamentally incompatible with it. It is a theory that regards βασκανία as a disease, which Plutarch's does not. According to Calasiris, the circumambient air enters the body through the eyes, nose, respiratory system, and all the other passages until it reaches the body's innermost points. The inborne air carries with it qualities which have an effect on the recipient that is of the same character as the qualities themselves. This means that when an envious person sees something fair, he fills the circumambient air with the quality of hostility and wafts his breath filled with bitterness toward the fair thing. That breath, being of a fine consistency, makes its way into the very bones and marrow of the recipient and thus causes sickness (3. 7. 3).

The main inspiration for Heliodorus' explanation is a breath-borne theory of contagion such as is found in Galen.[36] Heliodorus explicitly mentions that theory in adducing the examples of the atmospheric conditions that give rise to plague and ophthalmia as proof that βασκανία spreads its harm through the air (3. 7. 4).[37] The notion of the circumambient air, which Heliodorus mentions twice, also plays a prominent part in Galen's thinking.[38] Finally, a parallel for the idea that air, because it is of a fine consistency (λεπτομερές), penetrates to the innermost parts of the body can be cited from another *quaestio* of Plutarch, where air, because it is λεπτομερέστατον, is said to make its way through silver and bronze vessels (*Mor.* 695B).

By contrast, Plutarch does not hold that breath is the medium by which the envious do their harm. The harm is done by εἴδωλα that emanate from the eyes—if we may extrapolate from what Gaius says about Democritus' εἴδωλα (*Mor.* 683A)—and upset the bodies and minds of those on whom they impinge. Heliodorus says nothing about the eyes, nor do εἴδωλα play any part in his theory. What part, if any, Plutarch assigns to πνεῦμα in the dissemination of the εἴδωλα once they have left the eyes is, to say the least, unclear. Plutarch does in another *quaestio* appeal to a modified version of the Platonic theory of συναύγεια: the eyes emit a luminescent breath (πνεῦμα αὐγοειδές) that joins forces with the light emanating from external bodies to form the image seen (*Mor.* 626C; cf. Pl. *Ti.* 45C). It is nonetheless very doubtful that Plutarch—if he did assign a role to πνεῦμα in the dissemination of εἴδωλα—had given much thought to the relationship between them.

The differences between the two theories do not admit of reconciliation; it is not a question of one account having material that the other does not, but of their being radically different explanations of the Evil Eye. It follows that they cannot both be accurate renderings of a common source. Yet the verbal similarities between the two accounts, and the fact that

36. Cf. *De diff. febr.* 7:279 Kühn.

37. Note the technical medical language: τῆς ἐκ τῶν λοιμῶν καταστάσεως; cf. Gal. *De diff. febr.* 7:279 Kühn λοιμώδους ἀέρος καταστάσεως, [Alex. Aphrod.] *Probl.* 1. 88 λοιμικῆς καταστάσεως.

38. Cf. *De plac. Hippocr. et Plat.* 7. 5. 3–7, 8. 8. 24.

three of the supporting examples adduced by both authors are virtually identical, make it certain that these are not completely independent accounts.

Heliodorus' failure to say what part the eyes have in his breath-borne theory suggests that he is not quoting from a preexisting explanation of βασκανία but has concocted a theory on the basis of a well-known medical doctrine about contagion. Calasiris, in other words, is using the authority of medical doctrine to bamboozle Charicles. The thesis that Heliodorus is not attempting to offer a serious explanation is given further support by Heliodorus' demonstrable distortion of Plutarch's explanation of the special power of the eyes. Heliodorus uses this explanation when he has Calasiris cite the case of love in support of his theory of airborne contagion. Calasiris adduces five examples that are supposed to support the theory. His first example is the disease ophthalmia, and his second is the condition of the atmosphere that leads to plague (3. 7. 4). Calasiris' third example is the part that sight plays in generating love (3. 7. 5). The details of Calasiris' account correspond to Plutarch's general explanation of the eyes' special powers, not to his treatment of ἔρως (*Mor.* 680F–81A).

Calasiris' explanation is that what is seen gives rise to love by shooting the passions through the eyes into the soul. This happens because sight is the most readily moved and the warmest of the senses and passages that lead into the body. Vision is therefore most receptive to effluxes and draws to itself love, which is transmitted by the fiery breath inherent in it.

This is a pastiche, garbled to the point of incoherence, of what we find in Plutarch. There are two striking points of verbal similarity between Plutarch and Heliodorus:

μάλιστα δὲ τοῦτο γίνεσθαι διὰ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν εἰκός ἐστι· πολυκίνητος γὰρ ἡ ὄψις οὖσα μετὰ πνεύματος αὐγὴν ἀφιέντος πυρώδη θαυμαστήν τινα διασπείρει δύναμιν ὥστε πολλὰ καὶ πάσχειν καὶ ποιεῖν δι' αὐτῆς τὸν ἄνθρωπον (Plut. *Mor.* 681A).	καὶ μάλα γε εἰκότως τῶν γὰρ ἐν ἡμῖν πόρων τε καὶ αἰσθήσεων πολυκίνητόν τε καὶ θερμότατον οὖσα ἡ ὄψις δεκτικωτέρα πρὸς τὰς ἀπορροίας γίνεται, τῷ κατ' αὐτὴν ἐμπύρῳ πνεύματι τὰς μεταβάσεις ἐρώτων ἐπισπωμένη (Heliodor. *Aethiop.* 3. 7. 5).

The notion that the eyes have a fiery breath inherent in them, presumably because they are the warmest of the senses, and through its agency draw love to themselves is simply a parody of the more coherent explanation that Plutarch gives of the eyes' capacity to affect and be affected (*Mor.* 681A). Heliodorus makes the eyes the warmest of the sense-organs as well as the most susceptible to movement, a mischievous perversion of the idea that living beings possess warmth and are in a state of motion because they breathe. Plutarch's hot or fiery beam that emanates from the eyes in conjunction with πνεῦμα becomes simply a fiery breath. It is understandable that Heliodorus should have simplified Plutarch in this way, since his writing at this point is heavily influenced by the language of love

poetry and the idea of a fiery beam would naturally suggest the figure of the fire of love.[39] To confuse matters further, Calasiris says that because the eyes are easily moved and warmest, they are more receptive than the other sense-organs and apertures to effluxes (ἀπόρροιαι), a term that Plutarch uses of the effluxes emitted by animate bodies as they reverberate to the pulse of respiration (*Mor.* 681A; cf. Democr. 68 B 123 D.-K.). It is a final absurdity in this passage that these Democritean effluxes have no place in Calasiris' theory of the breath-borne Evil Eye.

The remainder of Heliodorus' account does nothing to encourage the belief that he has used a source independent of Plutarch. He makes no attempt to adapt to his theory the two examples that follow his discussion of love. They are the χαραδριός and basilisk. The χαραδριός is in Plutarch (*Mor.* 681C–D) and fits his theory; Calasiris' account (3. 8. 1) of its behavior is not materially different from Plutarch's, and it appears to be a paraphrase of Plutarch in which there are some minor changes of wording. The basilisk is not in Plutarch, but its presence in Heliodorus hardly constitutes evidence that Heliodorus used a source other than Plutarch. Its disagreeable ways were in all likelihood common lore.[40]

Calasiris ends his speech by saying that there should be no reason for surprise if some people fascinate their nearest and dearest with the Evil Eye, since those who are envious by nature do not do what they want to do but do what it is their nature to do (3. 8. 2). This is not particularly relevant to the topic at hand. It represents the gist of a much longer and properly motivated discussion in Plutarch: Soclarus expresses dissatisfaction with Plutarch's explanation of the Evil Eye, because it seems to explain neither the instances of fascination in which someone fascinates those near and dear to him nor cases of self-fascination (*Mor.* 682A–B). These counter-examples lead Plutarch to invoke the Aristotelian notion of a trait of character (ἕξις) built up by habitual practice, to explain how the envious fascinate their nearest and dearest in spite of themselves (*Mor.* 682B–F).

Plainly, Heliodorus has made no attempt to put an internally coherent and self-consistent explanation of the Evil Eye into Calasiris' mouth. Once it is recognized that Calasiris does not speak in good faith and is simply having some fun at Charicles' expense, the lack of internal coherence in his explanation and the differences between it and Plutarch's are easily accounted for. Calasiris' explanation is essentially a pastiche.

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39. For the eyes firing the arrows of love, cf. *Anth. Pal.* 12. 101. 2 (Meleager); for the burning arrows of love, cf. *Anth. Pal.* 12. 48. 3 (Meleager), *Anth. Plan.* 16. 207. 1–2 (Palladas).

40. Cf. Ael. *NA* 2. 5. 7, Plin. *HN* 8. 78–79, 29. 66, Luc. 9. 724–26.