

THE GENEALOGY OF THE *BOUKOLOI*: HOW GREEK LITERATURE APPROPRIATED AN EGYPTIAN NARRATIVE-MOTIF*

THE subject of this paper is the relationship between the Demotic Egyptian Inaros-Petubastis Cycle and the Greek novel. I will not argue that the Greek novel as a whole arose from Egyptian literature; that theory has been rightly laid to rest by scholars working in the area, most recently by Susan Stephens and the late Jack Winkler in their edition of the fragments of the novel.¹ What I want to do, rather, is to draw attention to a single motif that might have made its way from Egyptian narrative fiction to the Greek novel; to explore the background of this motif in Egyptian literature; and to discuss the mode through which this motif was appropriated by the Greek novelists. This motif concerns the *boukoloι*, outlaw shepherds who inhabit the Egyptian Delta and oppose central Egyptian authority.

1. THE *BOUKOLOI* IN THE GREEK NOVEL AND THE *Ϝm.w* IN THE DEMOTIC INAROS-PETUBASTIS CYCLE

The *boukoloι* play a major part in two of the ancient Greek novels: in Heliodorus' *Aithiopika* and Achilles Tatius, *Cleitophon and Leucippe*. In the *Aithiopika*, the *boukoloι* are a band of rough, marsh-dwelling warriors; the area they live in is called Boukolia after them (1.5.2), and they live in the settlement of Bessa (6.3.4). They figure in what is from the point of view of the plot the central section of the novel, which describes the journey of the hero and heroine Theagenes and Charicleia from Greece to Ethiopia, via a central interlude in Egypt. Their leader is Thyamis, elder son of the Memphite priest Kalasiris, who is one of the central characters in the novel. Thyamis has been dispossessed of the priesthood by his brother Petosiris. Eventually, he journeys to Memphis, where he fights a duel with his brother. The conflict is resolved when Kalasiris unexpectedly turns up. After further adventures in Memphis, Theagenes and Charicleia continue on to Ethiopia.

The status of the *boukoloι* in Heliodorus is ambiguous. Some of the characters dislike them, notably Knemon (2.17.4) and Nausikles (2.24.2). They grow their hair long and look fierce (2.20.5):

Βουκόλοι γὰρ ἄλλα τε πρὸς τὸ φοβερώτεροι φαίνεσθαι καὶ δὴ καὶ τὴν κόμην εἰς ὄφρυν ἔλκουσι καὶ σοβοῦσι τῶν ὤμων ἐπιβαίνουσιν, εὖ τοῦτο εἰδότες ὡς κόμη τοὺς μὲν ἔρωτικούς ἰλαρωτέρους τοὺς δὲ ληιστρικούς φοβερωτέρους ἀποδείκνυσιν.

(The Herdsmen cultivate an alarming appearance, particularly as regards their hair, which they pull forwards to meet their eyebrows, and toss violently as it falls over their shoulders, for they are well aware that long hair makes lovers seem more alluring, but robbers more alarming.²)

* This paper was written for a meeting of the Chicago–Stanford seminar on Hellenistic Egypt, which took place on 4 April 1998. I thank all participants of the colloquium for their comments, particularly Prof. Daniel Selden, Prof. Susan Stephens, Prof. Ludwig Koenen and Prof. H. J. Thissen. An abbreviated version was given at the XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia held in Florence in August 1998. I would also like to thank John Birchall and Helen Morales for discussion.

¹ Stephens and Winkler (1995); for the latest on Egyptian models, see Ryholt (1998a).

² This and other translations from the novel are based on John Morgan's translation in Reardon (1989).

They also eat fish without cooking it, an activity characteristic of extreme barbarism in Greek mentality.³ On the other hand, in the context of the novel, the *boukoloι* are on the side of justice. Their leader, Thyamis, is engaged in a struggle to reclaim the priesthood which has been unjustly taken from him by his brother; and they are represented as superior to the other band of robbers from whom they rescue the hero and heroine, Theagenes and Charicleia, near the start of the novel.

In Achilles Tatius' *Cleitophon and Leucippe*, the hero and heroine come ashore at Pelusium, at the sanctuary of Zeus Kasios; from there they sail toward Alexandria, but fall in with a group of *boukoloι* (3.9), who are unambiguously mean:

ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐγενόμεθα κατὰ τινα πόλιν, ἐξαίφνης βοῆς ἀκούομεν πολλῆς. καὶ ὁ ναύτης, εἰπὼν· “Ὁ βουκόλος”, μεταστρέφει τὴν ναῦν ὡς ἐπαναπλεύσων εἰς τοῦπίσω. καὶ ἅμα πλήρης ἦν ἡ γῆ φοβερῶν καὶ ἀγρίων ἀνθρώπων· μεγάλοι μὲν πάντες, μέλανες δὲ τὴν χροιάν (οὐ κατὰ τὴν τῶν Ἰνδῶν τὴν ἄκρατον, ἀλλ’ οἷος ἄν γένοιτο νόθος Αἰθίοψ), ψιλοὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς, λεπτοὶ τοὺς πόδας, τὸ σῶμα παχεῖς· ἐβαρβάριζον δὲ πάντες.

(As we were sailing past one city, we suddenly heard a great outcry. Our sailor said, ‘*Boukoloι*’, and swung the boat around so as to sail back in the opposite direction. All at once, the shore was full of wild frightening men, all large and black (not deep black like Indians, but black as, say, a half-Ethiopian might be), bareheaded, heavysset but quick on the feet. They all shouted in a foreign language...⁴)

The hero Cleitophon is eventually rescued by Egyptian soldiers (3.12); Leucippe is captured by the *boukoloι*, and is apparently sacrificed (3.15), but it turns out to be a ‘*Scheintod*’. In fact, she was saved from real sacrifice by an Egyptian friend of Cleitophon and Leucippe, Menelaos, who has been captured by the *boukoloι*, and initiated into their number. The human sacrifice is a test for newly initiated members of the *boukoloι* (3.22):

... ὁ λῆισταρχος ... “νόμος ἡμῖν ἐστίν”, ἔφη, “πρωτομύστας τῆς ἱερείας ἀρχεσθαι, μάλιστα ὅταν ἀνθρώπον καταθύειν δέηι.”

(‘We have a tradition’, says the leader of the robbers, ‘that sacrifices, especially human sacrifices, must be performed by newly initiated bandits ...’)

But Menelaos manages to deceive the *boukoloι* into thinking that he has performed a human sacrifice by using theatrical equipment. After this narrow escape, Leucippe is reunited with Cleitophon. Subsequently, the Egyptians launch a campaign against the *boukoloι* on the island of Nikokhis (4.12), but the *boukoloι* hide in the marshes (4.14), and ambush the Egyptians.

In 1985 the publication of carbonized papyri from Thmouis in the Eastern Delta (near Mendes: see Fig. 1) seemed to provide a context for the historical background to this story. These texts refer to events in the late second century CE. A local official complains in two documents of attacks from the ‘unholy inhabitants of Nikokhis’, which must surely be the same place mentioned in Achilles Tatius. In n.104 the writer reports that most of the inhabitants of the village of Kerkenouphis had been killed by the ‘impious men of Neikokis’, who came to the village and burnt it. In n.116, the writer records that some fishermen had been killed by the ‘impious men of Nikokhis’. Could these outlaws perhaps have made a contribution to Achilles Tatius’ *boukoloι*?⁵

³ On their eating habits, Graf (1986).

⁴ This and other translations from the novel are based on Jack Winkler’s translation in Reardon (1989).

⁵ I owe this reference to Bowersock (1994). On real bandits in Roman Egypt, see now McGing (1998).

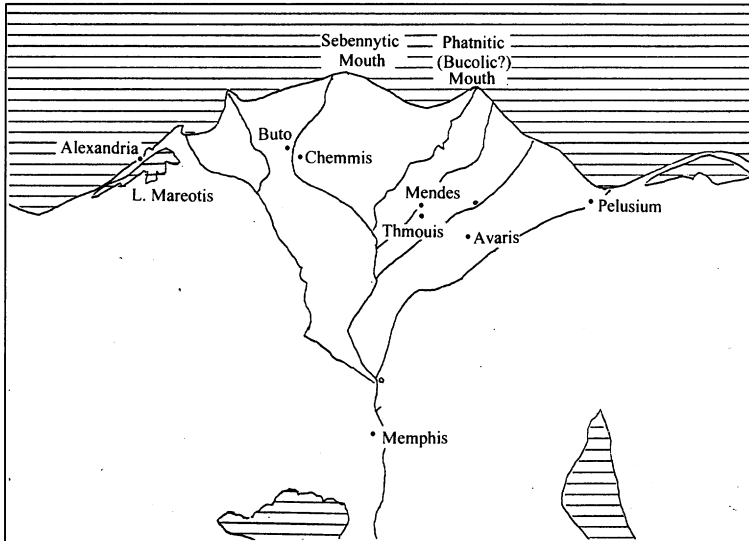


Fig. 1 The Nile Delta

The herdsmen also have a lesser role in a third novel, the *Ephesiaka* by Xenophon of Ephesus (3.12); they capture the hero Habrocomes when he comes ashore at the Eastern Delta, and transport him to Pelusium, where he is sold as a slave. In this case they are called not βουκόλοι, but ποιμένες ('shepherds').⁶

Two further fictional texts deserve to be mentioned. First, the fragments of the *Phoinikika* of Lollianus attest low-life characters who commit human sacrifice, feast and indulge in orgies; Albert

Henrichs suggested that these were Egyptian *boukoloi*, like those of Achilles Tatius. Other scholars have doubted both these claims, and assimilated Lollianus' characters to the ordinary robbers that we find in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.⁷ Finally, in any history of the *boukoloi* in Greek fiction, a word must be said about the shepherd-*boukoloi* in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*. Merkelbach has argued that there is a religious dimension to these, since βουκόλος was an established term in Dionysiac cult, and some of the practitioners of these cults in the Roman world were linked to Lesbos. On the other hand, there seems a considerable gulf between the pastoral landscape of Longus and the aggressive, semi-barbarous *boukoloi* of Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius.⁸

Historical References

A group of *boukoloi* much more like those of Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius is found in historical sources. In particular, the historian Cassius Dio (72.4) tells us about a group of *boukoloi* who caused a civil disturbance in 171 CE under the priest Isidorus; these rebel *boukoloi* attack the Roman authorities, having staged an ambush disguised as women, and they sacrifice one of the Roman soldiers. Eventually the revolt is put down by the Roman general Avidius Cassius:

καὶ οἱ καλούμενοι δὲ Βουκόλοι κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον κινήθεις καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους Αἰγυπτίους προσαποστήσαντες ὑπὸ ἱερεὶ τινι [καὶ] Ἰσιδώρῳ, πρῶτον μὲν ἐν γυναικείῳις στολαῖς τὸν ἑκατόνταρχον τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἠπατηκότες ὡς δὴ γυναῖκες τῶν Βουκόλων καὶ χρυσία δώσουσαι αὐτῷ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀνδρῶν προσιόντα σφίσι κατέκοψαν, καὶ τὸν συνόντα αὐτῷ καταθύσαντες ἐπὶ τε τῶν σπλάγχνων αὐτοῦ συνώμοσαν καὶ ἐκεῖνα κατέφαγον· ἦν δὲ Ἰσίδωρος ἀνδρῶν πάντων τῶν καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἄριστος· ἔπειτα ἐκ παρατάξεως τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ Ῥωμαίους νικήσαντες μικροῦ καὶ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν εἶλον, εἰ μὴ Κάσσιος ἐκ Συρίας πεμφθεὶς ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ στρατηγήσας ὥστε τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους σφῶν ὁμόνοιαν λῦσαι καὶ ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ἀποχωρίσαι (διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀπόνοιαν καὶ τὸ πλῆθος αὐτῶν οὐκ ἐθάρρησε συμβαλεῖν ἀθρόοις αὐτοῖς), οὕτω δὴ στασιάζαντας ἐχειρώσατο.

⁶ Habrocomes comes ashore in the 'Paralian' region, which seems to be the same as the 'Paralian Mouth', in the central Delta: see H. Kees, s.v. Paralios (1), *RE* 18.3 (1949) 1207.

⁷ Suggested by Henrichs (1972), but doubted by Winkler (1980); Jones (1980); Stephens and Winkler (1995) 319–21; cf. also Morgan (1998) 3347–9.

⁸ See Merkelbach (1988); cf. particularly the Roman inscription discussed by Vogliano (1933).

(The so-called Boukoloï were disturbed in Egypt and made the rest of Egypt revolt under the priest Isidorus. First, they deceived the Roman centurion, wearing female clothing as if they were the wives of the Boukoloï, and about to give them gold on behalf of their husbands. When he approached them, they killed him, and his companion they sacrificed and swore an oath over his entrails, and ate them. Isidorus was the best of his generation in bravery. Then in pitched battle defeating the Romans in Egypt, they would have taken Alexandria itself, had not Cassius sent from Syria conducted a campaign in such a way as to destroy their common purpose and separate them from each other (he did not dare to attack them when they were all together because of their desperation and numbers). In this way, he put down their revolt.)

The human sacrifice here is strongly reminiscent of the *Scheintod* in Achilles Tatius, and the possibility arises that Cassius Dio, or his source (possibly Marius Maximus), was influenced by contemporary fiction.⁹

It has been argued by Jack Winkler in his important article of 1980 that these rebellious *boukoloï* are a late development. Winkler distinguishes two groups:¹⁰ first, rebel-*boukoloï*, whom he finds, for example, in Achilles Tatius and in Cassius Dio; and second, barbarous *boukoloï*, cowherds who are supposed to have lived in Rhakotis before the foundation of Alexandria, and who are attested in Eratosthenes, *apud* Strabo 17.1.19.¹¹ The former are outlaws, opposed to centralized political authority, the latter natives who repel invaders. In order to be in a position to judge the validity of this model, we must first consider the native literature of Hellenistic Egypt.

The ʿʒm.w

Fragments survive of a cycle of prose, or possibly poetic, narratives, written in Demotic Egyptian, narrating episodes from the Egyptian heroic age. The cycle is called the 'Inaros-Petubastis Cycle' because of the prominence in it of a hero Inaros and a pharaoh Petubastis.¹² Although the papyri date from the Roman period, there is good reason to think that the Inaros-stories are considerably older, and may date back to the early Hellenistic period.¹³ One of these narratives, the so-called *Contest for the Benefice of Amun* (far and away the best attested) features a group of warriors called ʿʒm.w (variously translated as 'Asiatics' or 'herdsmen'), and it is on these I want to concentrate here.¹⁴

A summary of the *Contest for the Benefice of Amun* will be useful. Scholars have reconstructed the lost beginning as follows: Pharaoh claimed the Benefice of Amun at Thebes, first for himself, then for Ankh-Hor, his son. Pharaoh set out for Thebes with the prince of the East region Paklul, and Te-Hor, chief of Mendes. Some other princes stayed behind in the North, apparently feeling they had been slighted in some way; these included Pes-nofer and Pemu. However, the Benefice was also claimed by the son of the previous priest (who may not himself be dead), the so-called young priest of Horus of Buto, supported by thirteen warriors, called

⁹ Marius Maximus is mentioned as a source in *Historia Augusta* on Marcus Aurelius 21.2, and on Avidius Cassius 6.7.

¹⁰ Winkler (1980).

¹¹ Cf. also Homer, *Od.* 13.222.

¹² The best introduction is Tait (1994), also Tait (1996); Hoffmann (2000) 199–204. Earlier studies sometimes refer to the 'Petubastis-Cycle'. For a sense of the unpublished material, see Ryholt (1999).

¹³ Tait (1994) 205–6, 219–20; Ray (1972); Hoffmann (2000) 202. Spiegelberg (1910) also thought of an early Hellenistic origin. The publication of fragments of narratives from Saqqāra (as early as fourth century BCE) seems to confirm an early date for the Demotic prose novel: Smith and Tait (1976, 1983). In one of the Saqqāra narratives (Text 1 in Smith and Tait (1983), cf. pp. 58–62) an 'evil prophet' of Horus of Letopolis has ousted and murdered the rightful incumbent, Djedseshep a prophet of Horus of Letopolis, a plot similar to that of the *Contest for the Benefice* discussed below.

¹⁴ The herdsmen occur in no other fragments of Egyptian fiction, as Prof. Tait confirms to me.

ḥm.w or herdsmen. At some point the young priest of Horus and his thirteen herdsmen seize the sacred ship of Amun, which used to sail from Karnak up the Nile three miles to Luxor every year at the feast of Opet. It is at this point that the extant text begins. In the first column of the extant parts of *PSpiegelberg*, the young priest is describing the ship of Amun, and he identifies different parts of it with different gods. This passage seems to suggest that the priest of Buto has some sort of special religious insight.¹⁵ Later there is a dramatic confrontation between the two claimants. The herdsmen enter in *PSpieg.* col.4:

The thirteen herdsmen of the reeds marched against the (Egyptian) army, clad in their equipment, the helmet of a bull's head on their head, a shield on their arm, and the slashing-sword in their hand; they ranged themselves to the right and the left of the young priest, and their voices resounded, saying: 'Receive our oath that we make before Amun, the great god, present here today: no one of you shall cause the prophet of Horus of Pi, in Buto, to hear a word that displeases him, without us watering the ground with his blood ...'

They are described again in *PSpieg.* col.5.

... the young priest arose against Ankh-Hor, the royal son, as a lion against a wild ass, as a nurse against her nursling (?); he seized the inside of his armour, he threw him on the ground, he bound him firmly, he pushed him on the road before him. The thirteen herdsmen rushed after him, and not a person in the world attacked them, so great was the fear that they imposed.

Eventually, the young priest of Buto locks up Ankh-Hor in the sacred ship (*PSpieg.* col.5). A little later, the young priest and the herdsmen also capture and imprison a second warrior, the Great Lord of Thebes (*PSpieg.* col.9). Pharaoh is advised by an oracle that Pes-nofer and Pemu are indispensable if he is to be victorious, so he swallows his pride and sends for them. Near the end of the extant papyrus a new fighter appears from the south, Minnemmei, from Yeb (Elephantine); he is successful in combat, and is rewarded by the pharaoh. That is where the text ends. In the lost ending, Ankh-Hor probably secured the Benefice, and the young priest of Buto departed with his band of thirteen herdsmen.

The idea that the thirteen herdsmen are an antecedent to the *boukoloi* of Greek fiction was first proposed, as far as I know, by Maspero, in the introduction to his translations of Egyptian stories. It was developed by Struve and has recently been reasserted by John Birchall.¹⁶ On the level of semantics, there is no doubt that the Egyptian word 'ḥm' means 'herdsman', and would have been taken as the precise equivalent to the Greek βουκόλος. The parallel manifests itself in the Greek and Coptic versions of the Life of St. Antony, where ΝΑΜΗΥΕ (*n-amēue*) ('region of the ḥm.w') corresponds to τὰ βουκόλια in Greek.¹⁷ A much earlier instance is a document dated to 535 BCE, written by an ḥm of Mont called Petemont, son of Puahamon; Hughes thinks that ḥm means 'herdsman', though some have suggested that it might have meant 'farmer'. Also in a Ptolemaic document, a Siut record of court proceedings, one of Tefhape's uncles (Dionysus) is an ḥm, another (Hor) is a camel keeper (*mn gmwr*).¹⁸

Several narratological motifs link the herdsmen of the *Contest for the Benefice* with the *boukoloi* of the Greek novel.

¹⁵ Hoffmann (1995a).

¹⁶ Maspero (1967); Struve (1936); Birchall (1996).

¹⁷ See Crum (1939) s.v.

¹⁸ Louvre E. 7836 = Document IV in Hughes (1952); Ptolemaic document: B.M. eg. 10591 recto (= Thompson (1934)) B.1.24, iii.8, v.1, 24.

(a) Communal ritual activity. We have seen that in Achilles Tatius the *boukoloι* engage in a communal sacrifice, and the supposedly historical *boukoloι* of Cassius Dio do the same.¹⁹ The same pattern of behaviour is displayed by the herdsmen of the *Contest for the Benefice* when they capture the sacred ship and celebrate a festival on it:

... they washed themselves for a festival, they brought the bread, the meat and the wine they had on board, they placed it before them, they drank, they made a happy day.

(b) Piracy. In the *Contest for the Benefice*, the herdsmen seize the sacred ship of Amun, an act of sacred piracy. Furthermore, they capture warriors from the other side and imprison them in the ship. In the Greek tradition, the *boukoloι* are often linked to acts of piracy; we saw this already in Eratosthenes' account of the *boukoloι* preserved in Strabo, and we find exactly the same pattern in Achilles Tatius, 3.9, where Cleitophon and Leucippe are captured by pirates, and in Heliodorus 2.24:

... οἱ καλοῦνται μὲν ἄνθρωποι καὶ βουκόλοι λησταὶ δὲ εἰσι τὸν βίον καὶ δυσάλωτοι παντάπασιν, ὅσα φωλεοῖς καὶ σήραγμα τῶι ἔλει χρώμενοι.

(... who are called human-beings and herdsmen, but the life they lead is one of brigandry, and it is almost impossible to run them to ground, as they retreat into their dens and lairs in the marsh ...)

(c) Marshes and rushes. In the *Contest for the Benefice*, the herdsmen are specifically described as *ʿšm.w n pr ḏwf*, which Speigelberg interprets as 'herdsmen of the district of reeds'.²⁰ Thus in *PSpieg.* col.4:

The thirteen herdsmen of the reeds marched against the (Egyptian) army, clad in their equipment, the helmet of a bull's head on their head, a shield on their arm, and the slashing-sword in their hand;

and again in *PSpieg.* col.12, where Pegruris writes to Pisopdul:

'... come to the south of Thebes, on account of certain herdsmen of the reed-district, who are here in Thebes fighting daily against Pharaoh'.

A similar expression also seems to occur in an unpublished Carlsberg papyrus in which the 'thirteen herdsmen of the reed-district of the East' (?) seem to be dancers who protect the young Horus.²¹

Similarly, the *boukoloι* of the Greek novel live in the marshes, as we see in Heliodorus 1.5:

... ἐπὶ τινα λίμνην κατὰ θατέραν τοῦ ὄρους πλευρὰν ὑποτείνουσιν ἠπειγόντο. ἦν δὲ τοιάδε τις· βουκολία μὲν σύμπας κέκληται πρὸς Αἰγυπτίων ὁ τόπος· ἔστι δὲ κοιλάς τῆς αὐτόθι γῆς τοῦ Νείλου ὑπερεκχύσεις τινὰς ὑποδεχομένη καὶ λίμνη γινομένη, τὸ μὲν κατὰ μέσον βάθος ἄπειρος ἐπὶ δὲ τὰς ἄκρας εἰς ἔλος ἀποτελευτῶσα. ὁ γὰρ ταῖς θαλάτταις αἰγιαλοί, τοῦτο ταῖς λίμναις τὰ ἔλη γίνεται. ἐν δὴ τούτοις ὅσον Αἰγυπτίων ληιστρικὸν πολιτεύεται, ὁ μὲν ἐπὶ γῆς ὀλίγη, εἴ ποί τις ὑπερέχει τοῦ ὕδατος, καλύβην πηξάμενος, ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ σκάφους βιοτεύει, πορθμεῖον τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ οἰκητήριον ἔχων.

¹⁹ Here may be noticed the placename: *Hierou ton Boukolon*, see Calderini (1935–87) 2.63.

²⁰ On the term, see Dayan (1998).

²¹ I am grateful to F. Hoffmann and J. Quack for information about this text (*PCarlsberg* 69, col.x + 3, 22–3), which will be published as Hoffmann and Quack (forthcoming).

(They pressed on towards a lake that lay outspread below them on the other side of the mountain. Its nature was as follows: the Egyptians call the whole area Boukolia; there is a natural bowl into which the floodwater from the Nile pours; thus a lake has formed, immeasurably deep at the centre, but shallowing off at the edges into a marsh, for as beaches are to seas, so are marshes to lakes. This is the home of the entire bandit community of Egypt, some of them building huts on what little land there is above water, others living on boats that serve them as both transport and dwelling ...)

Some have argued that their habitat, what Heliodorus called the Boukolia, was in the Western Delta, near Alexandria and Lake Mareotis. There was indeed a region called the Boukolia in Alexandria, and this seems to suit the account in Heliodorus, where they are near Chemmis.²² If we recall the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle, we remember that the young priest who leads the herdsmen comes from Buto, which is in the same general area; at a couple of places in the *Contest for the Benefice*, the priest invokes Isis of Khemmis (*Hbi*) (*PSpieg.* col. 2):

Is there one who has power over the said benefice from him besides me, the prophet of Horus of Pi in Buto, born of Isis of Chemmis (Ese-n-khebis)?²³

a telling invocation, perhaps, in view of the role of Chemmis in Heliodorus' account of the *boukoloi*. On the other hand, Achilles Tatius puts the *boukoloi* in the Eastern Delta, near Nikokhis, a location for which the carbonized papyri from Thmouis near Mendes offer tentative confirmation. Xenophon of Ephesus also puts them in the East. It is certainly enough to make us treat with a certain scepticism the claim that the *boukoloi* were confined to the Western Delta;²⁴ indeed, to judge from the evidence available, the hypothesis that they were confined to any one area of the Delta seems implausible.

(d) An Egyptian priest leading the *boukoloi*. In the *Contest for the Benefice*, the herdsmen are led by an Egyptian, the anonymous priest of Buto. Similarly, in Heliodorus, they are led by Thyamis, claimant to the priesthood of his father. In both cases, the presence of the priest seems to mitigate the moral status of the herdsmen. In the *Contest for the Benefice*, the *ῥm.w*, though fierce warriors, are nevertheless morally in the right, in so far as the son of the priest is the rightful incumbent, and seems to have a more developed sense of theology than the pharaoh. So in Heliodorus the *boukoloi* are themselves morally neutral, but they are in the right because they support Thyamis.

This is part of a broader congruity between the plot of the *Contest for the Benefice* and Book 7 of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*, an idea first formulated by Graham Anderson. In both texts there is a confrontation between two claimants to an Egyptian priesthood: in the *Contest for the Benefice* between the young priest and Ankh-hor, and in the *Aithiopika* between Thyamis and Petosiris, the two sons of Kalasiris; in both texts the herdsmen are supporting one side, and in both acting as rebels against centralized authority.²⁵

²² Boukolia near Alexandria: Calderini (1935–87) 2.62; Birchall (1996). Chemmis: see Hdt. 2.156 and 2.165; a Berlin papyrus (BGU 625) may relate to Chemmis.

²³ Esenkhebis; cf. Lloyd (1976–88) 3.143–4.

²⁴ Also Sammelbuch 5701 from Abu-Eda in the Eastern Delta: τοποσθεσία | ἐπιλεγόμενη | Βουκόλα διαφέρουσα τῆι οὐσίαι | Μηνᾶ τοῦ μεγ(ίστου) Μαξί-μου οὔσηι ἐν τῆι | Κερκεσίαι. One more piece of information has sometimes been cited here. Herodotus (2.17) refers to one of the branches of the Nile as 'Bucolic'. Some have identified this with the Phatnitic branch of the Nile (the modern Damietta branch), but the case is unproven. In favour: Müller (1883–) 1.2.681 (ad Ptolemy, *Geographia* 4.5.5), Wiedemann (1890), Lloyd (1976–88); against: Sethe (1897), who favours a position further east.

²⁵ See most recently Thissen (1999).

To sum up, there seems little doubt that modern discussions of the Greek *boukoloï* are guilty of a serious omission in failing to mention the *ʿšm.w* of the *Contest for the Benefice*. In theory, it is possible that the narrative pattern migrates from Greek literature to Egyptian rather than vice versa. But although there is reason to think that Demotic literature might have been influenced by Greek literature at an earlier point,²⁶ the narrative-motif of the rebellious herdsmen is likelier to have migrated from Egyptian to Greek, because the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle as a whole seems to be much earlier than the Greek novel. It follows that Winkler's argument that the 'rebel-*boukoloï*' are a late development is seriously compromised by the presence of rebellious herdsmen in Egyptian texts whose origins must be much earlier.

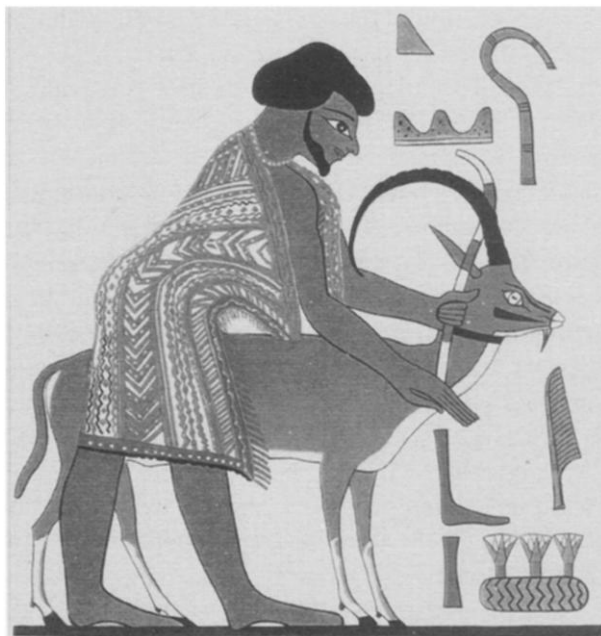


Fig. 2 Wall-painting from Beni Hasan, Tomb 3
(from P. Newberry, *Beni Hasan* (London 1893) Plate XXVIII).

2. THE EGYPTIAN BACKGROUND

Earlier, I noted the use of the Egyptian word *ʿšm* in Demotic and a later form of the same word in Coptic. It is first attested as a name for barbarians in the Old Kingdom; this is the only sense found in the *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*.²⁷ The 'Asiatic Sand-Dwellers' are an enemy in Weni's account of his campaign under Pepi 1 in the 6th Dynasty. When Sinuhe returns from the East, the pharaoh says to the queen (265; *cf.* also 141):

'Behold Sinuhe, returned as an Asiatic',

and the word for Asiatic there is *ʿšm*. So the *ʿšm.w* had had a place in fiction for a while.²⁸

From the Middle Kingdom (12th Dynasty, early 19th century BC), we have impressive illustrations of the *ʿšm.w* from a tomb painting at Beni Hasan (Tomb 3: see FIG. 2).²⁹ The accompanying text talks about the arrival of 37 *ʿšm.w*. Interestingly, as Professor Rittner points out to me, they are already depicted accompanied by animals, as if they have already assumed the identity of herdsmen.

²⁶ Anderson (1984); *cf.* Rutherford (1997).

²⁷ See Erman and Grapow (1926–63) 1.167.

²⁸ Pepi: Lichtheim (1973–80) 1.19. Sinuhe: Tale of Sinuhe sections 265, 141. Instruction of Merikare: Lichtheim (1973–80) 1.103–4. On Sinuhe, see Loprieno (1988) 41–59.

²⁹ See Newberry (1893–1900), 1.69. The text translated reads (on the scribes' papyrus, plate XXXVIII): 'The Year 6, under the majesty of Horus, the guardian of the two lands, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Kha-kheperre (= Senwosret II), the number of *ʿšm.w* brought by the son of the prince, Chnemhotep, on account of the galena, *ʿšm* of Shu, number amounts to 37.' (Shu is unknown, but thought to be in the Sinai Peninsula: see Gauthier (1925–31) 5. 130–1, s.v. Chout.) The second (above them) (it ḥr int msdmt in n-f *ʿšm.w* xxxvii): 'Arrival bringing galena which 37 *ʿšm.w* bring to him.'

The location of the ʿšm.w is uncertain. Later on, they come to be linked to the semitic world, but for the earlier period there are few clues. Some have thought they might be especially linked to the south, but Donald Redford discusses a number of references to the ʿšm.w in sources located in southern Egypt (these are usually *stelai* or graffiti in which Egyptians commemorate campaigns waged against the ʿšm.w), and comes to the conclusion that there is no reason to think that they were not always linked to the semitic world.³⁰ In Demotic texts, the word also has the sense ‘herdsman’. This sense is poorly attested in hieroglyphs; it may occur on a *stèle* from the Late Kingdom.³¹ This could have been a development from the same root, if Asiatics were perceived as working as herdsmen.³² This would be one of a number of cases where a professional term develops from an originally ethnic one (as Professor Janet Johnson pointed out to me). From then on, the development is a smooth one to the use of the word in Demotic, where its primary meaning seems to be ‘herdsman’, although the original meaning may not entirely have been lost.

Thus, a reasonable inference from the Egyptian data is that the ʿšm.w of the *Contest for the Benefice* might have a long tradition in Egyptian fiction. In earlier stages of the tradition they might have been genuine foreigners, enemies of the Egyptian state. By the time of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle, they have been appropriated by Egypt, fighting on behalf of one Egyptian against another.

A second manifestation of the same Egyptian tradition of foreign herdsmen at odds with central authority is perhaps to be found in Manetho’s account of Egyptian history. According to Manetho, as cited by Josephus (*FGrHist* 609F10), the Hyksos who occupied Egypt during the second millennium BCE were known as ‘king-shepherds’:

Their race bore the generic name of Hyksos, which means ‘king-shepherds’. For HYK in the sacred language denotes ‘king’, and SOS in the common dialect means ‘shepherd’ or ‘shepherds’; the combined words form Hyksos. Some say they were Arabians.

That is not the true etymology of the word, though according to Bietak it is a plausible folk-etymology.³³ These shepherds, Manetho says, were expelled by the pharaoh Tethmosis. They spent some time at Avaris in the Eastern Delta (now generally identified with modern Tell el-Dab’a), then went off to found Jerusalem. At a later point, several hundred years later, they entered Egyptian history again, when the pharaoh Amenophis expelled some lepers ‘and other polluted people’ and sent them to a quarry. The lepers called on the Jewish shepherds to help them, and they came, led by a priest of Heliopolis called Osarsiphos. Amenophis was expelled from Egypt and driven into Ethiopia, to return after thirteen years.

In another tradition, reported by Josephus from Chaeremon (*FGrHist* 618F1), Amenophis expelled the ‘contaminated’ population, led by Moses and Joseph, who went to Pelusium, where they linked up with another group of exiles to whom Amenophis had refused permission to cross the border. Notice that it is Pelusium that the Jews passed by when they left Egypt on the way to the Red Sea in *Exodus* 14. We read in *Exodus* 14.1:

³⁰ Redford (1986); the geographical location is linked to the question of the meaning of the word. If it was originally semitic in its application, then it is reasonable to suppose that it was a semitic word originally. One theory is that it is from the semitic root *ʿm*, but that would not account for the middle consonant. Yeivin (1959) suggested the true root might be semitic *ʿlm*, which means ‘young man’, and Redford supports this.

³¹ This is a stèle published by Burchardt and Roeder (1918); the hieroglyph was reinterpreted by Sharff (1936).

³² We happen to have depictions of herdsmen on tombs, and it has often been noticed that they are represented as rougher than other Egyptians: see Lloyd (1976–88) 2.370.

³³ According to Bietak (1980) the popular tradition is that the word is from *ḥqšw-ššsw*. The true etymology of Hyksos is of course *ḥqš-ḥšwt* = ‘ruler of foreign lands’, a term for foreigners that we find from early on in Egyptian sources. See van Henten and Abusch (1996) 276, who discuss the background. The MS of Manetho also reports a tradition that the word means ‘prisoner’, which Bietak suggests is from *ḥšq*. On the Hyksos, see now Redford (1997) and other essays in Oren (1997).

Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Tell the Israelites to turn back and camp near Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They are to camp by the sea directly opposite Baal Zephon. Pharaoh will think, “The Israelites are wandering about the land in confusion, hemmed in by the desert”...’

And then in *Exodus* 14.9:

The Egyptians—all Pharaoh’s horses and chariots, horsemen and troops—pursued the Israelites and overtook them as they camped by the sea near Pi Hahiroth opposite Baal Zephon.

Baal Zephon is none other than the sanctuary of Zeus Kasios at Pelusium. Furthermore, just as the Jews are linked with Seth-Typhon in some texts (e.g. in the Greek magical papyri, at *PGM* 36. 105–11), so Pelusium is linked to the Egyptian god Seth, known to the Greeks as Typhon.³⁴ Thus, in the Hyksos tradition, we seem to have a pattern which exactly parallels the semantics of *ʿšm.w*, namely a group of foreigners are described as ‘shepherds’. In fact the words *ʿšm.w* and *ḥqš.w-ḥšwt* (‘princes of the foreign lands’—the original form from which Hyksos is derived) are virtually synonymous, as we can see from the Beni Hasan mural, where the 37 *ʿšm.w* are led by a figure labelled ‘the *ḥqš-ḥšwt* Abishar’.³⁵

There is one piece of evidence that directly links the Jews of *Exodus* with the *ʿšm.w n pr. ḏwf* of the Petubastis-Inaros Cycle. Another place the Jews pass by in *Exodus* 13.18 is Yam Suf, translated ‘Red Sea’ in the Authorized Version, though the sense ‘Sea of Reeds’ is to be preferred, if (as is likely) *šūf* can mean ‘reeds’. But it is possible that Hebrew *šūf* is related to Egyptian *ḏwf* (which way the lexical borrowing took place is uncertain), so that the Jews of *Exodus* would have been represented as wandering through the same geographical zone that the *ʿšm.w* inhabit in Demotic fiction.³⁶

The possibility that Manetho’s Hyksos could be linked to the herdsmen of the *Contest for the Benefice* has not gone unnoticed. In the introduction to his *editio princeps* of the papyrus of the *Contest for the Benefice*, Spiegelberg drew attention to the parallel with Manetho’s account of the Egyptian priest Osariphos who leads the exiles (observe the pattern ‘Egyptian priest leads herdsmen’ that we noticed before).³⁷ The papyrologist Jacques Schwartz argued for a more complex version of this hypothesis:³⁸ for him, one tradition that the *Contest for the Benefice* drew on is an old one of a conflict between an Egyptian ruler (he thinks a ruler of Tanis), and ‘Asiatics’, which could have something to do with Manetho’s narrative about the Hyksos. The most economical approach, I would suggest, is to posit a traditional narrative pattern in Egyptian literature—‘Outlaw *ʿšm.w* oppose Egyptian authority’—and to argue that this pattern has come through in two different ways in the Greek–Egyptian material: first, in the more fictional narratives of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle; and second, in the more historical Hyksos-narratives of Manetho and Chaerephon.³⁹

³⁴ Jews and Seth: van Henten and Abusch (1996). Seth and Pelusium: Donner (1974). Sanctuary of Zeus Kasios at Pelusium: Chuvin and Yoyotte (1986).

³⁵ Loprieno (1988) 45–6 regards Abishar as one of the earliest representations of an individual foreigner in Egyptian culture, but stresses the conventional nature of the representation.

³⁶ Dayan (1998). The semantic relation is discussed by Vervenne (1995).

³⁷ Spiegelberg (1910) 8–9.

³⁸ Schwartz (1950). For him, the ‘Benefice’ story of the Inaros Cycle represents a combination of two older narratological motifs: first, a conflict between Thebes and Buto (i.e. Upper and Lower Egypt); and second, a conflict between an Egyptian ruler (he thinks of Tanis) and ‘Asiatics’. Schwartz thinks that the second of these may well have something to do with the Manetho-tradition about the Hyksos, and that could be right.

³⁹ That model is complicated by the possibility that an echo of the Hyksos-shepherds may resonate in the Greek novel. That hypothesis might explain the location of the *boukoloï* in the Eastern Delta near Pelusium that we observed in Achilles Tatius and Xenophon of Ephesus. And the Hyksos-story might even have been the subject of a Greek novel, to judge from *POxy* 3011, a fragmentary narrative recounting the withdrawal of the pharaoh Amenophis from Egypt, which has been thought to resemble the novels in style. Stephens and Winkler doubt whether this comes from a novel, but Morgan (1998) 3385 has recently reasserted the view that it does.

The narrative pattern no doubt continued to flourish in native Egyptian culture, either in written or oral form. It is the sort of story pattern that seems likely to have appealed to nationalist Egyptian sentiment in times of unrest, and this form of literature has been studied in an important article by Alan Lloyd.⁴⁰ It follows that the *Boukoloï* whom Avidius Cassius subdued in 172 CE are likely to have called themselves *ʿšm.w* and to have set themselves in the tradition of the heroes of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle.

3. A BICULTURAL TRADITION

The question arises, when and how did the story-pattern migrate to Greece? There is a wide range of possibilities. It could have been as early as the first centuries of contact between Greece and Egypt, when we have reason to think that the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle was already formed. There are some signs that aspects of Egyptian fiction were already known to the Greeks in the fifth century. The story of Sethos in Herodotus (2.141) has been claimed to resemble the Setne stories; the Hermotubies mentioned by Herodotus (2.164) as one of a number of groups into which Egyptian society is divided (one of two groups of 'fighters', the other being the *kalasiries*) might correspond to the *ʿšm.w n (pr)* ('herdsmen of the papyrus land') of the *Contest* (though even if that is true, it need imply no knowledge of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle itself).⁴¹ Most importantly, knowledge of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle has been thought to be reflected in the account of the rebel Inaros in Thucydides.⁴² However, even if traces of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle migrated to Greek literature in the fifth century, the major period of contact is more likely to have been the Hellenistic period, when Manetho adapted Egyptian traditions, or even the Roman period. In that case, perhaps the novelists drew directly on Egyptian sources, or at least translations of them, self-consciously building Egyptian material into their narratives.

Daniel Selden has made the attractive suggestion that some scenes in the Greek novel of Achilles Tatius invite alternative readings, depending on the cultural presuppositions of the reader. For example, the programmatic image of Zeus carrying off Europa in the temple at Sidon at the start of the novel would be read one way by Greeks, and another way by people familiar with semitic mythology. He says:⁴³

These two dimensions of the text do not stand in either metaphorical or ironic relation, but emerge simultaneously without reinforcing or, alternatively, interfering with the other; details of the narrative that may seem odd or irrelevant to one interpretative community are fully motivated for the other.

He calls this approach 'syllepsis' or 'double determination'. I wonder if an analogous approach could not be applied to the narratives of the *boukoloï* in the Greek novel. To a Greek audience, these would be read as part of the continuum of the romance. On the other hand, people who knew the Demotic tales, whether in translation or in the original, might well think of a temporary generic shift into the world of Demotic fiction. Such an approach might well be expected to work in the *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus, which, as Jack Winkler observed, is more concerned with issues of translation from one language to another than any other ancient text.⁴⁴ To con-

⁴⁰ Lloyd (1982).

⁴¹ Struve (1936); Lloyd (1976–88) 3.187 seems to agree, citing Aristagoras of Miletus, *FGrHist* 608F1, who says they were also called Labareis, which Lloyd interprets as 'men of the baris, boatmen'. Numerous etymologies for their name have been suggested, mostly on the basis that the beginning of the word resembles the Egyptian for 'man': *rmṯ-hṯrw* (horsemen) by Spiegelberg (1906b); *rmṯ-dbt* (men of the spear) by Möller (1920); *rmṯ-šm* ('men of the family' or 'offspring', a term already linked to the military sphere in Egyptian sources), by Thissen (1994); Grapow, *RE* 8.905, agrees with the first element but not the second.

⁴² So Birchall (1996), for example.

⁴³ Selden (1994) 49–50.

⁴⁴ Winkler (1982) 104–5.

sider the *Aithiopika*, it is as if as long as its plot passes through Egypt, we are intruding on an episode from the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle in progress: in geographical terms, we pass through Egypt; in literary terms, we pass through the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle.

As a test for the presence of ‘syllepsis’, Selden asks for details that make sense to different interpretative communities. One detail would perhaps be the name ‘Kalasiris’, the name of the priest in the *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus. ‘Kalasiris’ is a genuine Egyptian name, derived apparently from a late Egyptian word for ‘warrior’—*gl-šrj*. The Greek equivalent, *kalasiris*, is used by Herodotus for one of two types of Egyptian noble warrior, the other being the *hermotubis*.⁴⁵ There were *kalasiries* in Hellenistic Egypt, particularly attached to temples; they have been discussed exhaustively by Winnicki in several articles. The Greeks also used the word for an Egyptian cloak, a sense perhaps derived from the first. The development into a proper noun had already happened by the Roman period in Egypt.⁴⁶ It is perhaps worth bearing in mind that the original Egyptian word actually occurs in the texts of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle in the sense of ‘distinguished warrior’.

Now, the reader would perhaps not think of this association at every point in the *Aithiopika*. But it becomes more attractive when the priest Kalasiris is juxtaposed with scenes involving warring Egyptian warriors. Consider, for example, the scene in *Aithiopika* 7.6.5, where Kalasiris turns up just at the moment when his sons are engaged in mortal combat:

... τότε δὴ πῶς εἴτε τι δαιμόνιον εἴτε τύχη τις τὰ ἀνθρώπεια βραβεύουσα
καινὸν ἐπεισόδιον ἐπετραγώιδει τοῖς δρωμένοις, ὥσπερ εἰς ἀνταγώνισμα
δράματος ἀρχὴν ἄλλου παρεισφέρουσα, καὶ τὸν Καλάσιριν εἰς ἡμέραν καὶ
ῥᾶν ἐκείνην ὥσπερ ἐκ μηχανῆς σὺνδρομὸν τε καὶ οὐκ εὐτυχῆ θεωρὸν τῶι
περὶ ψυχῆς ἀγῶνι τῶν παίδων ἐφίστησι ...

(... then indeed either a divine power or fate judging mortal events imposes a new episode on the drama of events, adding to the conflict the start of another drama, and it introduces Kalasiris on that day like an *ex machina* character and an unhappy watcher for his children’s deadly combat ...)

Aspects of this passage no doubt show the influence of Greek literature.⁴⁷ But I would also suggest that it is meant to recall a narrative pattern in Demotic literature. I would compare two episodes from the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle. First, towards the end of the extant text of the *Contest for the Benefice*, when the young priest and the herdsmen are holding Ankh-Hor in the hold of the sacred ship, reinforcements for the pharaoh arrive from Elephantine in the South in the form of the *kalasiris* Minnemmei, son of Inaros. His duel with one of the herdsmen lasts all day, ending in a draw. Then (*PSpieg.* col.16) Minnemmei returns to his galley:

Then came Pharaoh to him with the great leader of the East, Pequrris, and with Teos, the son of Ankh-Hor. They said to him: Does a man go to the place of combat and return without going to the place where Pharaoh is, to receive the reward of his combat? Then the *kalasiris* went to the place where Pharaoh was. He took the helmet from his head ...

Similarly, towards the end of the *Breastplate*, Paqurris, ally of Pemus, is marshalling troops for battle, and the *kalasiris* Montubal turns up (col. XIV. 14, 17; XIX, 12):

⁴⁵ Hdt. 2.164; a comprehensive survey of the subject is Winnicki (1977); also Lloyd (1976–88) 2: 187; and see now Ryholt (1998b) 154.

⁴⁶ Attested in *PRhind* 2: see Spiegelberg (1906a) 87; Winnicki (1977) 258.

⁴⁷ As for example the phrase οὐκ εὐτυχῆ θεωρὸν recalls Euripides, *Hipp.* 806–7.

... it happened that the great chief of the east, Paqruris, turned away from the two armies, and he perceived a *kalasiris*, while he shone with steel, while he was beautiful in form, while he stood on the *Jnq* of a new and well-decorated chariot ... He raised his hand before the great chief of the east, Paqruris, saying: 'Be favourable to me, Oh Baal, great god, my god! Why have you not given me my own opponent in battle, that I may join my brothers, the sons of the prince Inaros, my father?' The prince of the East, Paqruris, saw the *kalasiris* without recognizing him. He said to him, 'Which of the men of our clan are you?' The *kalasiris* said to him, 'In truth, my father, prince of the East, Paqruris, I am Montebaal, the son of Inaros ...'

Subsequently, Montebaal makes a decisive contribution to the conflict, and succeeds in getting the breastplate returned to the family of Inaros. So we have two examples in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle in which a *kalasiris* turns up to save the day: in one case he is successful, and in one case he fails.

In *Aithiopika* 7.6 the conflict between Thyamis and Petosiris for the priesthood of Memphis is resolved by the unexpected appearance of, not a *kalasiris* exactly, but rather Kalasiris, the Memphite priest. It should be observed that this is precisely the section of the *Aithiopika* that Anderson suggested was modelled on the *Contest for the Benefice*. Now, this *recherché* allusion would have no chance of working in an interpretative community of readers who did not know the Demotic material. But it might be recognizable to a bilingual reader familiar with the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle, or to a reader who, though not bilingual, was nevertheless familiar with Egyptian literature in translation.

To recap, the point of reading the *Aithopika* this way is that we no longer have to think about the Egyptian material somehow filtering through and influencing the novel. Rather, we should posit two distinct traditions available both to Heliodorus and his readers: the tradition of the Greek romance, wherever that started; and the tradition of Egyptian Demotic fiction. Heliodorus then somehow fuses them together, in such a way that the identity of the Egyptian material is not wholly lost. In this way, Heliodorus contributes to the survival of a cultural tradition that was by his time dying.⁴⁸

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⁴⁸ I owe the last suggestion to Prof. Thissen. Compare now Whitmarsh (1998) 124: 'The central images of hybridity, of interloping, of illegitimacy, of combination together constitute a means of representing the text as engaged in the reconfiguration and renewal of literary tradition' (Whitmarsh's paper came to my attention only after this paper was virtually complete).

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