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KALASIRIS AND SETNE KHAMWAS: A GREEK NOVEL AND SOME EGYPTIAN
MODELS

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1) Greek and Egyptian Fiction.

There is every reason to think that Egyptian literature could have had an influence on Greek literature. An Greco-Egyptian culture existed in Egypt at least from the Ptolemaic period and quite possibly since the earliest Greek settlements in the 7th century. The icon for this culture is the city of Alexandria, a natural meeting place for Greek and Egyptian ideas. There has been a tendency sometimes to think of Greeks in Egypt as cut off from Egyptian cultural influence, but more recently scholars have begun to take the more reasonable view that there was cultural influence from Egypt. I think particularly of the important book by Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes*, in which he attempts to place the figure of Hermes Trismegistos in Greco-Egyptian cultural context, showing the Hermeticism of the early Roman Empire most likely continues traits associated with the Egyptian God Thoth (Greek Hermes) in late Egyptian religious and magical thought.

As far as the Greek novel is concerned, such influence has long been suspected. Perhaps the most important single piece of information to bear in mind is that in one crucial case a work of prose fiction is attested both in Egyptian and in Greek versions. This is *The Story of the Sun's Eye*. The premise of this story is that Tefnut (Tfenet) was a daughter of the son-god Atum or Atum-Re. She is sometimes known as the "Sun's eye" (Yiret-Ra), hence the title. Now, Tefnut got angry with Re for some reason, and went south to Nubia. The god Thoth was given the job of bringing her back to Egypt, which he does. Both gods take animal form: Tefnut has the form of a cat, a lion, or a vulture, while Thoth has the form of an

¹ I refer to the following works by author:

- G. Anderson, *Ancient Fiction. The Novel in the Graeco-Roman World* (London 1984);
- J. W. B. Barns, "Egypt and the Greek Romance", *Akten 8. Kongress für Papyrologie*, Mitteilungen aus der Papyrusammlung der Oesterreich. Nationalbibliothek, n.s. 5, ed. H. Gerstinger (Vienna 1956), 29-36;
- E. Bresciani, *Der Kampf um den Panzer des Inaros (Papyrus Krall)*. Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek (Papyrus Erzherzog Rainer) 8 (Vienna 1964);
- F. de Cenival, *Le mythe de l' Oeil du Soleil*, Demotische Studien 9 (Sommerhausen 1988);
- G. Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* (Princeton 1986);
- F. L. Griffith, *Stories of the High-Priests of Memphis: The Sethon of Herodotus and the Demotic Tales of Khamwas* (London 1900);
- K. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650BC)* (Warminster 1973);
- M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature. A Book of Readings* (Berkeley 1980); vol.3 is particularly important for this paper;
- G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt* (New York 1967; originally published in French in 1882; translated A. S. Johns);
- B. E. Perry, "The Egyptian Legend of Nectanebus", *TAPA* 97 (1966) 327ff.;
- W. Spiegelburg, *Der Sagenkreis des Königs Petubastis* (Leipzig 1910);
- S. A. Stephens and J. Winkler, *Ancient Greek Novels. The Fragments* (Princeton 1995);
- John Tait, "Egyptian Fiction in Demotic and Greek", in *Greek Fiction. The Greek Novel in Context*, edd. J. R. Morgan and R. Stoneman (London 1994), 203-222;
- "Demotic Literature in Egyptian Society", in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society. Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine*, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, 5 edd. J. Johnson (Chicago 1992), 303-310;
- A. Volten, "Der demotische Petubastisroman und seine Beziehung zur griechischen Literatur", in *Akten* (see Barns), 147ff.;
- S. West, "The Greek Version of the Legend of Tefnut", *JEA* 55 (1969) 161-183;
- J. Winkler, "The Mendacity of Calasiris", *YCS* 27 (1982) 93-158.

ape or a dog. On the way, Thoth tells her stories to beguile her, so that the journey becomes a frame for narratives.²

There are also some other cases of probable translation of Egyptian fiction into Greek. One is the story of Nectanebo, the last Egyptian pharaoh, and father of Alexander the Great. The beginning of this survives in a Greek version, and it is also incorporated into the Alexander Romance. No Egyptian correlate survives, but scholars have tended to think that there was one, since the theme is so uncompromisingly Egyptian.³ Yet another candidate for translation from Egyptian is the Sesostris novel, the story of the semi-legendary pharaoh Sesostris, which probably has an Egyptian background (extant in a few fragments). So there is reason to think that Egyptian fiction might have been known to Greek audiences.⁴

Another general point to make is that Greek authors of this period acknowledge the cultural importance of Egypt. To take an example which is not wholly random, there is a passage of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika* (3. 13) where the Egyptian priest Kalasiris, who is in Delphi in Greece, tells the person he is talking to that Homer was not born in Chios or Smyrna, or any of Greek places he is supposed to have been born, but was actually an Egyptian, who left Egypt and came to Greece.

In their recent edition of the fragments of the Greek novel, Susan Stephens and Jack Winkler discuss the possibility of Egyptian influence, and seem to incline in favour of it, but find no convincing cases.⁵ They think that the two instances of translation cited above are not sufficiently like the novel to make plausible the hypothesis that the novel itself derived traits from Egyptian material. It is the purpose of this paper to argue for some specific parallels.

2) Kalasiris and Setne Khaemwas

Kalasiris is probably the most interesting figure in the *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus. As Jack Winkler showed about ten years ago, he is a tricky character, with hidden knowledge and a capacity to conceal the truth, if he has to.⁶ It is interesting that there is a cycle of tales in Egyptian fiction which stars a priest. That priest is Setne Khamwas, priest of the god Ptah in Memphis. Setne Khamwas seems to be based on a real priest of the 19th dynasty, a son of Ramesses II. The name "Khamwas" means "the one who appears in Thebes" (Kha-em-Wast); "Setne" may be a late Egyptian version of an earlier priestly title *sm* (Lex. Äg. s. Setne; Griffith).

Papyri containing stories relating to Setne date from the Ptolemaic period, the earliest perhaps from the 3rd century BCE. Two main stories are known, distinguished for their somewhat complex and intricate narratological technique.⁷ In the first, which we can call *Setne Khamwas and the Magic Book*, Setne wants to get a book of magic from a dead prince, Naneferkaptah, and his wife and sister, Ahwere. Naneferkaptah is buried in Memphis, Ahwere in Koptos to the South. There are four stages in this story.

² M. J. Smith, "Sonnenaug, Demotischer Mythos vom" (in English), Lex. Äg. s.v.; most recent edition of Egyptian version: de Cenival (1988); Greek version: West (1969).

³ See Perry. Another story, *The Dream of Nektanebos* is narrated in the form of an Egyptian Königsnovelle (L. Koenen, *BASP* 22 [1986] 171-194).

⁴ Sesostris: A. B. Lloyd, "Nationalist Propoganda in Ptolemaic Egypt", *Historia* 31 (1982) 37-40.

⁵ Stephens and Winkler, 12-6; for a similar attitude in C. Ruiz-Montero, "The Rise of the Greek Novel", in *The Novel in the Ancient World*, ed. G. Schmeling, Mnemos. Suppl. 159 (Leiden 1996), 71-6.

⁶ Kalasiris is not the only Egyptian priest to star in a Greek novel. In the fragmentary *Wonders Beyond Thule* by Antionius Diogenes, the hero and heroine are persecuted by an evil Egyptian priest called Paapis. His name suggests Memphis also, since it means "The Apis" or "The one of Apis"; Apis is the Apis bull who was thought to be an earthly avatar of Ptah. Unfortunately, we do not have much detailed information about Paapis, because the novel only survives in epitome. See Stephens and Winkler, 123, n.40.

⁷ Translated in Lichtheim(3); an older translation with edition by Griffiths. Albert Henrichs draws my attention to S. West, *ZPE* 51 (1983) 55ff., a short papyrus fragment in which the narrator kills himself, which West compares to the narrative of the dead Naneferkaptah in *Setne Khamwas and the Magic Book*; C. Bonner, "A Fragment of a Romance (University of Michigan Inv. N. 3378", *Aegyptus* 13 (1933) 203ff.

Stage 1: the dead Ahwere tells Setne the story of how she and Naneferkaptah came to die. Naneferkaptah had learnt that a magic book he wanted was at the bottom of the Nile, near Koptos, so he went there in a magic ship, overcame various monsters, and eventually obtained the book. But his wife and child drowned in the Nile; and Naneferkaptah later died by drowning also.

Stage 2: even after hearing this, Setne still wants the book, and he plays Naneferkaptah at draughts for it. Eventually, he wins.

Stage 3: He gets the book, then he has a romantic episode. He falls in love with a beautiful woman, Tabubu, in the temple in Memphis. He tries to seduce her, but it is a disaster; she turns out to be some sort of supernatural temptress. He is left naked and embarrassed, and, reckoning that this is some sort of punishment from Naneferkaptah, he returns the book.

Stage 4: Naneferkaptah imposes a sort of penance on Setne: he has to bring the corpse of his wife Ahwere, and their son, Merib, from Koptos north to Memphis, which he does.

In the second story, Setne has a son, Si-Osire ("son of Osiris"), who grows to be a magician, a sort of shaman. A messenger comes from the Nubians, who asks whether anyone can read the message he carries without breaking the seal. Si-Osire can, and his reading of it produces extraordinary revelations about the earlier incarnations of Si-Osire and his relation to the Nubian sorcerer. Interestingly, Setne Khamwas may be reflected by Herodotus' Sethon, a priest of Hephaestus at Memphis (2.141); that passage comes just before the account of the Labyrinth. Some scholars count Herodotus' story of Sethon, priest of Ptah at Memphis, as another instance of a Setne Khamwas Romance.

Setne's encounter with Tabubu is rather like what happens to Kalasiris before he leaves Egypt. Kalasiris falls in love with a Thracian woman called Rhodopis in the temple at Memphis, although he leaves before he does anything reprehensible (there is a sort of inversion of the scene at the start of book 7 of the novel where Theagenes is ogled in the temple of Isis by the Persian queen Arsake (7. 10). This provides a second point of contact between the plot of the *Aithiopika* and Egyptian fiction. The parallel is not quite exact, because Kalasiris is a priest of Isis rather than Ptah, but that is because Isis is the Egyptian deity most recognisable in the Greco-Roman world.⁸

This borrowing may have come about in one of two ways. One possibility is that there was a Greek translation of the *Khamwas* stories, which Heliodorus had direct access too, or knew of indirectly. Perhaps the intermediary was a historiographical tradition, rather like Setne/Sethon in Herodotus. Manetho is an obvious possibility. Perhaps some books of his work discussed the history of the Third Intermediate Period, making use of stories like this.

3) The *Aithiopika* and the *Contest for the Benefice of Amun*

Heliodorus relates how eventually, after a series of adventures, Kalasiris together with Theagenes and Charicleia come to Egypt. There, they fall in with a bandit called Thyamis, who has a band of robbers, who are called shepherds or *boukoloï*. But Thyamis is not a professional bandit. In fact, he is the son of Kalasiris; he ought to have succeeded his father as priest of Memphis when Kalasiris left, but he had been unjustly driven into exile by his younger brother, Petosiris. Thyamis returns to Memphis, and the two brothers begin a single combat, but they put their quarrels aside when Kalasiris unexpectedly turns up. Kalasiris, Theagenes and Charicleia thus end up in Memphis, which is under the control of the Persians (the story seems to be set in the 5th century, when Egypt was in the Persian Empire). Kalasiris dies in Memphis, leaving Theagenes and Charicleia to face the slings and arrows of fortune alone.

Now, as Graham Anderson pointed out, the motif of two priest-warriors engaging in combat over a priesthood has a rough parallel in a demotic Egyptian source, the story known to modern scholars as

⁸ J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Isis in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius" in *Aspects of Apuleius' Golden Ass*, ed. B. L. Hijmans Jr. and R. Th. van der Paardt (Groningen 1978), 152. The parallel between Tabubu and Rhodopis is noticed also by D. Montserrat, *Sex and Society in Greco-Roman Egypt* (London 1996), 110 n.11.

The Conflict over the Benefice of Amun (no title survives in the papyrus). This is part of a cycle of prose stories, the so-called "*Petubastis Cycle*", so-called because most of the stories have something to do with the pharaoh Petubastis (his full name is Sehetepibenre Petubastis II), who ruled in the mid 7th century, during the Third Intermediate Period. This was the period when Egypt broke down into numerous different minor territories, each with their local ruler, until Psammetichus I unified the country again, with the help of the Assyrians in about 664-57BCE, founding the 26th Dynasty.

The *Petubastis Cycle* consisted of a number of narratives with the same focal characters. Two concern a figure called Inaros from Heliopolis; these are *Inaros and the Griffon*, and *The Contest for the Breastplate*. *Inaros and the Griffon* tells about his struggle with a griffon on the Red Sea. *The Contest for the Breastplate of Inaros* is set in the period after the death of Inaros, when there is a struggle between Pemu of Heliopolis and Urtep-Amun-niut of Mendes, under Petubastis. Another tale that belongs to the cycle is *Prince Pedikhons and Queen Serpot*, also called *Egyptians and Amazons*; this tells the story of another son of Inaros, called Pedikhons, who goes to Western Asia to look for Serpot, Queen of the Amazons, and they eventually fall in love.⁹ Yet another is the *Contest for the Benefice of Amon*, of which more anon.

The *Petubastis Cycle* has a complex relationship to Greek literature. In some respects it seems to reflect epic. *The Contest Over the Benefice of Amon* features warriors sulking and having to be persuaded to take part in battle, like Achilles in the *Iliad*. The *Contest for the Breastplate of Inaros* reminds one of the conflict for possessions of the weapons of dead Achilles in Greek epic. Finally, *Pedikhons and Serpot*, the one about the Amazons, ends with the two focal characters falling in love with each other on the battle-field, and this could be influenced by the story of Achilles and Penthesileia, again originally from Greek epic, the *Aithiopsis*.¹⁰ Assuming that there was indeed some such influence, one wonders when it might have happened, and this in turn raises the question of when the *Petubastis Cycle* were composed. Some people think that their composition is a consequence of early Ptolemaic interest in researching Egyptian history (Spiegelberg, 10; Bresciani, 14-5). But they need not be so late. Why not see them as the product of a direct oral tradition of narrative going back virtually to the events themselves, i.e. the 6th century BCE? There must have been Egyptian oral sagas and historical narratives in this period, but we have independent testimony of their existence from Herodotus, whose account of Egyptian history is replete with stories that sound very much as if they come from 5th century versions of the *Petubastis-Cycle*. The *Petubastis Cycle* may already have been around, at least in oral form, in the 6th-5th centuries. And I would suggest that the composers of the *Petubastis Cycle* had access to Greek literary traditions at this period. After all, there was a heavy Greek presence in Egypt from the 7th century BCE, as the result of mercenary armies and trade. I would suggest that the contact came about through bilingualism: there were people who knew their Homer, or at least Homeric mythology, but could also understand and influence Egyptian oral traditions.

Of "The Contest for the Benefice of Amun", only the central section of this survives. Scholars have reconstructed the lost beginning as follows:¹¹ the priest of Amun at Thebes died, and the Pharaoh claimed the inheritance, the benefice, first for himself, then for Ankh-Hor, his son. He 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, the so-called

⁹ Inaros and the Griffon: not translated; The Contest for the Breastplate: translated in Maspero, edited by Bresciani; Prince Pedikhons and Queen Serpot: translated by Lichtheim, vol.3.

¹⁰ These parallels are noticed by Bresciani, introduction. See also F. Hoffmann, *Ägypten und Amazonen. Neuarbeitung zweier demotischen Papyri: P. Vindob. D. 6165 und P. Vindob. D. 6165A* (MPER XXIV, 1995), 29. L. Koenen, "Ägyptische Königsideologie am Ptolemäerhofe", in *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (Stud. Hell. 27), ed. by E. van't Dack, P.V. Dessel, and W. van Gucht (Louvain 1983), 142-190, esp. p. 146.

¹¹ Translated by Maspero, edited by Spiegelberg. See now F. Hoffmann, "Der Anfang des P. Spiegelberg. Ein Versuch zur Wiederherstellung", in S. P. Vleeming, *Hundred-Gated Thebes*, Pap. Lugduno-Batav. XXVII (Leiden 1995) 43-68.

young priest of Horus of Buto, with the help of 13 warriors, called *3amew*. The story really hots up when the young priest of Horus seizes 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 the extant text begins. There is a confrontation between the two claimants, and the young-priest of Buto locks up Ankh-Hor in the sacred ship. Eventually, 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. Also, a new fighter appears from the south, Min-neb-mat, from Yeb (Elephantine); he is successful in combat, and rewarded by the Pharaoh. That is where the text ends. In the lost ending, Ankh-Hor probably gets the benefice, and the young priest of Buto departed with his band of 13 *3amew*.

Now this is remarkably close to a section of Bk. 7 of the *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus summarised earlier. Admittedly, the similarities are not exact, and there are some differences: Thyamis and Petosiris are brothers, whereas the priest of Buto and Ankh-Hor are not; Thebes is not Memphis. The conflict is over much more quickly in Heliodorus. Still, the parallel is there.

If we assume that one of these narratives has influenced the other, even indirectly, the Egyptian one is likely to be prior, because, although we do not know exactly when the Conflict Over the Benefice was composed, scholars agree that it probably dates from the Ptolemaic period or earlier (see above).

Anderson's insight also has an implication to our interpretation of the *boukoloï*. The *boukoloï* occur in Heliodorus' *Aithiopika* and in Achilles Tatius, *Cleitophon and Leucippe*. In the *Aithiopika* the *boukoloï* are the band of warriors led by Thyamis, elder son of Kalasiris. They hang out on marshes in the Delta. They are good guys (despite the comments of Knemon at 2. 17. 4 and of Nausikles at 2. 24. 2). They rescue Theagenes and Charicleia from a band of inferior robbers. They grow their hair long and look fierce (2. 20. 5). They live in Bessa (6. 3. 4); the whole area is called Boukolia after them (1. 5. 2). In Achilles' *Cleitophon and Leucippe*, the hero and heroine come ashore at Pelusium, at the sanctuary of Zeus Kasios, from where they sail toward Alexandria, but fall in with the *boukoloï* (3. 9). Cleitophon is rescued by Egyptian soldiers (3. 12); Leucippe undergoes a mock sacrifice (3. 15), after which she joins him. The Egyptians launch a campaign against the *boukoloï* on the island of Nikokhis (4. 12); the *boukoloï* hide in the marshes (4. 14), and ambush the Egyptians. They may be present also in the fragments of the *Phoinikika* of Lollianus.¹² We also find them in historical sources. They are a stock feature of the novels, always associated with the marshes of the Delta, always opposed to authority.

The prevailing theory is that the *boukoloï* are late. Jack Winkler in particular has argued in favour of this position. He distinguishes two groups: A) rebel-Boukoloï, who he finds in Achilles Tatius, *Cleitophon and Leucippe*, and also in Cassius Dio, 71. 4, as having caused a civil disturbance in 171AD under the prince Isidorus, and B) barbarous *boukoloï*, cowherds who are supposed to have lived in Rhakotis before the foundation of Alexandria, attested in Eratosthenes, *apud* Strabo 19 (802, 792).¹³ The former are outlaws, opposed to centralised political authority, the latter natives who repel invaders. His article does not make it too clear where Heliodorus' *boukoloï* belong in this picture: on the one hand, they are modelled on the *boukoloï* of Euripides; on the other hand they are outlaws, though pitted against the Persians, rather than the Greeks and Romans (J. Winkler, *JHS* 100 [1980] 180-1).

Against the argument that the *boukoloï* are late is the fact that there is a parallel between the *boukoloï* who Thyamis leads in Heliodorus, and the *3amew* who the priest of Buto leads in the *Contest*¹⁴ The *3amew* also rebels in a sense, though rebels against centralised Egyptian rule. Perhaps the outlaw

¹² Suggested by Henrichs, but doubted by Stephens and Winkler, 319-21.

¹³ Cf. also Homer, *Od.* 13. 222. The ποιμένες in Xenophon of Ephesus may be similar.

¹⁴ The parallel is based on function rather than semantics. The word *3amew* seems to be able to mean both "Asiatic" and also "shepherd". However, D. B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton 1992), 32, has recently connected it with a West Semitic word for "young man". Maspero noticed this parallel. There's also a strange connection with the Huksos, since Manetho translates them as "shepherds". That points to Egyptian background also.

Boukoloi continue this role. Here the connection might be complex: perhaps Egyptian rebels in the 2nd century AD appropriated an already existing concept.

4) The Name of Kalasiris

One more point about Kalasiris needs to be made concerning his name. This is a genuine Egyptian name, derived apparently from late Egyptian word for warrior - *gl-šj*. The Greek equivalent, *kalasiris*, is used by Herodotus for one of two types of Egyptian noble warrior, the other being the *hermotubis*.¹⁵ He 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.¹⁶ I suspect that Heliodorus chose the name "Kalasiris" for his priest character not just because it sounded Egyptian, but also because he liked the noble associations of the "warrior" sense. And it is perhaps worth bearing in mind that the original Egyptian word actually occurs in the texts of the *Petubastis Cycle*. We can even pinpoint the stylistic level: it is highly-charged, so that for example, individual warriors get called *gl-š-rj* when they turn up and save the day. To take an example, in *The Breastplate of Inaros*, Pemu and Urtepamonnui are fighting; Tinofer, on behalf of Pemu, calls to ships that are coming to Pemu's rescue: "Help. There are neither *kalasiries*, foot-soldiers, horsemen, or chariots with him against Urtepamonnui" ... and then a *kalasiris* appears on the prow of the ship and shouts his support. Also Paklul, ally of Pemu, is marshalling troops for battle, and the *kalasiris* Montubal turns up.¹⁷ In the *Contest* it occurs, when Min-neb-mei, who has just won a single combat, received thanks from the pharaoh (16. 17; Maspero, 261). I wonder if in the Greek adaptations of these stories, which I assume existed, the word *kalasiris* might have been used as a technical term for an Egyptian warrior; or whether perhaps in some lost Greco-Egyptian saga "Kalasiris" might have been used as a proper name for an Egyptian hero. And of course I speculate that Heliodorus' choice of name might have been influenced by some such usage.

These associations might seem inappropriate for Kalasiris, a priest who shows no sign of military prowess. However, in Egypt, priests can be warriors, a pattern illustrated by the high-priest of Buto in *The Contest Over the Benefice of Amun*, by the two sons of Kalasiris in the *Aithiopika*, and finally by the priest Isidorus who according to Dio Cassius 71. 4 led the revolt of the *Boukoloi* against the Romans in 171/2AD. Furthermore, some of the *gl-š-rj* were attached to temples, as we find them attached to the temple of Amun at Thebes in the Ptolemaic period.¹⁸

To sum up the argument so far, I suggest that a double connection exists between the *Aithiopika* and demotic Egyptian fiction: with the *Contest* and with *Setne and the Magic Book*. This makes me wonder whether we can't go a little further. So far, we have dealt only with small details. But there is a chance that the whole plot of the *Aithiopika* might be derivative on Egyptian material.

5) The broader plot

I begin with another suggestion by Graham Anderson. Anderson suggests that Heliodorus might have known something like the *Princess of Bakhtan*.¹⁹ This text, which purports to be from the time of Ramesses II in the 11th century BCE, but is in fact a late Egyptian forgery (or work of fiction), is a narrative describing how when a princess called Bentresh in a foreign country called Bakhtan falls ill, the Egyptians send first a doctor, and then the god Khons the Provider to heal her. Anderson compares this with the plot of the *Aithiopika*, in which Kalasiris leaves Egypt and cures Charicleia of lovesickness. I

¹⁵ Hdt.2.164; a comprehensive survey of the subject is J. K. Winnicki, *Historia* 26 (1977) 257-68 and *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 17 (1986) 17-32; also A. B. Lloyd, *Herodotus. Book II. Commentary* 99-102 (Leiden 1988), 187.

¹⁶ Attested in PRhind 2: see W. Spiegelberg, *ZÄS* 43 (1906) 87; Winnicki, *Historia* 26 (n. 15), 258 and *Or. Lov. Period.* 17 (n. 15) 26-32.

¹⁷ XIV. 14, 17; Maspero, p. 232; XIX. 12; Maspero, p. 236-7.

¹⁸ Winnicki, *Historia* 26 [n. 15]), 262 and *Or. Lov. Period.* 17 [n. 15] 22-26. Notice incidentally that the name *P3-dj-*Wsir**, i.e. Petosiris, is attested as the name of a *gl-š-rj*: Winnicki, *Historia* 17, 265.

¹⁹ Anderson, 15 ("The Legend of the Possessed Princess").

do not find that a particularly enlightening parallel, since in the *Princess of Bakhtan* the doctor does not bring the princess back to Egypt, whereas the defining feature of the plot of the *Aithiopika* is that Kalasiris effects the retrieval of Charicleia and her return to Ethiopia.

However, there is another possibility. I have already mentioned the *Story of the Sun's Eye*, also known as the Legend of Tefnut, in which Thoth (in the Greek version Hermes) was sent to fetch Tefnut back to Egypt, persuading her by telling stories.²⁰ Now, this is structurally somewhat similar to the plot of the *Aithiopika*, except that the dimensions North and South are reversed, and except that the characters are not gods. This is all so general, and "retrieval plots" are so common, that you might think it is hopeless to try to connect this specifically with the *Aithiopika*. And perhaps it is, but there are some interesting connections.

For one thing, the connection with the sun holds because, as we are told several times in the *Aithiopika*, Charicleia is a linear descendant of the Sun, who is the founding deity of the ruling family of Ethiopia. So she is returning to her father the Sun, like Tefnut. But there is also a parallel between the Thoth/Hermes figure in the *Sun's Eye* and Kalasiris. Kalasiris is a sort of general wise man, a philosopher-type figure, and Thoth/Hermes in the *Sun's Eye* is also. For example, when he is persuading Tefnut to return, he makes remarkably philosophical statements about the concept of a homeland. Thoth/Hermes also displays knowledge of hieroglyphs in the *Sun's Eye*. At 7.18 he says: "if one wants to write honey, one writes a figure of the sky with a pipe in its hand" (Spiegelberg, p. 5). Later on (9.10-1), he says: "if you want to write "year", you write a vulture" (which is true for late Egyptian).²¹ And that fits with the fact that Thoth is supposed to have invented hieroglyphs in Egyptian tradition (Plato's *Phaedrus* already attested Greek knowledge of this). Kalasiris also knows hieroglyphs, as you might expect an Egyptian priest to; but particular stress is placed on this by Heliodorus, and in particular on his skilful deciphering of the Ethiopian hieroglyphs on Charicleia's tokens. Finally, Thoth/Hermes tells animal-fables; the part of *The Sun's Eye* that Lichtheim translates (17.9-18.33) is in fact such a fable. And Kalasiris tells animal fables also, e.g. *Aith.*2.22 (Kalasiris: I am like a bird whose young have been eaten by a snake); *Aith.*3.8 (the plover [*kharadrios*] cures jaundice if it looks at you; the basilisk-snake can damage anything that crosses its path), the latter one explicitly said to come from "the sacred texts on animals".

To sharpen this comparison a little consider the figure of Hermes in Heliodorus. Hermes comes up at a couple of very significant places. First, in the middle of his narration of what happens at Delphi (*Aith.*3.5), Kalasiris invokes Hermes. This is often interpreted as an allusion to Homer, *Odyssey* 7.137ff., where the Phaeacians pour libations to Hermes before retiring to bed. On one level that probably works, but maybe it also implies that Hermes is a deity who Kalasiris is particularly comfortable with, and has a special relationship with. The second reference to Hermes—which we have already seen—comes in *Aith.*3.14, where Kalasiris talks about Homer, and reveals that Homer was an Egyptian, and his father was Hermes. I suggested earlier that this passage implies a parallel between Homer and Kalasiris. So is Kalasiris perhaps a son of Hermes? Now, the idea that Kalasiris has a special association with Hermes is very plausible, because in the person of Hermes Trismegistos, Hermes symbolises Egyptian wisdom for Greeks. But I wonder whether he is not perhaps thinking also of the *Eye of the Sun*, and the "retrieval" effected there by Hermes-Thoth.

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²⁰ This sometimes confused with another myth in which the god Onuris (*Anhur*) goes south to retrieve his consort Mekhit, a lion goddess (there is always a high degree of syncretism between different deities in Egyptian religion).

²¹ Spiegelberg, 28; Horapollo, 1.11.