The Many Voices in Heliodorus' Reanimation

In Section 73 of the *Bibliotheca*, a 9th century CE anthology of reviews on 280 pagan and Christian texts, Photius, twice patriarch of Constantinople (858-867 and 877-886) summarizes and analyzes Heliodoros' *Aethiopika*. Gerald Sandy (1982) notes an oddity in Photius' entry, namely that the necromancy episode from Book 6.12-15, comprising a mere one ninetieth of Heliodorus' novel, received one fourteenth of Photius' total summary. That a Christian scholar should place more importance on this passage than other scenes in the novel does not come as a surprise. As a religious man, Photius would have found this incident especially intriguing as it deals with pagan rituals to raise and speak with the dead. This macabre reanimation sequence, so intriguing to Photius, appears to be unique among the ancient Greek novels. The only other novel that incorporates elements of witchcraft and sorcery is Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, most conspicuously in the first three books.

Necromancy is divided into three distinct yet intersecting categories: evocation, scrying, and reanimation (Ogden 2001, 2002). The instances of necromancy, specifically reanimation, that appear in the ancient novels are: Apuleius' Meroe and Pamphile reanimate Socrates at *Metamorphoses* 1.13; at *Metamorphoses* 2.29-31, Zatchlas raises Thelyphron from the dead; and at *Aethiopika* 6.12-15, Heliodorus describes the reanimation of a dead soldier performed by the corpse's own mother. In the passage, he narrates that Charikleia (the heroine) and Kalasiris (her caretaker), searching for Theagenes (the hero), arrive on the outskirts of Bessa and come upon the aftermath of a battle. An old Egyptian woman is cradling a dead man in her arms and lamenting mournfully. Sitting beside her and consoling her, they discover that the dead man is her son. The old woman promises to guide them to Bessa at daybreak if they will wait for her to

perform certain nocturnal rites for him. They agree and move a short distance away to wait. Kalasiris falls asleep quickly, but Charikleia witnesses the woman perform dreadful acts upon her dead son.

The archetype for necromancy scenes in Greco-Roman literature, such as the one in Heliodorus, is the famous and elaborate reanimation performed by the Thessalian witch Erictho in Book 6 of Lucan's *Pharsalia*. In this episode (6.413-830), Sextus Pompey, son of Pompey the Great, consults the notorious witch to learn the outcome of the war between his father's forces and those of Julius Caesar, specifically the imminent battle at Pharsalus. While Lucan's Erictho scene undoubtedly influenced Heliodorus' necromancy episode and merits the full thrust of any analysis, other voices have impacted Heliodorus and deserve investigation.

In this presentation, I trace the voices that appear in Heliodorus' reanimation scene focusing particularly on Homer (*Odyssey* Bks 11, 12), Horace (*Satire* 1.8, *Epode* 5), Lucan (*Pharsalia* Bk 6), and Statius (*Thebaid* Bk 3). These texts, I argue, inform the physical and temporal setting, the ritualistic behavior of the reanimation, its themes, and the characters in Heliodorus' necromancy. While some scholars, most notably Daniel Ogden (2001, 2002), have made passing references to these literary antecedents, a detailed analysis is still wanting.

I argue specifically that the Latin poets, i.e. Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid, require certain temporal and physical landscapes when depicting acts of witchcraft, as well as specific characteristics for their witches (Johnson 2012, Tavenner 1992, Spaeth 2014), with which Heliodorus complies. The preparations for the *Aethiopika's* reanimation scene can be traced to Homer's *Odyssey*, and the themes of the necromancy proper to Lucan's *Pharsalia*. Statius's *Thebaid* (3.133-168) tenders the characters for the passage, viz. a mother searching a battleground for her two sons. After discussing the numerous voices that help inform and guide

the reanimation scene in the *Aethiopika*, I show how Heliodorus transforms and problematizes the scene to suit the specific needs of his novel.

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