

different senses to produce the translation 'darling and distress'. For *labor* in the sense of 'a cause of pain or distress' (though not in erotic contexts), cf. Sen. *Phaed.* 792, Sil. 3.75 (of Hannibal). This explanation is in principle feasible: the *ludiae* might well feel the glamour exerted by Hermes, yet simultaneously experience worry should he be matched with their own *vir*.⁴⁰

On balance, however, it seems best to opt for the second explanation, for three reasons. First, the idea that Hermes is a source of anxiety to the inhabitants of the *ludus* might seem to have been adequately covered already by line 4 'Hermes turba sui tremorque ludi.' Second, with the possible exception of the contentious⁴¹ 'Hermes omnia solus et ter unus' (15), all the other verses of the epigram focus on a single aspect of Hermes' craft.⁴² Third, to interpret *cura* in an erotic sense and *labor* in a non-erotic sense involves taking *que* as emphatically antithetical, yet when the particle is so used the force is, as a rule, only mildly adversative.⁴³ In sum, to deny synonymity to *cura* and *labor*, as Shackleton Bailey does, runs counter to the architecture of the epigram.

The conclusion must be that 'cura laborque ludiarum' means 'the darling and hearthrob of the gladiators' women'. The erotic allure of Hermes is conveyed by *cura laborque*, and *ludiae* is an objective term for the particular category of females whom this affects.*

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⁴⁰ Farnaby's explanation, reproduced in the Delphin edition (London, 1822), that they are all in love with Hermes and consequently also fear for his safety, ill fits the emphasis elsewhere in the poem on Hermes' invincibility in combat.

⁴¹ See Versnel (above, n. 19), *passim*.

⁴² In addition, lines 9–10 go together, 'divitiae locariorum' (9) balancing 'cura laborque ludiarum': this structure works better if 'cura laborque', like 'divitiae', represents a single idea.

⁴³ E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), p. 219, n. 4.

* Addendum: P. Howell's edition of Book 5 (Warminster, 1995) translates *ludiae* as 'female fans'.

PLUTARCH, *DE STOICORUM REPUGNANTIIS* 1048DE

In chapters 30–1 of the *de Stoicorum repugnantiis*, Plutarch sets out to show that the Stoics involve themselves in self-contradiction if they claim that their philosophy allows them an intelligible notion of providence. In the first place, he says, this is so because the traditional boons which men expect to receive from the gods (health, wealth etc.) do not benefit them at all if they do not have wisdom. Indeed, the fool uses all things badly, so that to give him anything at all without giving him virtue should be positively harmful to him. Yet the gods never give virtue to anyone so, on this score, they benefit no one either.

This argument is followed by another at 1048DE which aims to prove that the Stoic god does not benefit men any more than men benefit him, so that the very concept of providence is an impossibility in Stoicism. The text, as we find it in the MSS, is as follows:

(1) τὸ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλως γενομένους ἀγαθοὺς κρίνειν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχὺν οὐδὲν ἐστι· (2) καὶ γὰρ τοὺς θεοὺς οἱ ἀγαθοὶ κρίνουσι κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ ἰσχύν¹. (3) ὥστε μηδὲν μᾶλλον ὠφελεῖν ἢ ὠφελείσθαι τοὺς θεοὺς² ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

¹ ἰσχύουσιν X¹F¹ ²θεοὺς om. αA¹; αὐτοὺς A²En

The conclusion of this argument—that the gods do not benefit men any more than

men benefit the gods—is clear enough, and we can see why a demonstration of this fact would be of the greatest help to Plutarch. But what is less clear is how the first two clauses of the argument lead to this conclusion. In what follows, I shall consider the approaches adopted by Wyttenbach and Cherniss respectively towards the passage, since these two editors represent in their most convincing forms the two main lines of interpretation that have grown up around it. I shall consider Cherniss first, since he defends the MSS reading exactly as given above.

Cherniss's translation of the passage (in the 1976 Loeb edition) goes as follows:

[The gods'] judging by the criterion of virtue or of strength men who have become virtuous otherwise (than by their aid) amounts to nothing, for virtuous men judge the gods too by the criteria of virtue and strength, the result being that the gods confer benefit no more than they receive it from men.

As Cherniss explains in a note: 'Plutarch here rebuts the suggestion that the beneficence of the gods consists in their favourable judgment of human virtue' (*Moralia* vol. XIII.2, pp. 536–7 with note b). In this, he is explicitly following Madvig (*Adversaria Critica* [Copenhagen, 1871] vol. I, pp. 668–9), and the interpretation also seems to be presupposed by the translations of both Amyot and Holzmann.¹

Cherniss's understanding of the passage seems to make good sense. However, it suffers from one very serious drawback, and that is the difficulty involved in giving content to the phrase 'judgement by virtue or strength'. We certainly cannot suppose that 'judgement' would imply some form of *reward* for the sage: after all, the sage is already as happy as god just because of his virtue (cf. *de Stoic. rep.* 13, 1038CD). The only thing left for god to 'reward' him with is a larger share of *προηγμένα*, and we know that this does not happen either (cf. *de Stoic. rep.* 37 and Cicero, *de nat. de.* 3.80–5).

It is hardly more satisfactory to take 'judgement' to mean mere *appraisal* (in the sense of the Latin *censere*). We would, after all, expect 'benefiting' to involve the gods' having some *effect* on the virtuous—indeed, Plutarch himself tells us that the Stoics believed just that. At *de communibus notitiis* 33, 1076A, we discover that a sage or god is supposed to be benefitted every time he encounters the activity of another sage or god: *ὅταν ἄτερος θατέρου τυγχάνη κινουμένου*. To be sure, an 'appraisal' (*κρίσις*) is something that can have an effect (in the sense of *κινεῖν*)—a *πάθος*, for example, is defined as one kind of *κρίσις κινητική* (cf. esp. Plutarch, *de virt. mor.* 10, 449D). But even here, the *κρίσις* is not something that would normally have an effect on the very thing it was judging. In other words, we can make sense of god's appraisal of the sage being effective of something, but this is not yet enough to be able to say that it has an effect on the *sage*.

It might be objected that this criticism of Cherniss's interpretation presupposes too naïve an understanding of how the Stoics think people can be affected by each other's actions; after all, in another passage of Plutarch—*de comm. not.* 22, 1068F—we are told that 'if one sage anywhere at all extends his finger prudently, all the sages throughout the inhabited world are benefited'. What is there to stop us from saying that god's judging the sage (an action which he will, of course, perform prudently) benefits the sage through exactly the same lines of causation (whatever, in fact, they

¹ This is not to say that the text presupposed by Amyot and Holzmann is very much like Cherniss's. Holzmann actually prints the text of Stephanus, which is as follows: *τὸ δὲ τοὺς <θεοὺς> ἄλλως γενομένους ἀγαθοὺς κρίνειν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχύν, οὐδὲν ἐστὶ· καὶ γὰρ τοὺς κακοὺς οἱ ἀγαθοὶ κρίνουν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχύν*. However, he wisely ignores the interpolated <θεοὺς> in his translation. As Wyttenbach later commented (*loc. cit.* note 2): 'Locum jam antea corruptum magis etiam corruptum Steph[anus]!'.

might be)? The answer is, of course, nothing at all. But since it now turns out that *any* prudent action performed by god must benefit all sages, it becomes quite unintelligible why Plutarch restricts his attack to the possibility that the benefit received by sages from the gods is constituted by a form of judgement—and a rather specific form of judgement at that. Plutarch is here supposed to be blocking off a possible Stoic defence against the conclusion of his earlier argument: but there is nothing about that argument (which only pointed out that it was impossible to benefit someone who did not have wisdom) which would force the Stoics to suggest such a restricted characterization of providence. Indeed, they would presumably want to keep the potential for god's benefiting man as wide open as possible.

The Stoics, then, could never have claimed that god's benefitting the sage consists only or primarily in his judgement of him. It remains only to remark that there could be no incentive for Plutarch or any other polemicist to *claim* that this is what the Stoics believed. The conclusion Plutarch presents us with—that the gods cannot benefit man any more than men can benefit the gods—would be much more convincingly and honestly drawn from the simple and explicit claim we have just seen, that every virtuous action (every action performed 'according to virtue') benefits every virtuous being: just as each of god's actions benefits the sage, so each of the sage's actions benefits god.

Wytttenbach's approach to this passage can most easily be differentiated from that of Cherniss by the observation that he (unlike Cherniss) does not take 'the gods' to be the subject of *κρίνειν*. This means that the argument he reconstructs is focused rather on the Stoics' understanding of *what it is to be good* (so that the idea is that we recognize [*κρίνειν*] the good by noting the presence of these qualities) than on their supposed understanding of what constitutes *benefit* (viz. 'the judgement of the gods'). Wytttenbach's emendation and translation of the passage read as follows:²

(1) τὸ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλως γενομένους ἀγαθοὺς, ὑπὸ θεῶν ὠφελεῖσθαι, (2) ἢ ἄλλως τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς κρίνειν <ἢ> κατ' ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχύν, οὐδὲν ἔστι· καὶ γὰρ τοὺς θεοὺς οἱ ἀγαθοὶ κρίνουσι κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ ἰσχύν· (3) ὥστε μηδὲν μᾶλλον ὠφελεῖν ἢ ὠφελείσθαι τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

(1) Nam hoc quidem nihil est, vel eos qui alias boni facti sunt a Diis adjutos fuisse, (2) vel bonos alia dote censere quam virtute et potentia; nam et homines Deos censent virtute et potentia. (3) Ergo Dii non magis juvant homines, quam ipsi ab hominibus juvantur.

In more detail, the idea seems to be this. We have already seen (in 1048CD) that the gods do not give men virtue, and we now have an argument that says (1) the only way in which the gods *could* benefit men is *if* they gave them virtue; (2) we do not reckon that the good are improved by anything else the gods might give them (because their goodness is perfectly constituted by their virtue and strength); so (3) the gods do not benefit men any more than men benefit gods—i.e. they do not benefit them at all. Bernadakis leaves us with a slightly more opaque version of what seems to be the same argument, as does Pohlenz (whose manipulation of the text is admirably modest in comparison).³

It is easier to spot the problem with this reconstruction of the argument. It explicitly relies on the premise (clause (1)) that the *only* way in which it is possible to benefit a

² D. Wytttenbach, *Plutarchi Chaeronensis Moralia* (Oxford, 1800), vol. V, pp. 273–4, with note to 1048E1 on p. 273.

³ G. Bernadakis (*Plutarchi Chaeronensis Moralia* [Leipzig, 1895], *ad loc.*): τὸ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλως γενομένους ἀγαθοὺς <ἄλλως ἀγαθοὺς> κρίνειν <ἢ> κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ ἰσχύν, εἰ ἰσχύουσιν, οὐδὲν ἔστι κ.τ.λ. M. Pohlenz (*Plutarchi Moralia* [Leipzig, 1952] *ad loc.*): τὸ δ' ἄλλως τοὺς γενομένους ἀγαθοὺς κρίνειν <ἢ> κατ' ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχύν οὐδ' ἔνεστι κ.τ.λ.

person is by granting him virtue: if a person attains wisdom by his own endeavour, then he cannot be benefited by the gods (or by anyone else) at all. But this is clearly not true. To be sure, Plutarch's earlier argument showed that it is impossible for the gods to benefit the fool without giving him wisdom; but once a person has wisdom—once, that is, he is a sage—he can be benefited in all sorts of ways. As a matter of fact, sages are properly speaking the *only* people to experience benefit at all (see for example *SVF* III.673). And, as we have already seen, Plutarch himself informs us that a sage or god is supposed to be benefited *every time he encounters the activity of another sage or god* (*de comm. not.* 33, 1076A).

It seems to me, then, that we need to look again at the interpretation of this passage, and that this will involve looking again at the text.

One thing that is very striking about the first two clauses of the text as it stands is that we get something that is highly reminiscent of the standard Stoic definition of 'benefit'. We have already seen something of this definition in the *de comm. not.* passage cited earlier: benefit results when one virtuous being encounters the virtuous activity of another. The formal definition is given in Diogenes Laertius (7.104) as follows:

ὠφελεῖν δέ ἐστι κινεῖν ἢ ἰσχειν κατ' ἀρετὴν, βλάπτειν δὲ κινεῖν ἢ ἰσχειν κατὰ κακίαν.

The same definition of 'harm' is found in *SVF* III.78. A slightly garbled version of 'benefit' is found in Stobaeus (*ecl.* II, p. 95, 6–8 Wachsmuth); and cf. also Cicero, *de fin.* 3.33 (citing Diogenes of Babylon).

What I suggest, then, is that we take the *κρίνειν* and *κρίνουσι* of *de Stoic. rep.* 1048DE to be a scribe's attempt to understand *κινεῖν* and *κινουσι*. Correspondingly, *ἰσχύν* in the first clause would be a corruption of *ἰσχειν*; *ἰσχύουσιν* already (and remarkably) exists as an alternative reading to the *ἰσχύν* of the second clause. The argument now looks like this:

(1) τὸ δὲ τοὺς ἄλλως γενομένους ἀγαθοὺς κινεῖν κατ' ἀρετὴν ἢ ἰσχειν οὐδὲν ἐστι· (2) καὶ γὰρ τοὺς θεοὺς οἱ ἀγαθοὶ κινουσι κατ' ἀρετὴν καὶ ἰσχύουσιν· (3) ὥστε μηδὲν μᾶλλον ὠφελεῖν ἢ ὠφελίσθαι τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

Where we previously had the plausible-sounding, but ultimately unintelligible 'judgement according to virtue and strength', we now have an odd-looking, but thoroughly well-attested Stoic definition of *benefiting*. Not only is this textually plausible, but the argument we end up with is exactly the argument which I said, in discussing Cherniss's reading, would make the most honest and convincing demonstration of the conclusion Plutarch wants. My reading of the text translates as follows:

(1) It amounts to nothing to say that (the gods) affect or sustain by virtue those who have become good otherwise (than by their aid), (2) because the good affect and sustain the gods by virtue. (3) So the gods confer no more benefit than they receive from men.

Having earlier argued that Stoic gods are not provident because they do not grant men the one and only really good thing there is—virtue—, Plutarch reinforces his position by anticipating a possible defence that might be made of the Stoics. Someone might defend the Stoics by pointing out that, although it is true that the gods do not make men good, they can still benefit men who have (by whatever other means) *become* good, because they can 'affect and sustain them according to virtue'. (In fact, as we have seen, they inevitably affect and sustain them in this way whether they deliberately set out to do so or not.) Plutarch's retort is to say (in clause (1)) that this 'amounts to nothing' as an explanation of providence *because*, as he explains in

clause (2) (καὶ γάρ), the Stoics think that the good affect and sustain the *gods* by virtue. Again, we can add, for completeness, that the good will inevitably do this and, what is more, will do it to exactly the same extent as the gods when the gods benefit them.⁴ This, as clause (3) spells out, means that, although the gods *do* benefit men, they *receive* as much benefit from them.⁵ Plutarch has shown then, that the Stoics cannot base any claim about the providence of their gods on the benefit that any given person can expect to receive from them.

The Stoics, of course, could reply to this argument by saying that they never did define providence in terms of *benefit* in the first place.⁶ To this extent (they could say), the argument merely reflects Plutarch's own misguided Platonism.⁷ However, it turns out that Plutarch's idea of providence encapsulates something much closer to the non-technical expectations that people would normally have had of the gods. Indeed, it would not be going too far to say that, as far as most people were concerned, providence would actually have been *defined* in terms of the benefits derived by men from the gods. *De Stoic. rep.* 1048DE may not therefore be a full and final refutation of the Stoics' theological position; but, read as I suggest, what it does do is to show that the Stoics *cannot* maintain anything like a *conventional* view of providence, and thus places the onus firmly on them to explain why we should believe that they have a right to talk about providence at all.

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⁴ It cannot be stressed enough how complete this inevitability is: one virtuous agent can never benefit another more than he is benefited himself (in fact, he is benefited by the very act of benefitting: see Stobaeus, *ecl.* II p. 101, 21–4 Wachsmuth); and every one of his actions benefits every other virtuous agent (*de comm. not.* 22, 1068F). So it is not just a contingent fact of Stoicism that lines of benefit between virtuous agents run both ways; it is literally impossible that anyone should ever succeed in causing more benefit to one virtuous agent than to all others (himself included).

⁵ There is, of course, an ambiguity in *μηδὲν μάλλον ... ἤ*: this could mean 'neither ... nor' (and, as we saw, Wyttenbach certainly takes it that *neither* do the gods benefit men, *nor* do men benefit the gods). However, depending on the context, it can also mean 'both ... and to the same extent'. Cf., for example, Plutarch, *q. conviv.* 3.5, 727D (chattering is *no more* characteristic of swallows than of jays or partridges—but both chatter); *de prim. frig.* 13, 950C (there is *no more* darkness in air than water—but water is certainly dark); also D. L. 1.66 (Solon has *no more* quarrel with Pisistratus than any opponent of tyranny—but there is that much quarrel). Since we have just been told unambiguously at least that men benefit the gods (i.e. 'affect and sustain them by virtue'), this must be the correct way of taking the construction here.

⁶ In fact the Stoics think that providence consists in the simple fact that god has created the best possible universe (cf. esp. Cicero, *de nat. de.* 2.57–8). It is worth noting that 1048DE is not the only place in the *de Stoic. rep.* where Plutarch adopts the strategy of considering a defence that his readers might think *could* be made of Stoicism, despite the fact that no Stoics *would* have endorsed it. This also happens at chapter 47, 1056B (ὁ δὲ λέγων ὅτι Χρύσιππος κ.τ.λ.). As P. Donini rightly argues, Plutarch is *not* considering a position that Chrysippus could have held: see 'Plutarco e il Determinismo di Crisippo', in *Aspetti dello Stoicismo e dell' Epicureismo in Plutarco*; *Quaderni del Giornale Filologico Ferrarese* 9 (Ferrara, 1988), pp. 21–32.

⁷ For a concise summary of Plutarch's views on these issues, see the introduction to the *de Iside et Osiride*, 351D. The gods do not, he agrees, give men wisdom or virtue (but then part of the virtue in being virtuous is just that one has attained it on one's own merits); but according to Plutarch they can still give men—the wise and the non-wise alike—material boons that really are boons.