

EUCRATES AND DEMAINETE: LUCIAN, *PHILOPSEUDES* 27–8

This paper investigates some of the literary games played by Lucian in his charming tale of Eucrates' encounter with the ghost of his wife Demainete in his *Philopseudes* or *Lover of Lies*.¹ At first sight this is one of the simplest and most artless tales of the *Philopseudes* collection, but scrutiny exposes a complex system of significant undercurrents beneath its smooth surface. Of particular interest are: (i) the tale's relationship with Herodotus' famous story of Periander and Melissa, a relationship more intricate than has been appreciated; (ii) the parallel-tracked but wholly contradictory lines of interpretation that the tale offers the reader; and (iii) the admonitory Cynic imagery that inhabits it.

The core of the *Philopseudes* consists of Tychiades' account of the gathering of philosophers he has just witnessed at the house of the rich Eucrates. We are presented with a parody in the tradition of Plato's *Symposium*.² To Tychiades' dismay, each of the credulous party has attempted to convince him of the efficacy of magic and the reality of supernatural intervention in human life by telling one or more fantastic stories, supposedly from their own experience. Among these, Eucrates' tale of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is well known. The moral disapproval with which Tychiades recounts the tales he has heard is more than a little undermined by their delightful and engaging nature.³ The story at issue here is the seventh one to be fully narrated:

¹ For general discussions of this episode, see the standard commentaries on the text ad loc. Substantial are: L. Müller, *In Luciani Philopseuden commentarius*, Eus [sic] Supplement 13 (Leopoli, 1932) and J. Schwartz, *Lucien de Samosate. Philopseudes et De morte Peregrini, avec introduction et commentaire*, Textes d'Études. Publ. Fac. Lettres Univ. Strasbourg 12 (Paris, 1951¹, 1963²). Rather more vestigial are: F. Albini, *Luciano. L'amante della menzogna* (Venice, 1993) and M. Ebner, H. Gzella, H.-G. Nesselrath, and E. Ribbat, *Lukian. Die Lügenfreunde*, Scripta antiquitatis posterioris ad ethicam religionemque pertinentia (SAPERE) III (Darmstadt, 2001). The two German dissertations devoted to magic and superstition in Lucian have little to say about the passage: O. Herzig, *Lukian als Quelle für die antike Zauberei* (Tübingen, 1940) and D. Koefler, *Aberglaube und Zauberei in Lukians Schriften* (Innsbruck, 1949).

This is not the place to defend the now less fashionable reading of the work's title as singular (i.e. *Φιλοψευδής* as opposed to *Φιλοψευδείς*), but I note briefly that: (i) the MSS unanimously offer us the singular form, and indeed no one thought to question this until J. J. Hartman, *Studia critica in Luciani Samosatensis opera* (Leiden, 1877) and then M. Rothstein, *Quaestiones Lucianae* (Berlin, 1888); (ii) although the dialogue certainly features plural 'lovers of lies' (NB 2, *φιλοψευδείς*), the title may well refer more abstractly to the character-type satirized as opposed to the specific group of characters portrayed; (iii) and even if the title is to refer more directly to the *dramatis personae* of the text, then it could well refer to the singular Eucrates, who presides as host over the conversation, and who is himself responsible for no less than five of the ten lying tales recounted.

I thank the CQ referee for helpful comments on this paper.

² It is, I think, simplistic to regard the dialogue as a parody of Plato's *Symposium tout court*. Rather, the dialogue is, alongside the *Symposium* itself, a further contribution to the tradition of parodying *The Banquet of the Seven Sages*. See FGH 1005–7 (in the continuation of Jacoby) and J. Martin, *Symposion. Die Geschichte einer literarischen Form* (Paderborn, 1931).

³ Cf. B. E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances* (Berkeley, 1967), 234.

27. As we were having this discussion Eucrates' sons came in from the wrestling school. One of them was already in the ephebic class, the other was around fifteen years old. They said hello to us and took their place on the couch, beside their father. A chair was brought in for me. As if reminded by the sight of his sons Eucrates laid his hand upon them and said, 'So may I have joy in these children, I will tell you the truth, Tychiades. You all know how I loved the mother of my children, my wife of blessed memory. I showed this not only by my treatment of her in life, but also after her death, when I burned with her all the clothes and all the jewellery in which she delighted in life. On the seventh day after her death I was lying here on the couch, just as I am now, trying to come to terms with my grief. For I was quietly reading Plato's book on the soul. Whilst I was doing this Demainete herself came to me and sat next to me just like Eucratides here.' He gestured towards his younger son, who shuddered at once, as a child would. He had long been pale in response to the narrative. 'When I saw her, I embraced her, wailed out loud and started to weep. She stopped me crying and reproached me because, even though I had given her everything else, I had failed to burn one of her two golden sandals. She said that it was under the chest, where it had landed when thrown off. This was why we couldn't find it, and so just burned the one. We were still speaking when an accursed little dog, one of the Maltese breed, barked underneath the couch, and she disappeared at the bark. The sandal turned up under the chest and was later burned. 28. Is it still appropriate not to believe in these phenomena, Tychiades, when they are manifesting themselves on a clear and daily basis?'

'No, by Zeus', said I, 'since people who fail to believe and who so shamelessly scorn the truth ought to be beaten on the bottom with a gold sandal like children.'

(Lucian, *Philopseudes* 27–8⁴)

HERODOTUS' TALE OF PERIANDER AND MELISSA

Some have noticed the significance for Lucian's tale of Herodotus' story of Periander, tyrant of Corinth (who supposedly ruled 627–587 B.C.), and the ghost of his wife Melissa, although not the intricate nature of the relationship between the two narratives:⁵

On one day Periander stripped all the women of Corinth on account of his wife Melissa. For he

⁴ 27 Ἀμα ταῦτα λεγόντων ἡμῶν ἐπεισῆλθον οἱ τοῦ Εὐκράτους υἱοὶ ἐκ τῆς παλαιστρας, ὁ μὲν ἤδη ἐξ ἐφήβων, ὁ δὲ ἕτερος ἀμφὶ τὰ πεντεκαίδεκα ἔτη, καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι ἡμᾶς ἐκαθέζοντο ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης παρὰ τῷ πατρί· ἐμοὶ δὲ εἰσεκομίσθη θρόνος. καὶ ὁ Εὐκράτης ὥσπερ ἀναμνησθεὶς πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν τῶν υἱέων, “Οὕτως ὀναιμην,” ἔφη, “τούτων”—ἐπιβαλὼν αὐτοῖν τὴν χεῖρα—“ἀληθῆ, ὦ Τυχιάδῃ, πρὸς σε ἐρῶ. τὴν μακαριτὴν μου γυναῖκα τὴν τούτων μητέρα πάντες ἴσασι ὅπως ἡγάπησα, ἐδήλωσα δὲ οἷς περὶ αὐτὴν ἔπραξα οὐ ζῶσαν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπεὶ ἀπέθανεν, τὸν τε κόσμον ἅπαντα συγκατακαύσας καὶ τὴν ἐσθῆτα ἣ ζῶσα ἔχαιρεν. ἐβδόμῃ δὲ μετὰ τὴν τελευταίαν ἡμέραν ἐγὼ μὲν ἐνταῦθα ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης ὥσπερ νῦν ἐκείμην παραμυθούμενος τὸ πένθος· ἀνεγίνωσκον γὰρ τὸ περὶ ψυχῆς τοῦ Πλάτωνος βιβλίον ἐφ’ ἡσυχίας· ἐπείσερχεται δὲ μετὰ τὴν Δημινέτην αὐτὴ ἐκείνη καὶ καθίζεται πλησίον ὥσπερ νῦν Εὐκρατίδης οὗτοςί,” δείξας τὸν νεώτερον τῶν υἱέων· ὁ δὲ αὐτίκα ἔφριξε μάλα παιδικῶς, καὶ πάλα ἤδη ὠχρὸς ὦν πρὸς τὴν διήγησιν. “Ἐγὼ δέ,” ἦ δ’ ὅς ὁ Εὐκράτης, “ὡς εἶδον, περιπλακεὶς αὐτῇ ἐδάκρυον ἀνακωκύσας· ἡ δὲ οὐκ εἶα βοᾶν, ἀλλ’ ἡτῶτό με ὅτι τὰ ἄλλα πάντα χαρισάμενος αὐτῇ θάτερον τοῖν σανδάλιον χρυσοῖν ὄντων οὐ κατακαύσαιμι, εἶναι δὲ αὐτὸ ἔφασκεν ὑπὸ τῇ κιβωτῷ παραπύον. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἡμεῖς οὐχ εὐρόντες θάτερον μόνον ἐκαύσαμεν. ἔτι δὲ ἡμῶν διαλεγομένων κατάρατόν τι κυνίδιον ὑπὸ τῇ κλίνῃ ὃν Μελιταῖον ὑλάκτησεν, ἡ δὲ ἠφανίσθη πρὸς τὴν ὑλάκην. τὸ μέντοι σανδάλιον εὐρέθη ὑπὸ τῇ κιβωτῷ καὶ κατεκαύθη ὕστερον. 28 Ἔτι ἀπιστεῖν τούτοις, ὦ Τυχιάδῃ, ἄξιον ἐναργέσιον οὐδὲν καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκάστην φαινόμενός;” “Μὰ Δί,” ἦν δ’ ἐγώ· “ἐπεὶ σανδάλω γε χρυσῷ εἰς τὰς πυγὰς ὥσπερ τὰ παιδία παῖεσθαι ἄξιον ἂν εἶεν οἱ ἀπιστοῦντες καὶ οὕτως ἀναισχυντοῦντες πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν.”

⁵ Thus L. Radermacher, *Griechische Quellen zur Faustsage. Der Zauberer Cyprianus. Die Erzählung des Helladius. Theophilus*, Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaft in Wien 206.4 (Vienna, 1927), 13; R. Ganschinietz, ‘Ad Herodotum V.92E’, *Eos* 32 (1929), 668; Schwartz (n. 1) on 27; J. Bompaigne, *Lucien écrivain: Imitation et création*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome 190 (Paris, 1958), 459; G. Anderson, *Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction* (Leiden, 1976), 25 and 27–8; C. P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge, MA, 1986),

sent messengers to her, to Thesprotia, to the Acheron river, to the oracle of the dead, on the question of the deposit of a guest-friend. Melissa appeared and said that she would neither indicate nor declare where the deposit lay, for she was cold and naked. The clothes that had been buried with her were of no use to her because they had not been burned. As witness to the truth of these assertions stood the fact that Periander had thrown his loaves into a cold oven. The token was proof: he had had sex with Melissa's corpse. When these utterances were reported back to Periander, he at once issued an edict that all the women of Corinth should go out to the precinct of Hera. So they came out as to a festival in their finest adornments, but he posted his bodyguards in ambush and stripped them all alike, free and slave, piled their clothing up into a pit and burned it with a prayer to Melissa. After doing this he sent to Melissa a second time and she told him where she⁶ had put the guest-friend's deposit. (Hdt 5.92η⁷)

Herodotus' tale itself conflates two traditional story-types in a way that is not untypical of Lucian. In the first type a restless ghost spontaneously haunts the living until it secures its peace from them either by means of the rectification of inadequate burial (Melissa's explicit concern) or by means of the exaction of compensation from the ghost's killer (nor is this motif wholly irrelevant, given that Periander had himself killed Melissa).⁸ Examples of the sub-type with ghosts demanding rectification of burial abound: it is associated, for example, with Elpenor, Polydorus, Cillus, Deiphilus, Palinurus, and even the pseudo-Virgilian gnat.⁹ Examples of the sub-type with ghosts demanding compensation for killing are also plentiful: for this reason the ghost of Cleonice terrorized the regent Pausanias, the ghost of Pausanias in turn terrorized the Spartans and the ghost of Agrippina terrorized Nero.¹⁰

50; Albini (n. 1), 102, n. 53; A. Stramaglia, *Res inauditae, incredulae. Storie di fantasmi nel mondo greco-latino* (Bari, 1999), 114, n. 373; and Ebner at Ebner et al. (n. 1), 46. To exemplify the underestimation of the nature of the relationship, for Bompaire the Demainete tale is merely a calque of the Melissa tale, while for Anderson, Lucian has 'merely adapted the story of Melissa . . . to a more trivial setting'.

⁶ The story makes more direct sense if we understand the Greek to imply 'she' (i.e. Melissa) rather than 'he' (i.e. Periander) at this point, as noted by J. Stern, 'Demythologisation in Herodotus', *Eranos* 87 (1989), 13–20, at 16, and as indicated by the parallel folk-tales discussed below. However, scholars continue to construe as 'he': e.g. D. Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome* (Austin, 1999), 78.

⁷ μῆτι δὲ ἡμέρη ἀπέδυσσε πάσας τὰς Κορινθίων γυναῖκας διὰ τὴν ἐωντοῦ γυναῖκα Μελίσσαν. πέμψαντι γάρ οἱ ἐς Θεσπρωτοῦς ἐπ' Ἀχέροντα ποταμὸν ἀγγέλους ἐπὶ τὸ νεκυομαντήιον παρακαταθήκης περὶ ξεινικῆς οὔτε σημανέειν ἔφη ἡ Μελίσσα ἐπιφανείσα οὔτε κατερέειν ἐν τῷ κείτῳ χώρῳ ἢ παρακαταθήκη· ῥιγοῦν τε γὰρ καὶ εἶναι γυμνή· τῶν γάρ οἱ συγκατέθαψε εἰμάτων ὄφελος εἶναι οὐδὲν οὐ κατακαυθέντων· μαρτύριον δὲ οἱ εἶναι ὡς ἀληθέα ταῦτα λέγει, ὅτι ἐπὶ ψυχρὸν τὸν ἵπνον Περιάνδρος τοὺς ἄρτους ἐπέβαλε. ταῦτα δὲ ὡς ὁπίσω ἀπηγγέλλθη τῷ Περιάνδρῳ (πιστὸν γάρ οἱ ἦν τὸ συμβόλαιον, ὃς νεκρῷ ἐούσῃ Μελίσσῃ ἐμίγη), ἰθέως δὴ μετὰ τὴν ἀγγελίην κήρυγμα ἐποίησατο ἐς τὸ Ἑλλαιον ἐξίεναι πάσας τὰς Κορινθίων γυναῖκας. αἱ μὲν δὲ ὡς ἐς ὀρθὴν ἦσαν κόσμῳ τῷ καλλίστῳ χρεώμεναι, ὃ δ' ὑποστήσας τοὺς δορυφόρους ἀπέδυσέ σφας πάσας ὁμοίως, τὰς τε ἐλευθέρas καὶ τὰς ἀμφιπόλους, συμφορήσας δὲ ἐς ὄρυγμα Μελίσσῃ ἐπενυχόμενος κατέκαie. ταῦτα δὲ οἱ ποιήσαντι καὶ τὸ δεύτερον πέμψαντι ἔφρασε τὸ εἶδωλον τὸ Μελίσσης ἐς τὸν κατέθηκε χώρον τοῦ ξείνου τὴν παρακαταθήκην.

⁸ Herodotus 3.50–3.

⁹ Elpenor: Homer, *Odyssey* 11.61–79 (cf. also the famous plea made by the ghost of Patroclus for speedy burial at Homer, *Iliad* 23.65–76). Polydorus: Euripides, *Hecabe* 47–54. Cillus: Theopompus *FGH* 115 F350. Deiphilus: Pacuvius, *Iliona* (E.H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, Loeb Classical Library, 4 vols [Cambridge, MA, 1935–40], 2.328–41). Palinurus: Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.365–6. Gnat: [Virgil] *Culex* 210–383. Cf. Felton (n. 6), 8–12; S. I. Johnston, *Restless Dead* (Berkeley, 1999), 3–35 and D. Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton, 2001) 231–50.

¹⁰ Cleonice: Plutarch, *Moralia* 555c and *Cimon* 6; Pausanias 3.17.7–9; Aristodemus *FGH* 104 F8.1. Pausanias: Plutarch, *Homerikai Meletai* F1, *Moralia* 560ef; [Themistocles] *Letters* 4.14 Hercher/Doenges; Aristodemus *FGH* 104 F8. Agrippina: Suetonius, *Nero* 34.

In the second story-type a vital item is lost when its concealer dies, and his or her ghost must be called up to reveal its location for the sake of loved ones left behind. Thus, the *Apophthegmata Sancti Macarii* tells how a husband died after receiving money from a guest-friend and hiding it for him. When his widow could not produce the money, she was threatened with slavery. Macarius consoled her and prayed to the dead man at his grave and interrogated him. He was told that the money lay under the leg of the bed, and there it was indeed found. Augustine tells how a man died after paying off a debt. An opportunist creditor attempted to dun his son for the money a second time. The father's ghost appeared to the son to locate the receipt for him. In a Hebrew example the Talmud tells how Zeêraj gave an innkeeper money to keep safe for him, but returned to find her dead. He went to her grave, where her ghost told him that the money was under the door-hinge and asked him to bring her offerings (this last detail suggesting a bridge to the Herodotean conflation). A similar motif appears to underlie the well-known passage in Virgil's *Aeneid* in which the ghost of Sychaeus discloses hidden treasure to his widow Dido.¹¹

Herodotus' conflation of these two story-types results in the somewhat awkward anomaly that the ghost of Melissa does not complain about the circumstances of her burial spontaneously, but only raises the subject when called up to reveal the treasure, and makes the desired revelation conditional upon the rectification of her burial. This novel behaviour on the ghost's part at any rate succeeds in conveying a minor degree of disgruntlement. We may, however, think here of a similar opportunity taken by the ghost of Achilles when called up for interrogation about Homer by Apollonius of Tyana. Although he had not yet been driven to haunt the Thessalians, he was disgruntled by their neglect of his cult, and so asked Apollonius at this point to remind them of their duties towards him.¹²

The relationship of Lucian's tale with that of Herodotus is more complex than first appears.¹³ Lucian has disentangled the two story-types that Herodotus had conflated and combined them again in a new way. The main arc of Lucian's tale proceeds from a reassembling of the elements of the first simple story-type from the Herodotean text. Thus, the ghost of Demainete appears spontaneously to Eucrates specifically to ask for rectification of burial. But the central theme of the second simple story-type, that in accordance with which the ghost identifies for the living the location of an item the whereabouts of which it alone knows, has also been reintegrated. For Demainete does indeed point out to Eucrates the place in which she last left her lost slipper. In some ways this serves as a more satisfactory combination of the story-types than Herodotus' original one.¹⁴

Lucian's disentangling of these two traditional story-types from his Herodotean source and his recombination of them show him manipulating his immediate literary

¹¹ *Apophthegmata Sancti Macarii* at PG 34.244–5. Augustine, *De cura gerunda pro mortuis* 13. Talmud Berachot 18b. Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.353–9. Cf. W. M. S. Russell, 'Greek and Roman ghosts', in H. R. E. Davidson and W. M. S. Russell (edd.), *The Folklore of Ghosts* (Cambridge, 1981), 193–213 and R. Ganschinietz, 'De antiquorum psychagogia', *Eos* 32 (1929), 557–8.

¹² Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.16.

¹³ It is perhaps in awareness of such niceties that Müller (n. 1), 92–3 and Felton (n. 6), 78 and 81 ('Lucian's cannot be said to be a direct adaptation of Herodotus's version, despite his probable familiarity with it') see Lucian as alluding to Herodotus' tale in the Demainete episode rather than as working with it as his primary source.

¹⁴ I am not persuaded by the contention of G. Anderson, *Fairytale in the Ancient World* (London, 2000), 114–15 that the Demainete tale belongs with the 'theft from a corpse' folk-tale-type; A. Aarne, and S. Thompson, *The Types of Folktale* (Helsinki, 1961), no. 366.

source-text with a seemingly sophisticated awareness of its relationship to popular tradition. Some might here be tempted to exclude Herodotus altogether from the archaeology of Lucian's tale and suggest rather that he just happens to have independently combined for his own purposes the two traditional story-types that Herodotus had used. But we can indeed be sure that Lucian has the Herodotean text very specifically in mind, for he pays explicit tribute to it in the lapdog's designation as Maltese (*κυνίδιον* . . . *Μελιταῖον*).

Explanations of this designation hitherto tend to have focused on the nature of the breed. They were tiny lap-dogs from an island called Melite, hence the name. The ancients themselves were undecided as to which of the two Mediterranean islands called Melite was the one: modern Malta or Mljet (in the Adriatic near Corfu)? The debate continues among scholars, with Malta enjoying the upper hand.¹⁵ We are given a superb and timeless insight into their role and perception in the ancient world in Lucian's *On Hired Servants*. Here the unfortunate Stoic Thesmopolis is hired as house philosopher by a rich woman, only to be used to carry her Maltese ('Myrrhina', 'Myrtle') around for her. The dog peeps out from his cloak. It repeatedly empties its bladder over him and licks yesterday's soup out of his long philosopher's beard. Eventually it has puppies in his philosopher's cloak.¹⁶ Hence the *Philopseudes* dog is considered to bring a bathetic note to *Philopseudes* tale, as a trivial pampered pooch.¹⁷ This may be so, but it is surely at verbal level that the Maltese, or rather *Μελιταῖον* designation is of particular importance, for it clearly constitutes an allusion to the name of Herodotus' ghost *Melissa* (*Μέλισσα*) which would have been expressed in certain forms of Attic Greek as *Melitta* (*Μέλιττα*). It is for this reason above all that we can be sure that Lucian is working with the Herodotean text.

Furthermore, Lucian salutes this same Herodotean tale, or at any rate one of its strands, again in the *Downward Voyage*. Here the rich and newly dead tyrant Megapenthes asks leave to return briefly to the surface from the underworld to tell his wife where he had buried his treasure. It is denied.¹⁸ And in his *Toxaris* Lucian similarly 'kaleidoscopes' elements from the earlier portion of the same Herodotean chapter, that concerning the birth of Periander's father Cypselus (5.92β-ε). Here Herodotus tells how Corinth was ruled exclusively by the Bacchiad clan. The non-Bacchiad Eetion son of Echecrates took as wife a lame and undesirable Bacchiad girl, Labda, daughter of Amphion, and fathered a child, Cypselus, upon her. The Bacchiads received an oracle to the effect that this child would one day overthrow their regime, and so sent men to kill the child, but spared it when it miraculously smiled on them.¹⁹ The *Toxaris* is structurally comparable to the *Philopseudes* and regales us with ten stories of friendship. In its relevant tale the wealthy Menecrates of Massilia was disfranchised by the ruling body of the Six Hundred, and they confiscated his property. He now despaired of being able to

¹⁵ J. Busuttill, 'The Maltese dog', *G&R* 16 (1969), 205-8 reviews the evidence and plumps for Malta; Schwartz (n. 1) on 27 preferred Mljet.

¹⁶ Lucian, *On Hired Servants* 34.

¹⁷ Anderson (n. 5), 24-7 and Felton (n. 6), 80. We may note, incidentally, bearing in mind the mechanics of Lucian's stock-in-trade, the suggestion implied by the Thesmopolis anecdote that the Maltese of the *Philopseudes* had been Demainete's own dog; Eucrates' attitude towards it ('accursed') suggests the same. Did it then, on one reading of the story, bark in recognition of its returning mistress? We may wonder whether Demainete had in life treated the tame philosophers now gathered around Eucrates in the same way as Thesmopolis was treated by his mistress.

¹⁸ Lucian, *Downward Voyage* 8.

¹⁹ For exegesis of the Cypselus episode and its symbolism, see D. Ogden, *The Crooked Kings of Ancient Greece* (London, 1997), 87-94.

marry off his hideously deformed daughter, Cydimache. She was shrivelled and eyeless on her right side, and seemingly unable to walk. But Menecrates' friend Zenothemis gladly took her on without dowry. In due course his ugly wife presented Zenothemis with a beautiful son. When the boy was presented to the Six Hundred he laughed and clapped, and so charmed them that full rights were restored to Menecrates. The tales share a number of striking themes, and Lucian can be seen to have kaleidoscoped those of the Herodotean tale: an exclusive ruling group, and an outsider to it; the marriage of a deformed and lame daughter; the birth of a son; salvation through the baby's laughter. Character names may also convey slight tributary reminiscences: Echecrates/Menecrates and Cypselus/Cydimache.²⁰

WHAT 'REALLY' HAPPENS?

In contrast with most of the other tales to which he is subjected in the *Philopseudes*, Tychiades does not attempt any direct debunking riposte to this one, but confines himself to an ironic quip about spanking with a sandal.²¹ However, in this case Eucrates seems to do Tychiades' work for him, for as told the tale is readily susceptible to two rather different, parallel readings.

The first and more concretely supernatural reading goes as follows. The actual ghost of Demainete does indeed visit Eucrates in its restlessness. But her understandable tarrying with her beloved former husband is cut short when the dog barks and she flies back to the underworld. Why should the dog's bark make her do this? This is presumably because she associates the dog with Cerberus, the fierce warden of ghosts. It is surely significant in this regard that the Maltese is said to be 'underneath' the couch; the phrase is suggestive of the great dog under the earth. Perhaps the bark merely reminds the ghost of Cerberus and the threat he constitutes, or perhaps the Maltese is even to be seen as Cerberus' vicar on earth.²² Ghosts were often held to be licensed for only strictly limited periods of release by their underworld masters. When Aeschylus' Atossa calls up the ghost of her husband Darius, he tells her to be quick so that he can be blameless on the matter of time. Protesilaus's ghost was granted the brief licence of just one day or even just three hours to be with his widow Laodameia. In consequence, ghosts were all too likely to slip away as soon as they could, leaving their interlocutor frustrated and with questions still unanswered. This was the experience of Aeneas when confronted by the ghost of his father Anchises.²³

²⁰ Lucian *Toxaris*, 24–6.

²¹ Cf. Müller (n. 1), 91 for the lack of direct riposte. The image of spanking with a sandal appears twice elsewhere in Lucian. At *Dialogues of the Gods* 19 Aphrodite claims to have beaten the naughty Eros on the bottom with a sandal; at *How to Write History* 10 Omphale is pictured chastising a feminized Heracles with one. Cf. F. G. Allinson, *Lucian: Satirist and Artist* (New York, 1926; repr. 1971), 128, Schwartz (n. 1) on 27 and Albini (n. 1), 102–3, n. 55.

²² At *On Hired Servants* 34 the Maltese inflicted upon poor Thesmopolis is credited with a 'high-pitched' or 'squeaky voice': λεπτή τῇ φωνῇ; cf. Busuttill (n. 15), 205. As it happens, this quality was often attributed to ghosts' voices, as at Lucian, *Menippus* 10, λεπτόφωνον, of the ghost of Tiresias; cf. Ogden (n. 9), 227–8.

It has been put to me that the lapdog serves so well as a comic antithesis to Cerberus that this may be the principal justification for its inclusion in the scene, and that the coincidence between its 'Melitaeian' breed-name and 'Melissa' need therefore be no more than coincidental. If we are to resort to the unnecessary but inevitably reductive process of the ranking of Lucian's motifs and imagery in their significance, then I would contend that the allusion to Melissa is, after all, more striking than the allusion to Cerberus.

²³ Aeschylus, *Persians* 692. Protesilaus: Schol. Aristides 3.671–2 Dindorf; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 103. Anchises: Virgil, *Aeneid* 5.740–2.

The second and more cynical (with a small 'c'—so far) reading goes as follows. Eucrates is lying on the couch reading. As would be natural in such circumstances, he falls asleep and dreams about something akin to the subject of the book he has been reading.²⁴ It was commonplace to refer to Plato's *Phaedo* as his *Book on the Soul*, but the use of the sobriquet here makes the direct significance of the subject-matter all the more apparent.²⁵ Does Lucian also slyly hint here that the book can tax its advocates?²⁶ The soul or ghost of Demainete that manifests itself on his couch is accordingly a dream vision, dreams being the usual means of supposedly encountering ghosts in the ancient world. When the dog beneath the couch barks, Eucrates wakes up all of sudden, starting out of his dream, so that his vision of Demainete is instantly lost.²⁷

Thematic support for the latter sort of interpretation can be found in the figure of Lucian's other Demainete, she of the *Scythian*, who, intriguingly, constitutes the mirror image of this one. In the *Scythian* she is the wife of the Athenian Architeles the Areopagite. During the great plague of Athens, she has a dream, in which the ghost of the Scythian Toxaris (the eponym of the dialogue discussed above) comes to her from a tomb near the Dipylon gate, which is found on subsequent investigation to be his. The ghost instructs her to tell the Athenians to sprinkle the streets with wine. This they do, and the plague recedes. In thanks the Athenians sacrifice a white horse to Toxaris.

²⁴ It was a common topos, however, for apparitions to present themselves to people as they read or wrote: see Pliny, *Letters* 5.5.5 and 7.27.7 and Porphyrio on Horace, *Epistles* 1.4.3. The motif appears at *Philopseudes* 32, where the young wags dress up as ghosts to try to frighten Democritus as he writes in his tomb. See Stramaglia (n. 5), 151–2, n. 11.

²⁵ For the title *On the Soul* (περὶ ψυχῆς) for the *Phaedo*, see *Palatine Anthology* 7.471 and *POxy.* 2087 line 22. Here at *Philopseudes* 27 the book is similarly referred to as *On the Soul* (singular, τὸ περὶ ψυχῆς . . . βιβλίον). The *Phaedo* is already mentioned in the *Philopseudes* at 24 by the Platonist Ion, who declares that Eucrates' tale of Hecate and of his peering into the underworld to see the souls of the dead proves the book right. There the book is referred to, slightly differently, as *On Souls* (plural, τῶν περὶ τῶν ψυχῶν λόγῳ). At *Encomium of a Fly* 7 the book is referred to differently again as *On the Soul and its Immortality* (τῷ περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ ἀθανασίας αὐτῆς λόγῳ). Cf. Schwartz (n. 1) on 27; Albini (n. 1), 102, n. 54; and Ebner et al. (n. 1), 130, n. 159. We may also note that Tychiades salutes the beginning of *Phaedo*'s great monologue in the opening words of his own great monologue: *Philopseudes* 6, εἰώθειν . . . φοιτᾶν; *Phaedo* 59d, εἰώθεμεν φοιτᾶν; cf. W. H. Tackaberry, *Lucian's Relation to Plato and the Post-Aristotelian Philosophers* (Toronto, 1930), 74.

²⁶ Lucian is usually respectful of Socrates and Plato themselves (*Teacher of Orators* 9, *Peregrinus* 5, *Runaways* 3, *Dance* 25; but contrast *Dialogues of the Dead* 4). Plato did after all exert a massive influence on the form of Lucian's own works. He is respectful also of the Platonists Nigrinus and Demonax in the works named for them (if, that is, the *Demonax* is genuine). But he typically holds latter-day Platonists in low regard, considering them superstitious, and this is particularly true of Ion in this dialogue (6). Another Platonist Ion is found alongside another Peripatetic Cleodemus in the *Lapiths*. He too is presented as haughty and inflexible, and as similarly keen to speak about bodiless entities and immortal souls (6–7, 39). Platonists are further disparaged also at *Icaromenippus* 25, *Sale of Lives* 15–18, and *Twice Accused* 16–18. See R. Helm, 'Lucian und die Philosophenschulen', *H. Jahrb. f. d. klass. Altertum* 5 (1902), 188–213, 263–78, 351–69; Tackaberry (n. 25), 25–7 and 62–87; and M. Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps* (Paris, 1937; repr. New York and London, 1987), 29–40.

²⁷ Müller (n. 1), 93 discusses waking and dreaming ghosts in elucidation of this passage, but does not entertain the idea that Eucrates may have fallen asleep. For ghosts manifesting themselves in dreams, see e.g. the ghost of Patroclus' appearance to Achilles in his sleep at Homer, *Iliad* 23.65–91; 91; cf. Ogden (n. 9) 75–92. Concomitantly, ghosts are commonly perceived to sit on the couch or bed of the person to whom they manifest themselves: see Phlegon, *Mirabilia* 1.1; Pliny, *Epistles* 5.5.5, 7.27.12; [Quintilian] *Declamationes maiores* 10.14; cf. Stramaglia (n. 5), 239–40, n. 3.

Here Demainete is visited by a ghost as opposed to being a visiting ghost. Both ghosts bring remedies, of a kind, and receive sacrifices. In the *Scythian* case the confinement of the ghost (whether in this case real or imaginary) to the realm of dream is emphatically clear.²⁸

MORE ON THE MALTESE DOG

We have yet to exhaust the significance of the Maltese dog, for it can also be seen to serve as an admonitory Cynic symbol. Cynics in general were normally referred to as 'dogs', their name, *κυνικός*, signifying 'doggish' (*κύων*, *κυνός*, 'dog'). The original reason for this is not clear: it was either because they were held to live as shamefully as dogs, or because the movement's founder, or at any rate inspiration, Antisthenes, taught in the Cynosarges or 'White Dog' gymnasium in Athens.²⁹ Now, the movement's most famous figure, Diogenes of Sinope, actually referred to himself as a 'Maltese dog' (*κύων . . . Μελιταῖος*), as Diogenes Laertius tells us.³⁰ In this context the term *Melitaïos* plays significantly with a third Melite, the Athenian deme of that name, home to the shrine of Heracles *Alexikakos*, the Cynics' patron.³¹

Lucian himself takes up the association between Cynicism and dogs avidly throughout his *oeuvre*.³² More particularly, we note his readiness to play with the specific association between Maltese dogs and Cynic philosophers. To return to Thesmopolis, among the other indignities this poor man must suffer is to be mocked at dinner by the aging *kinaidos* Chelidonion (not so much a 'sparrow' as his name implies, we are told, but more of 'a plucked vulture'). For Chelidonion Thesmopolis' duties towards his mistress's Maltese lapdog turn him from a Stoic into Cynic.³³

A text of particular exegetical interest for the Demainete episode is Lucian's dialogue *Lapiths*, which, like *Philopseudes*, is a parody firmly within the tradition of Plato's *Symposium*. In this the uncouth Cynic Alcidas arrives late, like Plato's Alcibiades, and uninvited, to the philosophers' party. We are told that he is feared by all the other philosophers, and that he is the 'noisiest of all the dogs'. He scorns the couches and throws himself down on the floor to recline.³⁴ In due course Satyrion, a jester-like, ugly, shaven-headed, Egyptian, dancing-clown dwarf, taking on a role similar to that of Chelidonion, abuses Alcidas as a 'Maltese lapdog' (*Μελιταῖον κυνίδιον*).³⁵ Alcidas comes strongly to mind when we consider the phraseology with which the intervention of the *Philopseudes*' Maltese is described: 'We were still

²⁸ Lucian, *Scythian* 2.

²⁹ Diogenes Laertius 6.13. See B. R. Branham and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé (edd.), *The Cynics. The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and its Legacy* (Berkeley, 1996), 6. For the movement as a whole, see this same work, *passim*, and A. A. Long, 'The Socratic legacy', in K. Algra (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1999), 617–41 at 623–32.

³⁰ Diogenes Laertius 6.55. I thank Dr Philip Bosman of UNISA for first drawing this to my attention.

³¹ For the deme Melite and the shrine of Heracles *Alexikakos*, cf. A. M. Harmon, K. Kilburn, and M.D. MacLeod (edd.), *Lucian*, Loeb Classical Library, 8 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1913–67), i.433, note, and J. Travlos, *A Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (London, 1971), 274–7. For the Cynic association with Heracles more generally, R. Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King* (Uppsala, 1948), 22–73.

³² Menippus is repeatedly designated 'dog' in *Dialogues of the Dead*, for example: 1, 2, 3 and especially 4.

³³ Lucian, *On Hired Servants* 34.

³⁴ Lucian, *Lapiths* 12–14.

³⁵ Lucian, *Lapiths* 19. For ugly dancing dwarfs, Egyptian and Greek alike, see V. Dasen, *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece* (Oxford, 1993), *passim*.

speaking when an accursed little dog, one of the Maltese breed, barked underneath the couch, and she disappeared at the bark.' In both texts the fearsome 'Maltese lapdog', so described in similar phrases, 'barks' from a position below if not actually underneath a couch. The congruence strongly invites us to find a Cynic-philosophical voice in the barking of the *Philopseudes* dog, and in turn to construe the logic of the story's action in a third way: the ghost, the thing of lies, disappears instantaneously before the expression of the plain, coarse truths of the Cynic. Eucrates' lie unravels itself. In this way too a direct riposte from Tychiades is pre-empted and rendered redundant. The argument made here does not necessarily assume the chronological priority of the *Lapiths*, but it is based on the conviction that Lucian's *oeuvre* is so strongly informed by a well-defined stock-in-trade of themes and motifs that all his pieces should be treated as effectively synchronic for the purposes of analysis and elucidation. This is the sort of approach to the criticism of Lucian's *oeuvre* championed by Bompaire, which Reardon, writing in French, approvingly refers to as 'achronie'.³⁶

If this reading is accepted, it helps to establish that a Cynic voice, and not just the Epicurean one primarily associated with Lucian, can be heard against the 'lies' of the *Philopseudes*.³⁷ Given the considerable thematic overlap of much of the *Philopseudes* material with that of Lucian's 'Menippean' works, this is entirely to be expected.³⁸ Furthermore, cases can be made for surreptitious Cynic imagery in at least two other of the *Philopseudes* tales. First, the story of the Pythagorean Arignotus' exorcism of a haunted house is set in Corinth (29–31). When we are told that the house in question is beside the 'Cherry Grove (Gymnasium)' (τὸ Κράνειον, 30), we cannot help but think again of Diogenes, who lived here in his *pithos*-jar, and indeed this was the site of his famous encounter with Alexander.³⁹ Secondly, in the Sorcerer's Apprentice story (33–7), the object the apprentice Eucrates (for it is again he) succeeds in animating is not a broom, as Goethe and Walt Disney would have us believe,⁴⁰ but a pestle⁴¹ (the

³⁶ Bompaire (n. 5); B. P. Reardon, *Courants littéraires grecs des II^e et III^e siècles après J.-C.* (Paris, 1971), 169, n. 81; so too G. Anderson, *Lucian: Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic* (Leiden, 1976), 177, and M. D. Macleod, 'Lucianic studies since 1930', *ANRW* (1994), 2.34.2, 1362–421 at 1380.

³⁷ Caster (n. 26), 95–6, 318 (especially), 330–1, 334 holds that Tychiades speaks primarily from an Epicurean position; cf. also Tackaberry (n. 25), 47. Two signposts in the text above all tell in favour of this. First, the 'positive' story told by Tychiades himself makes a hero of Democritus (32), whom Lucian sees as a precursor of Epicurus in his *Alexander* (17). And, secondly, Epicureans are explicitly attacked by the lie-loving Ion (*Philopseudes* 24), just as they are by the hated Alexander in the *Alexander* (47). Alexander's attack on Epicureanism here provokes programmatic and extravagant praise of Epicurus from the author. His *Kuriiai doxai* are extolled as freeing people from terrors, apparitions, and portents, which is certainly suggestive for the position adopted by Tychiades in the *Philopseudes*. Some, however, have taken a broader view of Lucian's stance in the *Philopseudes*. Schwartz (n. 1) on 6 notes that the three philosophical schools not represented at the meeting, and therefore not derided, are the Epicureans, the Cynics, and the Sceptics, and accordingly concludes that Tychiades represents an amalgamation of the three. Cf. also Müller (n. 1), 19 and Albini (n. 1), n. 12.

³⁸ That is, *Menippus*, *Downward Voyage*, *Dialogues of the Dead*, *Charon*, *Icaromenippus*, *Tragic Zeus*, *Zeus Confuted*, *Assembly of the Gods*, *Dream*, *Lapiths*, *Sale of Lives*, *Fisherman*, *Runaways*, *Twice Accused*, *Saturnalia*, *Timon*. It has been conjectured that Menippus himself had written a *Symposium*: see Tackaberry (n. 25), 42. For Lucian's attitude to Cynicism and Menippus in general, see Tackaberry (n. 25), 30–42.

³⁹ Diogenes Laertius 6.38 and 77.

⁴⁰ Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Der Zauberlehrling* (1779); Walt Disney, *Fantasia* (1940).

⁴¹ Lucian, *Philopseudes* 36.

Sorcerer himself, Pancrates, was, however, in the habit of animating brooms alongside pestles and also door-bars).⁴² This pestle too may have functioned as a Cynic symbol for Lucian. In his *Demonax* the philosopher of that name has seen a Cynic using a pestle (ὑπερον) as a staff, and jokes: 'Do not lie (Μὴ ψεύδου), for you happen to be a disciple of Hyperides (Ὑπερείδου).'⁴³ We perhaps do not need to posit the existence of a long lost Cynic philosopher called Hyperides: the pun on ὑπερον, that is, 'Pestle-son', may itself explain the quip sufficiently. But the association between the rejection of lies and the pestle here is suggestive. If we may contextualize the Sorcerer's Apprentice tale against this joke, which in any case appears to have been a traditional one,⁴⁴ then the choice of a pestle in the tale may serve as a subtle appeal for a Cynic attitude on the reader's part.

To whom is such a recurring Cynic voice supposed to belong? Or, to put what is probably a simplistic question more simply: who or what are we to understand to have 'inserted' the Cynic elements into the text? Consideration must be given to the level of supposed actuality, and to three levels of narrator: (i) the original 'lying' tellers of the tales, Eucrates *et alii*; (ii), Tychiades, reporting them to his friend Philocles; and (iii) a disembodied author, whether or not we should call him 'Lucian', relaying the Tychiades–Philocles dialogue to us as listeners or readers. If the Cynic material is held to have originated at the level of supposed actuality, then we must conclude that the 'liars' are after all reporting events truthfully, whether or not they appreciate the Cynic imagery latent in them, and that Tychiades is misguided in his condemnation of the liars. If the Cynic material is held to originate at the first level of narration, with the 'liars', then we must conclude that they are playing a sophisticated game with Tychiades, and telling him tales that they do not themselves believe after all. If the Cynic material is to be understood as originating at the second level of narration, with Tychiades as an unreliable narrator, then he appears to undermine his own general representation of the liars as credulous fools, in so far as he himself attributes the Cynic material to them. None of these suggestions, for all that some may briefly intrigue, seems finally satisfactory. It is easiest, perhaps, to understand the material as originating with the disembodied author, working, as it were, in partial alliance with Tychiades.⁴⁵

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⁴² Lucian, *Philopseudes* 35.

⁴³ Lucian, *Demonax* 48.

⁴⁴ It is not therefore a critical point that Lucian's authorship of the *Demonax* should not be universally accepted.

⁴⁵ I consider the general unquestioning identification of Tychiades' voice with that of Lucian himself in this dialogue to be at best naïve, but such an assumption is widely made, e.g. by: Müller (n. 1), 27 ('Tychiades, qui scriptoris ipsius vice fungitur'); Caster (n. 26), 94, ('Lucien/Tychiades'); Schwartz (n. 1), 3, 8, 9, 34, etc. ('Lucien-Tychiades'); Bompaire (n. 5), 465 ('Tychiades-Lucien'); H. D. Betz, *Lukian von Samosata und das Neue Testament*, Religionsgeschichtliche und paränetische Parallelen Texte und Untersuchungen der altchristlichen Literatur 76 (Berlin, 1961), 11–12 ('Tychiades, d.h. Lukian'); Reardon (n. 36), 239 ('Tychiade-Lucien'); Anderson (n. 5), 32 (where he even attributes the narrated actions of Tychiades directly to Lucian) and 54 (Tychiades is Lucian's 'spokesman'); J. Hall, *Lucian's Satire* (New York, 1981), 510, n. 59 (the name indicates Lucian himself and suggests 'Mr Commonsense'); Nesselrath at Ebner et al. (n. 1), 166 ('Alter Ego'); Ebner at Ebner et al. (n. 1), 173, 178 ('Tychiades/Lukian', 'Lukian/Tychiades'). Given that the charm of the tales as told is in conflict, or at any rate tension, with the moral message put in Tychiades' mouth, the author's stance can hardly be simply equated with Tychiades'.