NOTES • KORT BYDRAES

THE MEANING OF ANTITHEOS (HLD. 4.7.13) AGAIN

ABSTRACT

The word ἀντιθεός in the Aithiopika of Heliodorus (4.7.13) may, contrary to a recent discussion, carry the meaning 'opposing god' and need not refer solely to a human agent (in this case Theagenes). To derive the meaning exclusively from the Homeric sense 'godlike being' is to deprive the passage of its subtle irony.

Modern scholars and translators of the Aithiopika take ἀντιθεός in Hld. 4.7.13 to mean 'a hostile god' and compare Iamblichus (Myst. 3.31.176–77), who refers to the Chaldaean doctrine of demonology in which 'impious slips of evil-doing' (τις ἀνοσιοφράγις ... ἀσέρη πταίματα) cause wrong gods or evil demons (which are called ἀντιθεοὺς) to be introduced into sacred rituals in the place of gods. Because of the similarity between the two passages, some authorities have claimed that Heliodorus had knowledge of 'Mazdean beliefs'. However, Puiggali states categorically that ἀντιθεός never carries this sense, that it should always be related to the basic Homeric meaning of the word 'godlike' ('semblable à un dieu': cf., e.g., Hom. Il. 5.663, ἀντιθεόν Σαρπεδόνα 'the godlike Sarpedon'), and that Heliodorus cannot therefore

be held to have had knowledge of Mazdaean doctrines. In essence, the question concerns the supernatural status of the ἀντίθεος in Heliodorus: does the word refer to a human or a demonic rival of the gods or both? Puiggali argues for the first alternative whereas the last is probably better suited to the passage in question. In order to decide the matter, two issues need to be addressed: the possibility of the word carrying the meaning ‘hostile god’ and its meaning in the context of Hlδ. 4.7.13.

The adjective form of ἀντίθεος generally means ‘godlike’, possibly even in P.Mag. Lond. 121.635–36 (τινὸς ἀντίθεου πανοδάκμονος), but there is also evidence that the Homeric sense of the word was already misunderstood in the second century A.D., since the sophist Apollonius records the views of those who believed that ἀντίθεος Πολυφήμος in Homer meant that the Cyclops Polyphemus was the enemy of Zeus. The Cyclopes were, of course, the sons of Earth and Heaven (cf. Hesiod, Theogony 147–49) and of quasi-divine status. By the fifth century, the philosopher Ammonius felt the need to remind his readers that ἀντίθεος was in the past used as a synonym of ἵθεος. The noun form is much rarer than the adjective but in addition to Iamblichus Myst. 3.31.177 it was extensively used by the Christian writers to refer to an enemy of God. The term ‘antiChrist’ had

4. Puiggali translates ἀντίθεος in the Iamblichus passage and in P.Mag. Lond. 121.636–36 as ‘faussement semblables aux dieux’ (above, n.1, p. 272). For the Heliodorus passage he cites Amyot’s translation with approval (‘Mais il me semble qu’il y a quelque jeune homme, qui empêche mon entreprise et combat à l’encontre de mes ministres’). Cf. the commentary of D. Koraes, Paris 1894–6, ad loc., who notes Amyot’s translation with surprise and suggests that he must have mistaken ἀντίθεος here for the similar Homeric form θέος ‘a young man on the verge of manhood’ (cf., e.g., II. 22.127, παρθένος ἰθέος) though there is no evidence in the MSS. for such a reading.

5. LSJ s.v. ἀντί C.6 observe that ἄντι in the sense of ‘like’ was used productively in compounds such as ἄντιταξις (Lucian Am. 2; Somn. 16, ‘like a child’) and ἄντιπαθος (Aesch. Ch. 135, ‘like a slave’. Aesch. fr. 104, ‘instead of a slave’). Philo also uses ἀντίθεος as an adjective to mean 'in the place of god, godlike’ (De somnatis 2.183.1; De confusione linguarum 88.1, ὁ ἀντίθεος νοῦς. De posteritate Caini 123.4, τὸν ἀντίθεον ἑαυτῷ). Philo commonly uses compounds of ἄντι-, such as ἄντιμομος in this sense (De Vita Mois 2.195.4). Cf. Puiggali (above n. 3) 271 n.4.

6. LSJ s.v. ἀντίθεος II is undecided about this usage.

7. Lexicon Hesperiunum s.v. ἄντι [Bekker]: ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ Κύκλωπος, ὅτε ἔσον ἀντίθεος Πολυφήμου ἠθέλους αἰσθένει ἐνοῦ τὸν ἐναντιοῦμενον τοῖς θεοῖς τόπῳ γὰρ ἔστιν οὐκ ἑτέρῳ λέγων ὅγερ Κύκλωπος Δίος μεγαλόθεος (ὁ δὲ ἄντικεφαλής ἅμαρταναίος, ἁμαρτάναν τοὺς ἔναντι τοῖς θεοῖς, ἆναξ καὶ ἀνέμος τοῖς θεοῖς). The prefix anti- was used productively in the sense ‘opposed to’ in Latin nouns derived from Greek (cf., e.g., Suet. Jul. 56.5, AntiCatones, cf. Plut. Caius. 54; Tib. 11.3, antisophistas, cf. Lucian Alex. 43).

8. In Cat. 71.2: τὸ γὰρ ἀντι παρὰ τοῖς πάλαιοι τὸ ἑαυτὸν σημαίνει, διὰ τὸ ἀντίθεον ἴσθεν καὶ ἀντίκεφαλον τὴν γνώμην τὴν ἴσην δύναμιν τῷ ἄνδρὶ ἑξουσιοῦ.

9. Cf., e.g., Johannes Chrysostomus In Joannem homiles 59.140.30: ἔνα μὴ δόξη ὡς ἀντίθεος τις καὶ ἐξ ἐναντίας ἵσθων τῷ Πατρὶ ταύτα ποιεῖν.
been in use since the composition of the *New Testament* and was widely used by the theological writers.\(^{10}\) The Christian usage (itself probably derived from Mazdaean thought) shows that the word was indeed used in the sense of ‘opposing god’ in the late Empire and that its use by Heliodorus in a closely related sense cannot be categorically excluded.\(^{11}\)

The second question concerns the context in which Heliodorus uses the word (4.7.13). Here Kalasiris, an Egyptian priest and the protector of the young lovers Theagenes and Charikleia, tells Charikles, the adoptive father of Charikleia, that some \(\alpha\nu\tau\iota\theta\iota\sigma\varsigma\) was counteracting the ‘powers’ (\(\delta\upsilon\nu\mu\epsilon\varsigma\varsigma\)) which he had invoked against her to overcome her antipathy to marriage (cf. 2.33.6–8, 4.7.1–2); his explanation was designed to account for the hysterical fit she had thrown when presented with Charikles’ chosen suitor, his nephew Alkamenes, instead of Theagenes (4.7.11). Puiggali argues that Kalasiris, who was opposed to the lower forms of Egyptian magic (3.16.3), regards the powers which he initially brought to bear against Charikleia (4.5.3) as malign and the power now blocking them as good, although he gives the opposite impression of his beliefs to Charikles, who believed in them.\(^{12}\) His arguments are as follows: (1) Kalasiris uses the words \(\delta\chi\lambda\eta\tau\iota\varsigma\alpha\varsigma\ \chi\alpha\tau\acute{a}n\alpha\gamma\chi\acute{a}\varsigma\alpha\varsigma\) of the powers (\(\delta\upsilon\nu\mu\epsilon\varsigma\varsigma\)) he first raised against Charikleia (4.7.12) and therefore they cannot be good. (2) Kalasiris only presents the \(\alpha\nu\tau\iota\theta\iota\sigma\varsigma\) as malign for the sake of his deception of Charikles. The whole performance is a spoof (4.5.3), since Kalasiris disapproves of the lower forms of magic (3.16.3). (3) The \(\alpha\nu\tau\iota\theta\iota\sigma\varsigma\) is not a god or a demon because it is called an \(\epsilon\chi\theta\rho\dot{o}\varsigma\) later in the same paragraph and is portrayed as a \(\gamma\omicron\upsilon\alpha\)\(\iota\). (4) The \(\alpha\nu\tau\iota\theta\iota\sigma\varsigma\) is, in fact, Theagenes. With regard to the first argument, neither \(\delta\chi\lambda\eta\tau\iota\varsigma\alpha\varsigma\) nor \(\chi\alpha\tau\acute{a}n\alpha\gamma\chi\acute{a}\varsigma\alpha\varsigma\) is strong enough to characterise the powers first invoked by Kalasiris as evil. These forces were, after all, originally invoked to counter the effects of the ‘eye of envy’ (\(\dot{o}\rho\theta\theta\lambda\lambda\mu\dot{o}\varsigma\ \beta\acute{a}k\alpha\alpha\varsigma\varsigma\varsigma\)), which Kalasiris suggested to Charikles had been put on Charikleia during the procession at Delphi (3.7.2). The second of Puiggali’s arguments effectively concedes that the \(\alpha\nu\tau\iota\theta\iota\sigma\varsigma\) is presented as

\(^{10}\) Cf., e.g., 1 Ep. John 2.18; 2.22; 2 Ep. John 7.3; Polycarp Ep. ad Phil. 7.1; Lactantius *Inst. Divin.* 2.9.13 [Brandt]: *nox quam pravo illo antitheo dicimus attributam*.


\(^{12}\) Puiggali (above n. 1) 274.

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malign to Charikles and that he took it in the sense of a ‘divine opponent’. Although Kalasiris is probably insincere in his deception of Charikles, this does not mean that the word cannot refer to a supernatural power in its primary sense. In turn, the ἄντιθεος need not be identified with the ἔχθρος (4.7.13, Puiggali’s third argument) since Kalasiris describes it as a hostile power invoked by the rival sorcerer to blight Charikleia’s life and to leave her childless. It is quite possible that Heliodorus was playing with the Homeric meaning of the word (‘resembling a god’) and intended his readers to pick up an allusion to Theagenes (Puiggali’s final argument) in the word. This would have been entirely in keeping with his characterisation of his hero as a second Achilles replete with ashen spear (δόροι μελίαν γάλακτοςμοι, 3.3.5) and also with his tendency to play on words.13 But, while this may be the latent meaning in this passage, the overt sense must be ‘hostile god’ to suit the demands of the context. It is worth noting that Porphyry (De Absttn. 2.37-43) refers to a closely analogous situation of a hierarchy of spiritual powers and daemons.14

In conclusion: while there may be an underlying awareness of the Homeric meaning of ἄντιθεος in Heliodorus, which lends a degree of ambiguity and irony to the phrase, the primary meaning demanded by the immediate context must be ‘opposing god’. I suggest ‘some divine opponent’ to bring out the nuance in the expression.

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A PROPOS DES INSCRIPTIONS AXOUMITES DE MEROE

ABSTRACT

A short, fragmentary Axumite inscription, found in Meroe and published by T. Hägg in 1984, can be compared with an already known inscription of an Axumite king in Meroe. Hägg’s conclusions regarding both inscriptions are re-examined in this note. There is no proof that they belong to the same period or are connected with each other. In fact, there were at least two different Axumite incursions into Meroe, one before and the other after the introduction of Christianity into Ethiopia.

13. For Theagenes as a descendant of Achilles, see 2.34.4. Heliodorus frequently echoes Homeric vocabulary: cf., e.g., καλλιξανοι τως και βεστιξανοι, 3.2.1.

14. See Cumont (above n. 2) 267-268 n. 39. The passage in Porphyry shows a similar antipathy to blood-sacrifices that is also evident in Heliodorus (e.g., 10.9.6-7).