

ANNALES
DE
FILOLOGÍA CLÁSICA

THE EXTENT OF HERACLITUS fr. 92 D

It is often difficult to determine the precise extent of *verbatim* quotations in ancient authors, especially in authors like Plutarch who were apt to interpose their own comments or expansions in the middle of a quotation. It seems obvious that in such cases the modern critic, in seeking to isolate the literal quotation, should (whatever other criteria he may use) invariably follow two procedures. First, he should study the whole context in which the quotation occurs. This will include assessing the argument, motive, and development of the entire episode in the course of which the quotation is made. Secondly, he should compare the language and style of the author who makes the quotation with that of the author from whom the quotation is made (if this is possible), and in particular with that part of the direct quotation which can be distinguished with comparative certainty. This will enable him to apply the criterion of language, as well as of sense, to those parts of his text which could formally belong either to the *verbatim fragment* or to the later author who preserves it.

To illustrate this simple generalisation — the truth of which, judging from one or two recent editions of fragments, is not universally accepted — I append a brief discussion of the extent of fr. 92 D of Heraclitus.

The immediate context is as follows: Plutarch *de Pyth. or.* 6, 397 A τάχα δὴ μεμψόμεθα τὴν Πυθίαν ὅτι Γλαύκης οὐ φθέγγεται τῆς καθαροῦ λιγυρώτερον, οὐδὲ χροιομένη μύροις οὐδ' ἀλουργίδας ἀμπεχομένη κάτεισιν εἰς τὸ <χρηστήριον>, οὐδ' ἐπιθυμῶ κασσίαν ἢ λήδανον ἢ λιβανωτὸν ἀλλὰ δάφνην καὶ κριθίνον ἄλευρον. οὐχ ὄρας, εἶπεν, ὅσην χάριν ἔχει τὰ Σαπρικὰ

μέλη κηλοῦντα καὶ καταθέλγοντα τοὺς ἀκροαμένους; Σίβυλλα δὲ μαινομένῳ στόματι καθ' Ἡράκλειτον ἀγέλαστα καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα φθεγγομένη χιλίων ἑτῶν ἐξικνεῖται τῇ φωνῇ διὰ τὸν θεόν. ὁ δὲ Πίνδαρος ἀκοῦσαι, φησί, τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν Κάδμον μουσικῶν ὀρθάν, οὐχ ἠδεῖαν οὐδὲ τρυφερὰν οὐδ' ἐπικεκλασμένην τοῖς μέλεσιν. Plutarch's speaker, Sarapion, is here defending the unattractive appearance, behaviour, and style of the Pythia by quoting instances to show that utterances inspired by gods do not need the charm of a Sappho to give them lasting fame. In the third sentence of the extract the words 'according to Heraclitus' are inserted in a complex sentence; formally they could refer to the whole or part of what precedes them in this sentence, or to what immediately follows them, or to the whole of the rest of the sentence that follows them, or to the whole sentence. Many editors have accepted the whole sentence as by Heraclitus, though Diels, Kranz and others exclude χιλίων... φωνῇ. Further, Kranz includes a note in his editions (fifth and following) of *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* that 'nur Σίβυλλα... στόματι hält für Heraklitisch, das übrige für Plutarchisch (als Gegensatz zu Sapphos Stil) H. Fränkel (briefl.)'. We may be grateful for this caveat of Fränkel's, which so far as I know he has not expanded elsewhere. It is only necessary to glance at frs. 86 and 100, and possibly fr. 89, of Heraclitus, to see that Plutarch is in the habit of quoting isolated phrases, as well as whole sentences, from earlier authorities. Whether or not the words 'The Sibyl with raving mouth' seem quite enough, by themselves, to motivate the reference to Heraclitus, it is beyond dispute that formally speaking this could be the total extent of the quotation¹.

What, then, of the three striking adjectives that follow, all of which have been accepted as Heraclitean by everyone except Fränkel (unless H. Stephanus, too, was doubtful)? ἀκαλλώπιστα does not otherwise occur until Philo, Iacian, Galen, and Maximus of Tyre; the positive form does not exist;

¹ Iamblichus *de myst.* III, 8, a passage about divine inspiration, contains the words μαινομένῳ... στόματι φθεγγομένων, seemingly as a deliberate though unattributed quotation. But whether or not this is based upon Plutarch, φθεγγομένων extends the quotation beyond the range proposed by Fränkel.

while the original verb-form *καλλωπίζειν* is commonly found in Xenophon and Plato and (with its other derivatives) in later authors including Plutarch. It is not found *before* the fourth century B.C. On this evidence *ἀκαλλώπιστα* is far more likely to be Plutarchean than Heraclitean. As for *ἀμύριστα* (elsewhere only in a second-century-A. D. inscription; *μυρίζειν* as early as Herodotus and Aristophanes), it might appear to be an unlikely word for Plutarch to have chosen as descriptive of speech, even though he uses the verb-form literally elsewhere; but reference to his context (cf. the first sentence printed above) places the matter in a different light: 'Perhaps we shall blame the Pythia because she does not utter more sweetly than Glauce the lyre-singer, because she does not anoint herself with unguents (*οὐδὲ χροιομένη μύροις*) or put on purple robes to descend into the oracle, and because she does not burn cassia or sweet gum or frankincense, but laurel and barley-meal'. Thus *ἀμύριστα* could be a direct reference by Plutarch to the expression *οὐδὲ χροιομένη μύροις* which he has already applied to a Sibyl-like figure namely the Pythia. It is also conceivable, of course, that Plutarch mentioned unguents in relation to the Pythia because he already had in mind a statement by Heraclitus about the 'unperfumed' style of the Sibyl. On this point I may perhaps be permitted to quote from my discussion (*Heraclitus, the Cosmic Fragments*, p. 163) of another fragment of Heraclitus that appears in Plutarch, fr. 99: 'Now one of the difficulties in detecting insertions in Plutarch's quotations is that, on account of a stylistic preference for having his own contention in the same verbal form as that of the quotation which he is adducing to substantiate it, he tends either to reshape the quotation to fit the form of his own assertion which he already had in mind, or to adapt the expression of his thought to the previously existing form of the quotation which he is already thinking of adducing. It is sometimes impossible to detect which process has taken place'. In the present case the description of the Pythia and that of the Sibyl are equally graphic; the rather daring metaphorical use of *ἀμύριστα*, of speech, might be felt to be more easily acceptable in view of *μύροις* just before (which would imply that Plutarch is responsible for both):

but it might also be argued that the daring use belongs to the more vivid stylist, that is, Heraclitus. It is impossible to be certain here, though in sum, even without taking into account the status of ἀκαλλώπιστα, I incline to Plutarchean authorship for μύριστα. The first of the three epithets, ἀγέλαστα, I have kept until last; again it is an unusual epithet for speech (though not so much so as ἀμύριστα), but this time no obvious motive for the choice of this particular word is to be discerned in Plutarch's context — though the general meaning of 'unlaughing', or grim, is suitably enough opposed to the clear utterances of Glauce the lyre-singer. Further, ἀγέλαστος occurs in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, at line 200, and more than once in Aeschylus; it could also be the correct reading at *Od.* 8, 307. It is more probable than not, therefore, that ἀγέλαστα is by Heraclitus and not supplied by Plutarch. Thus the examination of the passage so far suggests that Plutarch expanded Heraclitus's ἀγέλαστα by adding καὶ ἀκαλλώπιστα καὶ ἀμύριστα.

This expansion of a quotation by the addition of epithets of his own choice to an original epithet, so as to sharpen the point of the passage quoted and increase its relevance to Plutarch's own meaning, is a comparatively common practice in this author. Another instance of it is seen in the last sentence of the context set out above, where the Pindaric phrase μουσικὰν ὄρθάν is elaborated by Plutarch's appended words οὐχ ἠδεῖαν οὐδὲ τρυφεράν οὐδ' ἐπικεκλασμένην τοῖς μέλεσιν. Instances of expansion by Plutarch in the middle of a quotation (though not in these cases by the mere reduplications of epithets) are to be seen in Heraclitus frs. 91, 99, and perhaps 88. In the present case Plutarch seems to have appended two formally similar words to Heraclitus's ἀγέλαστα in order to stress the parallel with his own description of the Pythia two sentences before. Thus while Heraclitus's ἀγέλαστα corresponds well enough with Plutarch's implication that the Pythia's utterances are not sweet like Glauce's, but quite the reverse, ἀκαλλώπιστα is intentionally added to correspond with the statement that the Pythia 'does not put on purple robes', and ἀμύριστα to match the statement that she 'does not anoint herself with unguents'. The order of these last two parallel descriptions has been reversed, and

there is no formal parallel, in the expansion of the description of the Sibyl, to the closing statement in the Pythiasentence, that the Pythia burns not cassia or sweet gum or frankincense but laurel and barley-meal. This last point would in any event be difficult to bring out within the scope of a single adjective or a short phrase; and the parallelism, though not quite complete, is sufficiently marked to suggest that it is not entirely due to coincidence. The use of the same verb, φθέγγεσθαι, in each case is not necessarily significant, since it is a natural word, even for Plutarch, to apply to oracular utterances. We cannot be sure that its use to describe the Sibyl, in the second of the parallel sentences, is due to Heraclitus rather than Plutarch; but if Heraclitus was indeed responsible for ἀγέλαστα, and not merely for Σίβυλλα μαινομένῳ στόματι, then Plutarch must have had in mind at least a complete clause of Heraclitus, not merely an isolated phrase, and thus he presumably knew the verb of speaking used by Heraclitus. There is no reason to doubt that this was a part of φθέγγεσθαι. The participle-form, however, may be entailed by Plutarch's expansion; it is possible, for example, that Heraclitus simply said φθέγγεται.

This leads on to the question of the authorship of the last words of the sentence, which in Plutarch form its predicate. The language of χιλίων ἔτων ἐξικνεῖται τῇ φωνῇ διὰ τὸν θεόν is rather ungainly, which would accord with Plutarchean authorship; otherwise there is no specific lexical, dialectal or stylistic peculiarity to suggest that it is by Plutarch rather than Heraclitus or *vice versa*. Plutarch's context demands, of course, that the point be made that the Sibyl's utterance, unattractive as it is, is nevertheless effective because it is inspired by a god. Thus we may assume that if Heraclitus did not say, first that the Sibyl's utterances are long-lasting or deeply significant or something of the sort, and secondly that this is due to their divine origin, then Plutarch would be bound to supply the deficiency. But Heraclitus must presumably have made some statement about the essential quality, or effect, of Sibylline pronouncements; for he is unlikely to have said nothing more than that 'The Sibyl with raving mouth utters things mirthless'. Such an observation presupposes an inference or a comparison. It seems probable

that Heraclitus added that the Sibyl's words were nevertheless unusually true and significant, and that he meant to draw the conclusion that his own description of the Logos, though difficult and unadorned, was nevertheless, like the utterances of the Sibyl, particularly profound. At *de Pith. or.* 21, 404 D — later, that is, in this same essay — Plutarch quotes another saying of Heraclitus whose purport may be roughly similar: fr. 93, 'The lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks out nor conceals but gives a sign'. In both these cases, it is true, the utterances in question are divinely inspired; but this is not essential to the point that Heraclitus seems to have been making, rather it is incidental to the oracular style to which Heraclitus may have wished to compare his own. Thus there is no strong reason for thinking that the words *διὰ τὸν θεόν* as they appear in Plutarch are taken from, or are a paraphrase of, Heraclitus. *χιλίων ἑτῶν ἔξικνεῖται*, on the other hand, though it need not be a quotation or even a paraphrase of Heraclitus, may well have been paralleled by something in Heraclitus that had a broadly similar import, namely that the Sibyl's words are particularly potent.

That the words 'reaches a thousand years with her voice' are not closely derived from Heraclitus seems to be shown by the following considerations². The statement that the Sibyl's utterances are known, and still valid, a thousand years after they are made probably implies that the Sibyl has been active for at least a thousand years before the time of the person who makes the statement. If this statement was originally made by Heraclitus, then he must have envisaged that the Sibyl was active long before Homer wrote his poems; for, though Heraclitus need not have assigned to Homer such an enlightened date as Herodotus later did, he

² Cf. also BOUCHÉ-LECLERQ, *Histoire de la divination*, (Paris, 1879), II, p. 186; DELATTE, *L'Antiquité Classique*, 3, 1934, 6 n. 1. Delatte suggested that Heraclitus may have meant, not that the Sibyl had lived for 1000 years before him, but that she had predicted events which would happen in 1000 years, after Heraclitus's own time. It is true that *χιλίων ἑτῶν ἔξικνεῖται* is a obscure and ambiguous phrase, but since Sibylline longevity later became a commonplace, while long-distance prediction did not, the conventional interpretation of the phrase seems much the more probable; though Delatte's cannot be ignored.

is most unlikely to have thought that Homer lived as much as a thousand years before his own time. But if the Sibyl were pre-Homeric, surely Heraclitus or any other Greek would have asked himself why there was no mention of her in Homer? It does not seem likely, therefore, that Heraclitus would have said that the Sibyl reached over so long a period as a thousand years. For Plutarch, however, this was a possible and natural thing to say. It is a fact that Sibylline longevity is not mentioned by any extant classical author before Timaeus in the fourth century B.C.; though it should be borne in mind that the Sibyl, or Sibyls, do not occur in literature at all before our reference in Heraclitus. In the Roman period Sibylline longevity is a commonplace, and we find that at this time a thousand years, or just under, is the common life-span for the Erythraean Sibyl. Thus an imperial inscription at Erythrae states that she had lived 3×300 years, and Plutarch's contemporary Phlegon of Tralles quotes an oracle by this same Sibyl in which she claims to have lived into the tenth generation (here, a γενεά is clearly a hundred years) and to be approaching death³. Plutarch himself seems to have been familiar with this poem or one very like it, for a few pages after the quotation from Heraclitus, at *de Pyth. or.* 9, 398 C, his character Sarapion refers to a poem by the Delphic Sibyl which was manifestly similar to that given by Phlegon⁴. Thus Plutarch almost certainly knew that Sibyls often lived for about a thousand years⁵; and since this assumption would probably have caused grave

³ Phlegon II. μακροβίων V, 2 (*F. gr. H.* 257, F 37).

⁴ Compare especially lines 11 ff. of the oracle in Phlegon, ἐνθ' ἄρα μοι ψυχὴ μὲν ἐς ἧέρα κατηθείσα/πνεύματι συγκραθείσα βροτῶν εἰς οὐατα πέμφει/κλήδονας ἐν πακινοῖς ἀνίγμασι συμπλεχθείσας, with Plutarch *de Pyth. or.* 9, 398 D: τῷ δ' ἄετι τὸ πνεῦμα συγκραθὲν ἐν φήμας αἰεὶ φορήσεται καὶ κληδόσιν. The succeeding passages, too, in each source, are similar in content (they describe how the Sibyl's body will merge with earth, grass, and so on, to be eaten by sacred sheep whose entrails will later foretell the future), though not closely so in language. Some slight variation in the source of Plutarch and Phlegon is suggested by the fact that the former, but not the latter, mentions that the Sibyl will become the face in the moon.

⁵ Plutarch, of course, was familiar with several different Sibyls. Heraclitus was referring to the Erythraean Sibyl, for whom many counterparts were discovered during the Hellenistic period.

difficulties to Heraclitus, we may conclude that Plutarch, and not Heraclitus, was responsible for the particular content of *χιλίων ἐτών ἐξικνεῖται τῇ φωνῇ*. It has already been seen that *διὰ τὸν θεόν*, too, is motivated for Plutarch but not obviously so for Heraclitus⁶. This study of language and context leads, then, to the conclusion that the probable extent of the *verbatim* quotation from Heraclitus is as follows *Σίβυλλα μαινομένῳ στόματι ἀγέλαστα φθεγγομένη*. The rest is by Plutarch⁷. Thus the extent of the fragment seems to lie between what is overliberally accepted in Diels-Kranz and most of the editors, and what is drastically but helpfully suggested by Hermann Fränkel.

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⁶ It might appear as though a looser version of Heraclitus fr. 92 which appears in Clement of Alexandria supports a Heraclitean origin of the words *διὰ τὸν Θεόν*: *Strom.* I, 70, 3 'Ἡράκλειτος γὰρ οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνως φησὶν ἀλλὰ σὺν θεῷ <τὸ> μέλλον Σιβύλλη πεφάνθαι. However, Rohde's assertion (*Psyche*, 5-6, II, 69 n. 1) that Clement's source here was precisely our passage of Plutarch is very plausible. Clement did, of course, draw extensively on Plutarch.

⁷ The particle *δὲ* may or may not have belonged to Heraclitus; Plutarch would have supplied it in any case, to suit his own context. The same applies, as has been suggested above, to the possible alteration of an original *φθέγγεται* to *φθεγγομένη*: for alterations of Heraclitus's syntax to fit Plutarch's own sentence-structure cf. also fr. 99 and possibly fr. 100.