

NOVELS' "EXOTIC" PLACES AND LUKE'S AFRICAN OFFICIAL (ACTS 8:27)

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How historical is Luke's narrative concerning the African official? Some scholars have suggested that it reflects the style of legend,¹ but this judgment is entirely subjective, since ancient historians used many of the same narrative techniques employed by storytellers and novelists.² As C. K. Barrett points out, "There is no means of checking the historicity of the narrative unless it can be assumed that angels do not exist or that they do not order missionaries about or provide transport for them."³ Whether or not it pleases modern readers, most of Luke's contemporaries assumed such events not only in novels, but in their own real world. Others have suggested that the story is "completely mythical" because so many details have symbolic value;⁴ but parallels between different accounts in Plutarch show that stories laden with narrative connections and allusions could have historical bases.⁵

Scholars have countered with various arguments in favor of the historical accuracy of this narrative (not least of which is the overall historical genre of Acts).⁶ If Philip did meet a pilgrim from Nubia, such a pilgrim might well have

¹Martin Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. M. Ling, ed. H. Greeven (New York: Scribner's, 1956), 15; Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 67-68.

²For shared techniques, see e.g., Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography*, SNTSMS 70 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992), 245; David E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 285; Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles,'* trans. Ken McKinney, Gregory J. Laughery, and Richard Bauckham, SNTSMS 121 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 29; Clare K. Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History: An Investigation of Early Christian Historiography*, WUNT 2 Reihe, 175 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 291-292; Marion L. Soards, "Review of *Profit with Delight*, by Richard Pervo," *JAAAR* 58/2 (1990): 307-310, here 309.

³C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994-1998), 422.

⁴M. D. Goulder, *Type and History in Acts* (London: SPCK, 1964), 195.

⁵See e.g., Plut. *Sert.* 1.1; *Demosth.* 3.2; cf. *Cimon* 3.1-3.

⁶For Luke as ancient historiography, see, e.g., Eckhard Plümacher, *Geschichte und Geschichten: Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte und zu den Johannesakten*, ed. Jens Schröter and Ralph Brucker, WUNT 170 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 1-32; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 3-7;

been a person of means to make such a journey.⁷ If Philip was Luke's oral source, as 21:8-10 might well suggest,⁸ Luke may have known and wished to reveal to his audience an event that prefigured the church's official story in Acts 10. Other scholars argue forcefully from the apparent narrative tension with Luke's account of Cornelius's works that Luke would not likely have invented this account, though he certainly enlists it to good effect once he has it.⁹

Here, however, I focus on a particular literary question. Richard Pervo has argued that Luke includes the story of the African official because the latter was "exotic," being from a distant and fabled land.¹⁰ By contrast to this approach, Luke's narrative lacks the fictitious elaborations about a distant land characteristic of reports in novels and novelistic sources. Luke's details, sparse as they are, display a higher proportion of accuracy than in many historians' speculations; they certainly lack the colorful but inaccurate depictions common in fiction.

The Official's Nation (8:27)

Although writers often engaged in fanciful tales about distant lands beyond the realm of corroboration (cf., e.g., the later "Wonders beyond Thule"), Luke's

Wilfried Eckey, *Die Apostelgeschichte: Der Weg des Evangeliums von Jerusalem nach Rom*, 2 vols. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), 20-31; Odile Flichy, *L'oeuvre de Luc: L'Évangile et les Actes des Apôtres*, CaÉ 114 (Paris: Cerf, 2000); for implications of this genre for the degree of factual content, see, e.g., Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, ed. Conrad H. Gempf, WUNT 49 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 63-70; Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History—History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Ancient Oral History* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 179-184; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 17-25. For Luke's frequent historical reliability, see data surveyed in Hemer, *Acts in History*, passim.

⁷Whether he was really a eunuch is harder to test historically, but if the person was of such means as to be an official of Candace, the eunuch claim makes sense. Further, it would explain why the traveler would make such a long journey to Jerusalem, yet not be a proselyte (his Gentile character being a component Luke would not invent, given the Cornelius story). While the eunuch's claim implicitly fits Isa 56, it remains plausible historically as well.

⁸Cf. William M. Ramsay, *Pictures of the Apostolic Church: Studies in the Book of Acts* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), 66; Barrett, 51; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 169, 280.

⁹See Gerd Lüdemann for a historical nucleus here (both because of tension with Acts 10 and because this fits the Hellenists' activity) (*Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989], 105); cf. F. Scott Spencer, "A Waiter, a Magician, a Fisherman, and a Eunuch: The Pieces and Puzzles of Acts 8," *Forum* 3/1 (2000): 155-178; Bernd Kollmann, "Philippus der Evangelist und die Anfänge der Heidenmission," *Bib* 81/4 (2000): 551-565.

¹⁰Richard I. Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006), 32 (among other arguments against the narrative's historical nucleus). Some of Pervo's other literary observations are more accurate; I am not addressing these points in this article.

account takes place in the Roman province of Syria, not a distant land impossible to verify. Often people confused material about distant lands (e.g., the "Ethiopian" Troglodytae with northern Troglodytae, or cave-dwellers),¹¹ but others reported data accurately, and Luke's report tends to match these more accurate reports.

For example, the Kandake is clearly a historical personage (or series of persons), in contrast to mythical Memnons or exotic novelistic details such as appear in Heliodorus's *Ethiopica*. My focus here will be to compare the treatment of "Ethiopia" in myth and in history and to show that Luke's brief data about "Ethiopia" fit history rather than myth. While myth and fiction could draw on valid historical information, they usually included historically impossible material as well, and were Luke composing novelistically (in contrast to the historical genre in which he writes), we should not expect him to know, any better than other fictitious storytellers did, which kind of source was which.

At a minimum, Luke's sparse portrayal of the official's nation fits historical fact at most of the few points it offers. The Greek title "Ethiopia" technically included all of Africa south of Egypt,¹² but the Candace's title has convinced nearly all scholars that the Nubian kingdom of Meroë is specifically in view here.¹³ James Bruce discovered Meroë in 1722, and John Garstang's work (1909-1914) identified the site archaeologically.¹⁴

That the treasurer is journeying southward toward Gaza would surprise no one and probably cannot be counted either way in the argument. Meroë's Nubia was what was then a centuries-old black African kingdom between Aswan and Khartoum, the two leading cities of which were Meroë and Napata.¹⁵ People in the Mediterranean world depicted "Ethiopia" as near¹⁶ or

¹¹Robert G. Morkot, "Troglodytae," 1555 in *OCD*. Quint. Curt. 4.7.18 has the Troglodytes as Arabians south of the Ammon oracle, with Ethiopians to its east; in 4.7.19, the Ethiopians to the west are called "snub-nosed."

¹²It included other Ethiopians besides Meroë (Diod. Sic. 3.8.1; also Hdt 3.17-24; 4.183 in Frank M. Snowden Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 105.

¹³E.g., Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury, *English Translation and Commentary*, vol. 4 in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979, reprint), 95; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 310; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 190-191; Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles*, rev. ed., ed. W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, AB 31 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 78; Eckey, 202-203. For Meroë as Ethiopia in early imperial sources, see, e.g., Stephan Losch, "Der Kämmerer der Königen Kandake (Apg. 8,27)," *ThQ* 111 (1930): 477-519, here 499 (citing Lucan *Phars.* 10.219-331; Sen. *Nat.Q.* 6.8); cf. Günther Roeder, "Die Geschichte Nubiens und des Sudans," *Klio* 12 (1912): 51-82, here 72-76.

¹⁴David O'Connor, "Meroë," 3:472-73 in *OEANE*, 472.

¹⁵It had endured since about 760 B.C.E., since at least the early third century B.C.E. from its capital in Meroë; see esp. J. Leclant, "The Empire of Kush: Napata and

directly south¹⁷ of Egypt, likewise describing Meroë as south of Egypt.¹⁸ Such basic information was, of course, widely available; even a later novelist who fictionalized freely about Ethiopia recognized its capital as Meroë.¹⁹

Information and Myths

As we have noted, Richard Pervo has argued that Luke includes the story of the African official because the latter was “exotic,” being from a distant land;²⁰ but whatever appeal a remote land might have for the story, Meroë was a real place, and Luke does not elaborate at any length on the location. Whereas many indulged in wild speculations about exotic distant lands, both fictitious and real, Luke avoids adding speculations; while he is interested in the symbolic spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth, his interest is not, in fact, “exotic.”

Unlike Luke, even some nonfiction writers speculated, in some cases more plausibly than others. Based on their knowledge of the Sahara, some Romans thought that “Ethiopia” and the interior of Africa were mainly desert (Sen. *Nat. Q.* 3.6.2; *Dial.* 5.20.2), just as much sand lay between Ethiopia and Egypt (Sen. *Nat. Q.* 1.pref.9); all knew that it was hot (Arrian *Ind.* 6.7).²¹ Some thought that Ethiopia north of Meroë lacked trees (Pliny *N.H.* 12.8.19), except for those yielding cotton (13.28.90).²² For lack of more accurate data, many writers simply compared Ethiopia with India, comparing their rains and crocodiles (Arrian *Ind.* 6.8). But an expedition sent in the time of Nero confirmed that desert began

Meroë,” in *Ancient Civilizations of Africa*, vol. 2 in *General History of Africa*, ed. G. Mokhtar (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 278-295; A. A. Hakem et al., “The Civilization of Napata and Meroë,” in *Ancient Civilizations of Africa*, 298-321. For the transfer of sovereignty from Napata to Meroë as late as 270 B.C.E., see O’Connor, 472.

¹⁶Plut. *Exile* 7, *Mor.* 601DE.

¹⁷Jos. *Ant.* 2.239; *War* 4.608; Appian *Hist. rom.* pref. 9; Juv. *Sat.* 10.150. Thus a plague beginning there spread to Egypt and thence to Greece (Thucyd. 2.48.1). They were thought the people to the furthest south (Paus. 1.33.3-6).

¹⁸Arrian *Ind.* 25.7. The boundary came up to the Nile’s first cataract in Augustus’s day (Losch, 479).

¹⁹Heliod. *Eth.* 9.16, 20, 24; 10.3, 5. He depicted it as a triangular island surrounded by three navigable rivers, including the Nile (10.5), but claimed that it was so big it looked like a mainland (ibid.); others claimed that a river surrounded Meroë (Vitruv. *Arch.* 8.2.6). The island did in fact lie “between the White Nile, the Blue Nile, and the Atbara River” (Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Africa and the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004], 165). Nero’s expedition claimed that the town of Meroë lay a full 70 miles from the entrance to the island (Pliny *N.H.* 6.35.185).

²⁰Pervo, 32.

²¹Vitruv. *Arch.* 8.2.7, opined that Africa had few rivers, because it was hot and moisture comes from the north.

²²Pliny *N.H.* 12.8.17 notes that Hdt 3.97 attributes ebony to Ethiopia, but with Virgil *Georg.* 2.116-17 he attributes it to India.

giving way to foliage around Meroë, with more forest and even elephant and rhinoceros tracks (Pliny *N.H.* 6.35.185).

In contrast to information and at least plausible surmises, some exotic "knowledge" was pure invention designed to "sell" on a popular market.²³ Polybius complained about the fables invented by various writers about Ethiopia (3.38.1, 3) and other distant locations (Polyb. 34.5.1-12; 3.57.1—59.9, especially 3.57.1-9; 3.58.2) in his day. Thus the Ethiopians were said to mine metal by pulling it up only by magnets (Sil. It. 3.266-67).²⁴ One swift monster considered native to Ethiopia supposedly had a lion's body with a human face, and three rows of teeth useful for eating humans.²⁵ Ultimately, writers often mixed genuine and fictitious information, lacking resources to distinguish them: thus Ethiopia produced not only hyenas and monkeys, but also "winged horses armed with horns."²⁶

Pliny the Elder offers some of the most thorough information about what the Roman world thought of Meroë in Luke's era. In *N.H.* 6.35.178-80, he lists towns and peoples reported south along the Nile to Meroe, but notes (181) that most no longer exist, as attested by Nero's scouts who found only desert there. While researching his work on Ethiopia, one Greek writer allegedly lived in Meroë for five years (6.35.183). Nero's scouts found few buildings in Meroë (6.35.185); while it apparently had a sizeable population, it was apparently spread out.

The Roman world claimed knowledge of some other African, "Ethiopian" regions in addition to Meroë, sometimes with the same sort of admixture of fact and fiction. Besides north African regions and Axum, these included explorations in west Africa in the second century B.C.E., likewise preserved for us in Pliny the Elder (*N.H.* 5.1.9-10). Discoveries included forests (5.1.9) and rivers with crocodiles (5.1.9-10). Elsewhere in Africa, after a desert and the Egyptian Libyans, came the "white Ethiopians"; and after them, "the Ethiopian clans of the Nigritae, named after the river."²⁷ But the further Pliny moves from his known world, the less certain (and often more skeptical) we can be of his information. He speaks of mute, snake-eating cave-dwellers (5.8.45),²⁸ the naked Gamphasantes (5.8.45);

²³Some stories told to Herodotus fit this description (see Hdt 3.17-24; 4.183 in Snowden, 105); certainly novelistic works (e.g., Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.21; Heliod. *Eth.* 10.4-5) and rabbinic speculations (e.g., *b. Pes.* 94a; *Taan.* 10a; *p. Ber.* 1:1, §12; *Song Rab.* 6:9, §3; cf. similarly fanciful dimensions in Heliod. *Eth.* 10.5) do.

²⁴Somewhat more plausibly, their companion Nubians wore no armor, but linen, including on the head, and they tipped their javelins with poison (Sil. It. 3.269-73).

²⁵Pliny *N.H.* 8.30.75 (attributing this "information" to Ctesias).

²⁶Pliny *N.H.* 8.30.72 (LCL 2:53).

²⁷Pliny *N.H.* 5.8.43 (LCL 2:249, 251); the river is the Niger (among African tribes called *Tarraelii* and *Oechalicae*, 5.8.44), though not necessarily the modern river by this name. "Niger" was a common river name, perhaps partly because in the Libyan language *gher* (or *ghir*) applied to "any flowing waters" (Werner Huß, "Niger," 9:749 in *Brill's New Pauly*).

²⁸Unfortunately, following Hdt 4.183, Pliny deals further with the Trogydytice, the

the Blemmyae, whose mouth and eyes are on their chests (an unfortunate necessity because they lack heads; 5.8.46); leather-footed people who crawl rather than walk, along with Satyrs and other creatures (5.8.46).

Even around Meroë, he assures us, strange peoples lived: on the east some flat-faced peoples lack noses; some had neither mouth nor nostrils, but one opening both for breathing and for sucking in fluids through “oat straws,” using gestures instead of speech (Pliny *N.H.* 6.35.187-88). Likewise (but now again more reliably), some also report a race of Pygmies closer to where the Nile originates (*Pygmaeorum*; 6.35.188).²⁹ All quadrupeds around “Nubian Ethiopia” (*Nubaei Aethiopes*), including elephants, lacked ears; a still more distant people “have a dog for a king and divine his commands from his movements” (6.35.192; LCL 2:481).³⁰ Some plants around Meroë were useful medicinally, whereas others caused suicidal madness.³¹ A mineral category including diamonds was found in mines near Meroë (Pliny *N.H.* 37.15.55), though also in India and Arabia (Pliny *N.H.* 37.15.56).

Although all educated people knew of Africa south of Egypt, some of the most widely circulated stories about particular Africans south of Egypt belonged to myth and legend. One of the most popular characters was Memnon, though many placed his Ethiopia in the “east,” the land of the dawn.³² (Some later writers, however, also associate him with Egypt.)³³ Dawn, a goddess who lived in the east, consorted with the mortal Tithonus and bore him two sons, including Memnon, in Ethiopia (Hesiod *Theog.* 984-85; Apollod. *Bib.* 3.12.4).³⁴ Memnon was black (*nigri*, Virg. *Aen.* 1.489),³⁵ and Odysseus

cave-dwellers, at 6.34.169; beyond Meroë, all were cave-dwellers (6.35.189). In Pliny *N.H.* 5.5.34, cave-dwellers lived seven days to the southwest of Libyan desert-dwellers who built houses of salt; Rome’s only contact with the cave-dwellers was carbuncle imported through Ethiopia. Reports of “cave-dwellers” might confuse the “Ethiopian” Troglodytae with northern Troglodytae, or cave-dwellers (Morkot, “Troglodytae”).

²⁹Beyond Meroë, Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.25 lists nomadic Ethiopians (living in wagons!), elephant-hunters, cannibals, and pygmies; plus people who were “shadow-footed”; nevertheless, the travelers found hospitality in a village there (6.27).

³⁰Some ideas, such as a ruling dog, may have grown from outsiders’ views of sacred totems, but plainly Pliny’s sources are not accurate at these points.

³¹Pliny *N.H.* 24.102.163; cf. 27.1.2; detailed in 27.3.11-12.

³²E.g., Sil. It. 3.332-34; Sen. *Troj.* 10. For fragments of the *Aethiopsis*, including dealing with Memnon, see *Greek Epic Fragments* (ed. West, LCL pp. 108-117). On Memnon, see also Johannes Scherf, “Memnon,” 8:649-50 in *Brill’s New Pauly*.

³³See Herbert Jennings Rose and Jennifer R. March, “Memnon (1),” 955 in *OCD* (citing Paus. 1.42.3).

³⁴In less detail, also Ovid *Ex Ponto* 1.4.57; *Am.* 1.8.3-4; Philost. the Elder *Imag.* 1.7.

³⁵Further, Ovid *Am.* 1.8; *Ex Ponto* 3.3.96-97. But his mother Aurora (Latin for Eos, Dawn), as a goddess, had golden hair (Ovid *Am.* 1.13.2)! In Philost. the Elder *Imag.* 1.7, his skin has a trace of ruddiness mitigating the black. Greek vase-paintings portray him according to Greek heroic conventions, but often his attendants as black Africans (Rose

claimed that Memnon was the handsomest man he had ever seen (Hom. *Od.* 11.522). By all accounts, he was a mighty warrior, yet finally was killed by Achilles (Apollod. *Epit.* 5.3).³⁶ In some versions, after Achilles slew Memnon, Zeus made the latter immortal (*Aethiopsis* 1–2).³⁷ Pliny reports the view of some that birds fly annually from Ethiopia to fight over Memnon's grave at Troy, and that another source claims that the birds do the same around his palace in Ethiopia (Pliny *N.H.* 10.37.74).³⁸ For centuries his death remained a subject for Greek art and of rhetorical descriptions thereof (Philostratus the Elder *Imagines* 1.7).

Some suggested that the Ethiopians originated astrology.³⁹ Others claimed that they stole their wisdom from India (Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.11), from which they were expelled for murdering many Indians, including King Ganges, the river's son (3.20). Ethiopian sages could make the trees salute Apollonius (6.10); after Apollonius argues that the Indian sages are superior to them (6.5–11), the youngest of the Ethiopian sages follows him as a disciple (6.16). Ethiopians were as wise due to their warm climate as Scythians were fierce due to their harsh climate.⁴⁰

The Roman public proved infatuated with any stories about Ethiopia after the return of Nero's expedition (61–62 C.E.).⁴¹ By contrast, Luke (versus, say, the later novelist Heliodorus) does not even describe Ethiopia; we know that Nubians were a *real* people (unlike Amazons), and Candace was a *real* queen. Comparison with ancient fictions show us that Nubia would be of interest to Luke's audience; but unlike some other locations fictitious reports claim, Nubia was not fictitious. Far from indulging speculations about distant lands, Luke stays close to the most sober model of historiography. Though he could not have known which reports of his contemporaries were reliable and which were not, what he reports (in

and March, "Memnon").

³⁶Also Pindar *Nem.* 3.62–63; 6.49–53; *Isthm.* 8.55; Pliny *N.H.* 6.35.182; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 11.114, 117; for his war exploits, e.g., Philost. the Elder *Imag.* 2.7.

³⁷Excerpted, hence preserved, in Proclus *Chrestomathia* 2 (in Hesiod LCL, 506–507; also *Greek Epic Fragments*, ed. West, LCL, 113). A revisionist version claims that the Memnon slain at Troy was a Trojan (Philost. *Hrk.* 26.16–17), though Memnon of Ethiopia ruled during the Trojan War and is worshiped in Ethiopia and Egypt (*Hrk.* 26.16; cf. similarly *Vit. Apoll.* 6.4).

³⁸On this myth, see further Johannes Scherf, "Memnonides," in *Brill's New Pauly*, 8:652–53. Memnon's statue in Ethiopia could speak, and was so realistic it helped Eos to stop mourning her son (Callist. *Descr.* 9).

³⁹Lucian *Astr.* 3, suggesting also (5) that they passed it to Egyptians; but Lucian is being satirical in this essay.

⁴⁰Pliny *N.H.* 2.80.189.

⁴¹Hans-Josef Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in Early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Brian McNeil (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 25–26 (following Eckhard Plümacher, *Lukas als hellenistischer Schriftsteller: Studien zur Apostelgeschichte*, SUNT 9 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972], 12–13).

contrast to what many others report) does not contradict what we know.

Exotic Analogies

Against the claim that Luke would invent the African official because he hails from an unverifiable, “exotic” land, Luke’s brief report is barely comparable to sources genuinely interested in exotic matters. Many Greeks had long enjoyed speculating about distant, exotic lands, where life differed from what was known as far as imagination could allow. Comparison with some other peoples helps set their speculations about Ethiopia in context. In the far north lived the Hyperboreans,⁴² who enjoyed such longevity that finally, when they tired of living, they would banquet and then hurl themselves into the sea.⁴³

Likewise, some claimed that India had rivers of milk, honey, wine, and olive oil,⁴⁴ and people ate the lotus that grew without need for cultivation;⁴⁵ their Brahmin sages drank from the “fountain of truth,” making them incapable of lying.⁴⁶ Ants larger than foxes dig gold, and at midday, when the ants retreat underground due to the heat, Indians steal their gold, often leading to ensuing battles with the ants.⁴⁷ Arrian had such fantasies in mind when he complained about unverified tales of water monsters, griffins, and gold-mining ants in India (*Alex.* 5.4.3).

Speculation (mixed with more accurate knowledge)⁴⁸ had also been rife about the Scythians, because they were remote enough⁴⁹ that knowledge about them was limited. Thus some felt that Scythia was too cold for thunderbolts, just as Egypt was too hot for them.⁵⁰ One plant there reportedly preserved one from hunger and thirst, so long as one kept it in one’s mouth.⁵¹ In their land,

⁴²Cf. e.g., *Epigoni* frg. 5 (so Hdt 4.32) and in Hesiod frg. 150.21 M.-W. (so *Greek Epic Fragments*, ed. West, LCL, 59).

⁴³Pliny *N.H.* 4.12.89, though himself unsure if the reports were correct.

⁴⁴Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.18 (noting that all flow one month of the year only for the king, as his tribute).

⁴⁵Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.19. The trees brought their fruit down to whomever wished to eat (35.21).

⁴⁶Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.22.

⁴⁷Hdt 3.102-5 (claiming that he learned this from the Persians); Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.23-24.

⁴⁸For some modern research, see, e.g., Ellis H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks: A Survey of Ancient History and Archaeology on the North Coast of the Euxine from the Danube to the Caucasus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913).

⁴⁹On their remoteness, see, e.g., Aeschylus *Seven* 728, 817; Cic. *Nat. d.* 2.34.88 (mentioned alongside Britain); in Jos. *Ant.* 1.123, they are Magog.

⁵⁰Pliny *N.H.* 2.51.135. They are contrasted with Egyptians also in Philo *Mos.* 2.19; Max. Tyre 23.4.

⁵¹Pliny *N.H.* 25.43.82.

a wild country,⁵² one hairy animal changed its color to blend in with its surroundings.⁵³

Another major area of exotic geographic speculation involved the renowned Amazons, though by this period they are more often mentioned with regard to the past. Amazons were essentially the opposite of what Greeks thought of women, hence a fertile ground for imagination. It was thought that Amazons had once subdued much of Asia and Europe (Diod. Sic. 2.44.2-3);⁵⁴ it was more difficult for more recent people to believe such reports, one historian opined, because their strength had died out (Diod. Sic. 2.46.6).

Most ancient historians and other writers took for granted the historical authenticity of the Amazons.⁵⁵ Herodotus assumes the existence of Amazons.⁵⁶ Xenophon did not see any Amazons in the east, but notes that they captured a man with weapons like those attributed to the Amazons.⁵⁷ Pompey's Asian captives included women thought to be Amazons; but it was uncertain whether they belonged to a separate kingdom or these "barbarians" simply called any warrior women "Amazons."⁵⁸ Later, Strabo still apparently believes in Amazons, but thinks that, despite various claims, no historian in his day really knows their location.⁵⁹ Arrian reports that some in Alexander's day claimed the existence of Amazons,⁶⁰ but suspects that they must have died out by Alexander's day, since he did not run into them.⁶¹ In the second century C.E., Pausanias still treats them as real figures, citing earlier historians.⁶² Some philosophers offered arguments that depended on their authentic existence.⁶³

⁵²Aristoph. *Birds* 941.

⁵³Philo *Drunkenness* 174.

⁵⁴More fully, see Diod. Sic. 2.44.2-46.6.

⁵⁵E.g., Mary R. Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 22-23; in Greek historians, see Donald J. Sobol, *The Amazons of Greek Mythology* (New York: Barnes, 1972), 81-90; in literature and art, 91-112. For the question of their actual existence, see Sobol, 113-147, who doubts that historicity can be proved either way (147).

⁵⁶E.g., Hdt 4.111-17.

⁵⁷Xen. *Anab.* 4.4.16 (the weapons are not all that distinctive).

⁵⁸Appian *Hist. rom.* 12.15.103. Since local language was presumably translated into Greek and Latin, the "Amazons" may be the translators' doing.

⁵⁹Strabo 11.5.1, 4.

⁶⁰Arrian *Alex.* 4.15.4. Some claim that the Amazon queen came to meet Alexander (Diod. Sic. 17.77.1; uncertainly, Plut. *Alex.* 46.1-2), or sent tribute (Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.26, an unreliable source). In *Pesiq. Rab Kab.* 9:1, a place inhabited only by women, possibly in Africa, dissuades Alexander from warring with them.

⁶¹Arrian *Alex.* 7.13.4-6.

⁶²Paus. 1.2.1.

⁶³E.g., Crates *Ep.* 28. The artistic portrayal of Pericles fighting Amazons in the historical period (Plut. *Per.* 31.4) is an artistic recollection of Theseus's and the

Others proved more skeptical about their existence, though sometimes simply because such warlike women seemed to them unthinkable.⁶⁴ Against their existence, although Greek art contains many Amazons, they do not appear in the art of other peoples, for whom Amazons would also have been a matter of interest.⁶⁵ By contrast, Luke offers nothing mythical.

Luke's Plausible Details

The few features Luke reports about the official relevant to his culture appear both in historical and novelistic works, but what is significant is that, in contrast to novelistic works, none of Luke's essential claims is improbable.

A Meroitic Treasurer

Luke's claim that the African was an official is not implausible. The journey was a significant one; any of Luke's contemporaries who derived information from sources such as Herodotus might expect Meroë to be nearly a two months' journey south of Elephantine, and more exotic expanses yet two months further south (Hdt 2.29-32).⁶⁶ As noted above, if Philip did meet a pilgrim from Nubia, such a pilgrim might well have been a person of means to make such a journey.

To supervise the queen's wealth was no small matter, given the famous wealth of Meroë.⁶⁷ Meroë was known for its wealth (Diod. Sic. 1.33.1-4),⁶⁸ hence a novelist could claim that Ethiopians cared little for gold or jewels, heaps of which the royal palace had in storage (Heliod. *Eth.* 9.24).⁶⁹ Its wealth was not, however, purely novelistic. At about one square mile (2.59 square km or 640 acres), it is, apart from Egyptian cities, "the earliest large-scale city" we

Athenians' battle with them.

⁶⁴Tatian 32.

⁶⁵Lefkowitz, *Women in Myth*, 22.

⁶⁶See also Snowden, 105. Pliny *N.H.* 2.112.245 estimates 705 miles from the Ethiopian coast to Meroë, and 1,250 from Meroë to Alexandria; in 6.35.184, he notes that Nero's scouting expedition reported 945 miles from Syene to Meroë. Note the fanciful proportions of Ethiopia in *b. Pes.* 94a; *Taan.* 10a; *p. Ber.* 1:1, §12; *Song Rab.* 6:9, §3.

⁶⁷With also Abraham Smith, "Do You Understand What You are Reading?: A Literary Critical Reading of the Ethiopian (Kushite) Episode (Acts 8:26-40)," *JITC* 22/1 (1994): 48-70, here 64. On Kush's economy (including in the Meroitic period), see esp. Derek A. Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1998), 153-176. Among legendary portraits, Ethiopians valued gold less than Mediterranean peoples valued lead (Hdt 3.23; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 79.3).

⁶⁸See also John H. Taylor, *Egypt and Nubia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; Trustees of the British Museum, 1991), 46-47; P. T. Crocker, "The City of Meroe and the Ethiopian Eunuch," *BurH* 22/3 (1986): 53-72.

⁶⁹Cf. also Heliod. *Eth.* 10.5 for its marvelous fertility, including three-hundredfold harvests.

know of in Africa.⁷⁰ Although plunderers ravaged much of Meroë's wealth over the centuries, excavators found many expensive imports, as well as hoards of gold jewelry.⁷¹

Even those writing fictitious geography recognized the strategic location for trade (cf. Xen. *Epb.* 4.1), but again, this connection was not itself fictitious. As the link between the Mediterranean world and Egypt, on the one hand, and the wealth of Africa's interior, on the other, Meroë was strategically positioned for trade.⁷² Not far from Meroë was the strategic horn of East Africa, from which the Axumite empire would eventually rise to challenge Meroë's dominance.

Greeks apparently had widespread contacts with Africa south of Egypt as far back as the Minoan period;⁷³ Nubia's contacts with the northern Mediterranean world were even more prominent in the Roman imperial period.⁷⁴ "Ethiopia" was considered a source for ebony (Paus. 1.42.5) and ivory,⁷⁵ though at this time some elephants also existed in North Africa.⁷⁶ Ships trading in Roman Egypt would make "a two year round trip" voyage along the east African coast "as far south as Zanzibar," purchasing "ivory, tortoise shell, myrrh and incense" en route.⁷⁷

⁷⁰O'Connor, 472. This archaeological evidence may conflict with, and should then be preferred to, Pliny *N.H.* 6.35.185.

⁷¹O'Connor, 473.

⁷²See S. Adam with J. Vercoutter, "The Importance of Nubia: A Link between Central Africa and the Mediterranean," in *Ancient Civilizations of Africa*, 226-223. Pliny *N.H.* 6.35.18 claims that another island joined with its own to form a harbor; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 6.2 claims that Ethiopia-Egypt trade was more equitable than Greek trade.

⁷³See William Leo Hansberry, *Africa and Africans as Seen by Classical Writers*, ed. Joseph E. Harris (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1981), 37-39. For the history of Greek contact with Africa, see the survey in Werner Huß, "Africa: History of Africa's Discovery," in *Brill's New Pauly*, 1:291-194; for Greek sources in translation, see Stanley Burstein, *Ancient African Civilizations: Kush and Axum* (Princeton: Marcus Wiener, 1998), 23-52.

⁷⁴See Taylor, 48; Burstein, 53-75; cf. Yamauchi, 165-166; Stephan Johannes Seidlmayer, "Nubia," in *Brill's New Pauly*, 9:867-870, here 869.

⁷⁵It had access to elephants (Sen. *Ep. Lucil.* 85.41; Pliny *N.H.* 8.13.35; Juv. *Sat.* 10.150; Heliod. *Eth.* 10.5) and ivory (Polyb. 34.16.1; Pliny *N.H.* 8.47). One could also secure these from India (e.g., Catullus 64.48; Pliny *N.H.* 8.11.32; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 79.4), and ivory was more available in Egypt (at least by the period of Philost. *Vit. soph.* 2.21.603).

⁷⁶Cf. Karl-Wilhelm Weeber, "Environment, Environmental Behavior," in *Brill's New Pauly*, 4:1002-1008, here 1007; St. John Simpson, "Bone, Ivory, and Shell: Artifacts of the Persian through Roman Periods," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 5 vols., ed. Eric M. Meyers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1:343-348, here 346; Helmuth Schneider, "Ivory," in *Brill's New Pauly*, 6:1153.

⁷⁷J. Nelson Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse*, JSNTSup 132 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 104; cf. Joyce Maire Reynolds, "Africa

Naturally the nation's prosperity also affected that of the queen, whose treasurer this official is. Meroë's art typically depicts their queens as laden with jewels and many-fringed robes, and notably corpulent; their wide girth, probably intended as a display of prosperity, persisted in representations from the third century B.C.E. to the fourth century C.E.⁷⁸

Queen Candace

Presumably the queen the official served worshiped traditional deities of Meroë; nevertheless, she (and perhaps her society) must have known and tolerated the Jewish faith. The treasurer could hardly have taken an excursion for months, along with his presumed entourage, without the queen's approval (cf. Neh 2:5-8).

Most scholars, including nearly all commentators on Acts,⁷⁹ hold that "Candace" (pronounced *kan-dak'e*) was not the queen's name but her dynastic title, presumably comparable to Pharaoh or Ptolemy;⁸⁰ Pliny claims that this name was passed on to each queen ("through a succession of queens for many years," *N.H.* 6.186).⁸¹ Although Greek and Roman authors thought it a proper name, it is a Meroitic construction, *kdke* or *ktke*, from "woman" (*kd*) and the titular suffix *-ke*.⁸² Historically, we know of several Candaces from the late first century B.C.E. to the mid-first century C.E.; the title seems to stop in the mid-first century C.E.⁸³ This observation could suggest that Luke's source predates that time and the time of Luke's own writing, though we dare not infer too much from it (since Greco-Roman writers later than he continued to employ the title).

Because the kings were considered sons of the sun god (similar to ancient Egypt's pharaohs), Bion of Soli claims that they did not specify their fathers, but only their mothers, the mother of each king being called the Candace (*Aethiopica* 1).⁸⁴ Because of the king's holiness, it was thought, the queen was

(Libya), Exploration," in *OCD*, 33; for details on the first-century mariners' guidebook for this voyage, including the merchandise acquired there (such as spices, ivory, and tortoise shell), see Lionel Casson, *The Ancient Mariners: Seafarers and Sea Fighters of the Mediterranean in Ancient Times*, 2d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 203-204.

⁷⁸Yamauchi, 172.

⁷⁹E.g., Lake and Cadbury, 96; Haenchen, 310; F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 186; Munck, 78; Conzelmann, 68. Much earlier, see also Bede *Comm. Acts* 8.27b (trans. L. Martin, 82).

⁸⁰Cf., e.g., Paus. 1.8.6, commenting on the line of Ptolemies (with distinct individual surnames).

⁸¹LCL 2:477. Often noted, e.g., Lyman Abbott, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Barnes, 1876), 102; Bruce, *Commentary*, 186 n. 43 (citing also Strabo 17.1.54; Dio Cass. 54.5.4).

⁸²Angelika Lohwasser, "Kandake," in *Brill's New Pauly*, 7:15.

⁸³Yamauchi, 171.

⁸⁴Lake and Cadbury, 96; Bruce, *Commentary*, 186 n. 43.

then left with tasks of secular administration.⁸⁵ Nero's scouting expedition claimed that a queen ruled Meroë.⁸⁶ As late as Eusebius, the Roman Empire believed that queens ruled in Meroë (Euseb. *H.E.* 2.1.13).⁸⁷

Though not entirely accurate, Greco-Roman conceptions of this queen were close enough for ordinary purposes.⁸⁸ Nubian society was not matriarchal, but its queens were wealthy and did exercise significant power, sometimes as regents for sons.⁸⁹ One scholar argues that "Candace" appears to have been "a corruption of a Meroitic title (*kedke*) which was borne by all the royal consorts or queen-mothers of Kush; it does not specify a queen regnant."⁹⁰ From a minimalist perspective (that is, based on only the extant evidence and not inferences from it), though "at least five queens" reigned directly "during the latter centuries of the Kushite dynasty," no two of these known queens are known to have "reigned in succession, and it is not certain that they bore the title *kedke*."⁹¹

Did Luke's informant (again, possibly Philip) know the details of the Candace, or did he fill in this information relevant to the official's position based on the popular Greco-Roman view of his era? "Candace" was the title by which she was known to the Greco-Roman world, and William Y. Adams concurs that it was apparently related to the indigenous Nubian title for all queens. Further, this eunuch could work for her without implying that no king held power at the same time.⁹² Whether the queen would have her own wealth and her own treasurer is a subject meriting further exploration, but we need not rule it out *a priori*; there can be no question that the queen mothers in this period held significant political power.⁹³ Even at this point, where we could

⁸⁵Bruce, *Acts: Greek*, 191. Examining also novels, Jacqueline De Weever, "Candace in the Alexander Romances: Variations on the Portrait Theme," *RomPhil* 43 (1990): 529-546, here 530, notes that in Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.*, "Candace, rather than her adult son, rules the country."

⁸⁶Pliny *N.H.* 6.35.186, *regnare feminam Candacer*; undoubtedly true in the generation of their visit.

⁸⁷Johnson, 155.

⁸⁸Cf. the Nubian inscription noting the reigning queen in 13 B.C.E. (G. Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978], 352; Bruce, *Acts: Greek*, 191).

⁸⁹William Y. Adams, *Nubia: Corridor to Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 260. He, 260, notes cases of patrilineal and possibly some matrilineal succession, but points out that brother-sister marriages may have been common. These were also common in Egypt, see, e.g., Diod. Sic. 1.27.1; Sext. Emp. *Pyr.* 1.152; Ptolemy *Tetrab.* 4.10.203; in the Ptolemaic royal house, e.g., Paus. 1.7.1; Lucian *Icar.* 15.

⁹⁰Adams, 260.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 260.

⁹²E.g., even a general could have his own treasurer (Aeschines *Tim.* 56).

⁹³See Hakem, 302-304; Roland Oliver and J. D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa* (New York: Facts on File, 1989), 32. Cf. the high status of queens in some traditional African societies, including the Amhara in East Africa (John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and*

most readily forgive Luke if he (like some other historians) were slightly confused, his sparse report does not clearly conflict with certainly known facts.

Still, it is not impossible that this Candace was also a queen regnant. Although some have suggested that a Candace named Amanitare (25-41 C.E.) ruled in this period, the newer chronology identifies a different queen for this period, for whom the particular title Candace is not yet attested. She may well have borne this title (alongside a name, as with other Candaces), or Luke may simply employ the title familiar to a Greco-Roman audience (or to his source); as noted above, the wife or mother of any king could bear the title. We know of four queen mothers who actually ruled (holding the title *qore*, “ruler”) in this period, the last being Queen Nawidemak, ruling in the first half of the first century C.E. The Candace here could thus possibly be Queen Nawidemak, who is attested as *qore*, hence ruled Nubia.⁹⁴

Mediterranean Perspectives on Candace

For Luke’s audience, this queen unquestionably held high status. Although Roman sources claimed that Augustus defeated the Candace’s troops, the concessions he granted her suggest that this is one of the empty claims to victory so common among losers’ boasts in antiquity. Likewise, as Frank M. Snowden Jr. observes, Meroë’s own reliefs and other evidence could suggest a Meroitic victory.⁹⁵ Rome continued diplomatic relations with Meroë, working together in the time of Nero⁹⁶ and even in later times after the kingdom’s strength *vis-à-vis* Axum was waning.⁹⁷

Even novelists knew of the Candace, and seem to have preferred alliances with Ethiopian queens to battling them.⁹⁸ In a work praising Alexander, a novelist portrays the Candace as extremely tall, looking like “a demigod”; she proves smarter than Alexander and freely tells him so (Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.22).⁹⁹ Greek and Latin sources tend not to describe the Candace’s color, since it may be assumed from her being Ethiopian;¹⁰⁰ but it is certainly only some of

Philosophies [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970], 234, 243).

⁹⁴Yamauchi, 172.

⁹⁵Snowden, 133.

⁹⁶See Sen. *Nat. Q.* 6.8.3; further Losch, 495. On Nero’s expedition, see, e.g., Pliny *N.H.* 6.35.178-185.

⁹⁷See Snowden, 133-136.

⁹⁸Ps.-Callisth. *Alex.* 3.19-21; cf. Jos. *Ant.* 2.252-53 (less helpfully to the other Ethiopians). This approach does not stem from favor toward women in general; both Achilles and Theseus supposedly slaughtered Amazons freely (e.g., Plut. *Thes.* 26-28).

⁹⁹Also emphasized by W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), 140.

¹⁰⁰See De Weever, 533.

the later European romances that portray her as European.¹⁰¹ Another Greek novel, set in the Persian period, makes Ethiopia's queen, Persinna, the priestess of the Moon (Helioid. *Eth.* 10.4) and attributes to her a revelatory dream (10.3), though like all women, she was barred from attending special sacrifices lest she accidentally defile them (10.4). The story's heroine, her daughter, is nearest to the throne for succession (10.12, 15). Luke shows little interest in such novelistic expansions, but his more modest assumption of a wealthy and powerful queen is accurate.

The Official's Communication with Philip

That the official is reading (or perhaps has another reading to him, especially given likely bumps in the road) an Isaiah scroll, or can converse with Philip, is not implausible. Meroë had its own language, with (by this period) an alphabetic script,¹⁰² but we cannot expect Philip to have acquaintance with that language. If Philip was primarily Greek-speaking (cf. Acts 6:1-5), how could he talk with the Ethiopian or understand that he was reading from Isaiah? It is possible that Philip could have known enough Hebrew to recognize a Scripture text, but we need not suppose that this Nubian God-fearer reads Hebrew poetry as well as converses with Philip in (presumably) Greek.¹⁰³ There is no question that the Septuagint was widely available in Alexandria and probably in Jerusalem as well, and that is the version Luke quotes (though the version we might expect Luke to quote in any case).

Luke's Greek audience would know that Ethiopians were not normally among Greek-speaking peoples (cf. Acts 2:10; *Sib. Or.* 3.516). Yet no person of means would come from Ethiopia to Jerusalem without either a translator or some knowledge of language; in this case, the latter situation is far more probable. As a presumably educated member of the Nubian elite and one perhaps involved in discussing trade, this treasurer would likely speak several languages, including those relevant for trade ties with places such as Greek-speaking Alexandria in Egypt to Meroë's north. Greek appears in Nubian inscriptions, including one mentioning the queen in 13 B.C.E.¹⁰⁴ Coins from

¹⁰¹See *ibid.*, 537, 540-544.

¹⁰²Zahi Hawass, "Nubia," in *OEANE*, 4:170-171, here 171; cf. the use of Egyptian hieroglyphs and its own alphabet in Seidlmayer, 869. From no later than the mid-second millennium B.C.E., Meroitic, apparently a north-Sudanese language like Nubian, used "18 single-sound characters (15 consonants and 3 vowel signs) and 4 syllabic signs in a hieroglyphic form and the usually employed cursive form" (Angelika Lohwasser, "Meroitic," in *Brill's New Pauly*, 8:718).

¹⁰³Joseph A. Fitzmyer thinks the scroll "in Hebrew, or less likely Greek" (*The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 31 [New York: Doubleday, 1998], 412-413). But while Hebrew Torah scrolls may have been preferred, MSS of the LXX show that Greek versions also existed, and if anyone needed a Greek scroll this official may have been among them.

¹⁰⁴Deissmann, 352.

nearby Axum, dated before Ezana's conversion (in the early fourth century), use Greek inscriptions as well as a Roman design and gold standard.¹⁰⁵ An earlier king of Meroë appearing in Greek sources is said to have had a Greek education, which suggests one or more teachers of Greek there.¹⁰⁶ Certainly knowledge of Greek would have been essential in relations with Ptolemaic Egypt;¹⁰⁷ likewise in this period, the ruling elite in Egypt, as in much of the eastern empire, continued to speak Greek.

Conclusion

Various factors support Luke's dependence on prior tradition. One is that, whereas Luke's brief information about Nubia comports with known historical data, he lacks the fictitious elaboration characteristic of most fictitious and speculative sources. This difference also suggests that Luke's source, however limited, may reflect a genuine historical encounter between Jewish and Nubian culture. Correspondences with genuine information also appear in novels, but they (and sometimes historical works citing misinformation) also include fictitious elements (usually abundantly). While the present state of research does not prove that some of Luke's details (such as a current "Candace" having her own treasurer) will never be open to question, even those details do not differ substantially from what we find in basically accurate portrayals in contemporary historical works. Luke lacks interest in fictitious elaboration about the official's homeland (on account of which he lacks even the inadvertent fictitious elements often found in histories).

While such correspondences and lack of elaboration do not prove that Luke has a source, they do show that his interest is more in recounting his historical source than in adding the "exotic" developments characteristic of novels. That is to say, at the least, that Pervo's suggestion of Luke's novelistic interest in the account is at this point misplaced.

¹⁰⁵Marilyn E. Heldman, "Axum," in *OEANE*, 1:239-241, here 239.

¹⁰⁶Welsby, 194-195, noting Diod. Sic. 3.6.3 and an alphabet inscribed perhaps for educational purposes.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 67.