

Lucian's *Dialogi Marini*

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By

Adam N. Bartley

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Exactly what are the *Dialogi Marini* about? The reader's first response is usually that they have been presented with a pleasant and at times witty presentation of myths in a concise and approachable format, which are, however, lacking in intellectual depth. Lami and Maltomini¹ note that, in comparison with the *Dialogi Deorum* we can view the scenes here as a set of anti-Olympian tales. Certainly works of this sort appear to have been familiar from Lucian's own period and birthplace, if we consider a contemporary of Lucian's, the Syrian Cynic philosopher Oenomaus of Gadara.² Such a straightforward view is not in itself a bad thing. When we look at the dialogues in depth, however, with particular attention to the literary culture of the time in which Lucian wrote and the learned audience that he had at his disposal, we can see that what has, in fact, been presented to us is a series of 15 puzzles, inviting us either to consider the myth from a novel and unexpected viewpoint or, more importantly, to consider some other intellectual point through the medium of the myth.

1.1 About Lucian

Due to the problems involved in dating Lucian's works in general, and these dialogues in particular, Lucian's education, his career as a sophist and the nature of his other works must all be regarded as potential influences on the

¹Lami and Maltomini, 1986, 23.

²For discussion of the nature of Oenomaus' work as mentioned in Julian's *Orationes* see Smith, 1995, 75, where Oenomaus is described in *Oration* 7.209b and 211a as a 'scorner of all things divine and human'.

content of the *Dialogi Marini*. Extreme care needs to be applied, as there has been a considerable academic tradition, correctly criticised by Hall³, of attempting to set all of Lucian's works in a sort of sequence and to make judgement on the details of their composition as a result. With the exception of a few of Lucian's works, it is important to accept that while we can often establish similarities between Lucian's works, it is often impossible to determine influences from one upon another.

1.1.1 Lucian's Life

In his detailed background analysis of Lucian's home city of Samosata, Simon Swain⁴ notes that the city of Lucian's birth was, on the one hand, thoroughly Greek in its outlook, having only comparatively recently joined the Roman empire, after being part of the independent kingdom of Commagene until AD 72. Ostensibly Lucian was, in his own words at *Bis Accusatus* 27, initially a speaker of Syrian who learnt Greek only at a later age.⁵ As Jones notes, there is some ambiguity in these words, as βάρβαρον ἔτι τὴν φωνὴν could refer equally to a foreign accent as to a foreign language.⁶ However, even though the figure of Oratory personified may only be referring to an accent, that certainly does nothing to lessen our strong suspicion that Lucian was a speaker of Syrian. Swain notes that, although the Syrian language was due to rise to considerable prominence in the coming centuries, the dominant administrative language at the time was Greek, and we can reasonably expect Lucian to have had a good education in it. Born sometime between 115-120 AD, Lucian tells us at *Somnium* 2 that he began his life in training for the family business of sculpture, before choosing rhetoric instead. This choice may reflect what would have been for Lucian the very recently introduced freedom from liturgies for sophists working in cities other than their home city, which would have been considerable incentive to take up a different lifestyle.⁷

Lucian's life as a sophist was, indeed, a travelling one. He appears to have spent a period of education in Ionia, as he himself mentions at *Bis Accusatus* 27. At some point Lucian travelled to Gaul, where he seems to have taught

³Hall 1981, 44-45.

⁴Swain 1996, 310-11.

⁵Εγὼ γάρ, ὧ ἄνδρες δικασταί, τουτονὶ κομιδῇ μειράκιον ὄντα, βάρβαρον ἔτι τὴν φωνὴν καὶ μονουχὶ κἀνδυν ἐνδεδυκότα εἰς τὸν Ἀσσίριον τρόπον, περὶ τὴν Ἰωνίαν εὐρούσα πλαζόμενον ἔτι καὶ ὅ τι χρήσαιτο ἑαυτῷ οὐκ εἰδόμενα παραλαβοῦσα ἐπαίδευσεν.

⁶Jones 1986, 7.

⁷See Bowersock 1969, 32-33, who notes that this exemption became more widespread under the emperor Hadrian, and not Vespasian, as is sometimes supposed, although it was constantly under review by subsequent emperors.

rhetoric for a period of time, before apparently pursuing a career in rhetoric in Rome and Athens.⁸ Hall⁹ notes that it is difficult to state categorically exactly when he returned to the Near East, but he was certainly present in Antioch between 163 and 165, when Lucius Verus left most of the campaigning to Marcus Aurelius and fostered a court there. It is in this period that he appears to have composed the *De Saltatione*, *De Historia Conscribenda*, *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus* for no other reason, than that there would seem to have been little advantage for Lucian in composing such works which seem targeted at securing imperial patronage after the death of Lucius Verus in 166.

Lucian tells us himself that he travelled to Athens in 165 AD, as he was present at the Olympiad of that year when the Cynic philosopher and former Christian Peregrinus immolated himself in protest at the Roman administration, an event which Lucian describes and mocks in the *Peregrinus*. Lucian received an administrative position in Alexandria from then co-regent Commodus in 177. In this location, which would, with its literary history and thriving culture, have appealed well to him, he appears to have spent the last of his days before dying at some point after AD 180.

A difficult issue when considering the timing of the composition of a particular work is that we have so little external evidence on which to base our judgements of when they were composed and the internal evidence must always be approached with great care, as it is as prone to literary play as any other aspect of Lucian's writing. Good examples of this include the above-mentioned scene in the *Somnium*. It is impossible for the reader to know whether Lucian really had some training as a sculptor, as he claims, or whether he is embellishing details so as to emphasise the choice that he makes in that dialogue between a very safe but pedestrian career choice and the more exotic seeming choice to become a sophist. Jennifer Hall¹⁰ accurately highlights the danger attempting to date the majority of Lucian's works to particular periods in his life. An example of the over-interpretation of this evidence can be seen in the analysis of Kazimierz Korus, who, when noting that the *Imagines* can, by links to external evidence, be confidently dated to 163 AD, goes on to identify this as Lucian's 40th year and state, therefore, that "he was, therefore, at the height of his artistic development"¹¹. Without better knowledge of when the bulk of Lucian's works were composed it is impossible to judge at what stage in his life his artistic output developed most fully. While a small number of his works allow for accurate dating against external events, it is

⁸Bompaire 1993, xiii-xv.

⁹Hall 1981, 20.

¹⁰Hall 1981, 44-45.

¹¹Korus 1981, 48.

only possible to group the majority according to the characteristics that they share.

1.1.2 Lucian's Works

It is difficult to categorise rapidly the works of an author from whom we have over eighty attributed works. They can, however, be grouped into three broad classes. The first of these are those works which are involved in the description of contemporary events and figures. Examples of these works are the *De Historia Conscribenda*, which is ostensibly a humorous handbook on how to compose a history of the quality of Herodotus, Thucydides or Xenophon, but is, in fact, closely linked to the campaigns of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus against the Parthians, the *Alexander*, which can be confidently linked to the fraud of Alexander of Abounoteichos, by which Lucian was directly affected, or the *Demonax*, about the life of a contemporary Cynic philosopher.¹² These works are presented in a manner which displays less literary parody than we would associate with the many dialogues. What is clear is Lucian's satirical intent, whether for praise at the expense of other satirical targets, in the case of *Demonax*, or outright invective and condemnation, in the case of the *Alexander*. In contrast with these works the majority of Lucian's writing lacks contextual connection to outside events and cannot be dated with any real confidence. A less obviously satirical approach is taken in the *De Syria Dea*, in which Lucian discusses a cult from his own province in a manner highly reminiscent of Herodotus, to the extent that he uses a form of the Ionic dialect clearly intended to evoke Herodotus' *Histories*. It is difficult, however, to take even this at face value, as the work could well be a satire of the apparent gullibility of Herodotus, his successors, such as the *Indica* of Arrian, and his readers. As with the mention of the great historians in connection with the campaign against the Parthians in the *De Historia Conscribenda*, however, Lucian may also be implying that his own city is worthy of description in a work of the calibre of that of Herodotus.

The next important group of works is the very wide range of satirical dialogues, which both attack the norms of the dialogue form and specific aspects of contemporary life, such as the *De Parasito*, which presents an ironically competent defence of the lifestyle of living as a type of dependent

¹²Sidwell 2004, 33-34 suggests that the *Demonax* is a fictional parody, following Branham 1989, 57-63. Neither Sidwell nor Branham can provide much more evidence than that based on the 'feel' of the text. Given that Sidwell himself admits that there are collected sayings of Demonax, admittedly dated to a period after Lucian, the question should remain, at the very least, open, as there is reason enough to accept the existence of Demonax, with an admittedly open mind.

entertainer in the homes of the very wealthy. Unlike the previous category, there is usually less about these dialogues that suggests an explicit link to contemporary figures and events. Instead, Lucian satirises aspects of society more generally, such as the follies of particular schools of philosophy, the dependent lifestyle of sophists, or the pitfalls of the popularity of rhetorical education in Lucian's time.

The final category, to which the *Dialogi Marini* belong, are far more literary in nature, satirising the norms of the popular, philosophical and technical literature of the time. As such, of all of the styles of Lucian's writing named here, this one is most strongly dependent on the learning of the reader, as many of the most striking features of these works draw on a wide range of works at once. The premier example of this style of writing is the *Verae Historiae*, with its parodic visions of the great poets, historians and philosophers on the Isles of the Blest and its parodies of the *Odyssey*, paradoxographers, and the *Historia* of Thucydides¹³. The *Verae Historiae* could also be read as a satire of the contemporary popularity of novels and mirabilia, which provide exotic descriptions of far-off places with little basis in fact and only tenuous connection with what were regarded as the greats of literature in Lucian's own time.

All of the so-called minor dialogues, namely the *Dialogi Mortuorum*, *Dialogi Deorum*, *Dialogi Meretricii* and *Dialogi Marini* can be fairly regarded as belonging most strongly to this last category. They describe the reactions of famous figures to the after-life, the quirks and affairs of the gods, the difficult lives led by women of negotiable virtue or the divine stories associated with the sea. There are variations even within this group, though. The frequent appearances by the Cynic philosophers Menippus and Diogenes in the *Dialogi Mortuorum* are indicative of an effort to present some intellectual response to the afterlife under the guise of humour. The mores of New Comedy strongly inform the *Dialogi Meretricii*, but Lucian is also not insensitive to the financially tenuous lives of these women, which is at odds with the less thoughtful depictions by the extant comic playwrights. Both the *Dialogi Marini* and *Dialogi Deorum* are more solidly literary in their outlook but, as will be seen in this commentary, there are instances where issues beyond the mythographical and literary intrude even here, albeit to a minor degree.

Just as the dating of works of Lucian without clear links to external events is a hazardous practice, so too are generalisations attempting to link the character of these writings to certain periods of an author's life no accurate guideline. There is certainly no reason why all of the groupings of minor dialogues could not have been composed at different times in Lucian's life. Even the

¹³See Bartley 2003.

Dialogi Deorum and *Dialogi Marini*, which have the greatest similarities in style and content, may have been written at very different times. The *Dialogi Marini* could just as well represent the first attempt at brief divine comedy, upon which Lucian later elaborates in the *Dialogi Deorum*, as a later refinement of the other longer collection.

1.2 About the *Dialogi Marini*

It is important at this point to consider the compositional techniques which underpin the *Dialogi Marini*, the inspirations on them from different genres, as well as the language which Lucian uses not only to convey his stories but also the place they occupy in the patchwork of Greek literature. Lastly, it is worth considering the type of reader for whom Lucian composed these works and the scope that an educated readership allowed him to compose in a highly learned and allusive manner.

1.2.1 The Compositional Techniques of the Dialogues

The *Dialogi Marini* can usefully be considered as a series of fifteen puzzles for the reader. Through the dialogue form, Lucian leads the reader to consider a wide range of issues connected with these myths in a way that is at once challenging and humorous for his learned readers. Lucian himself states in the *Bis Accusatus* that he had dragged dialogue from a serious to a more frivolous form¹⁴. It is perhaps in response to criticism about the apparent trivialisation of an apparently serious format that he has composed a series of works seemingly so frivolous in their material, but with so much capacity for the intellectual engagement of the reader. It is interesting to compare this situation with that of a near contemporary. Oppian, the author of a didactic epic on salt-water fishing, the *Halieutica*, for the most part composes his epic in a highly learned style, drawing strongly on the standards of rhetoric that were so widely taught in the Second Sophistic, and he handles the whole tradition of epic verse through his allusions. However by focussing the fourth book of his work almost entirely on how fish can be caught through the exploitation of their passions and obsessions, both sexual and otherwise, Oppian effectively plays with the reader's expectations of the epic genre. To make this subversion effective he includes as many traditional elements in his poem as possible in a very direct and non-ironic manner. Lucian, too, takes care to make the

¹⁴For a discussion of this passage see Swain 1996, 310-11. Swain highlights the way that Lucian may respond to criticism that he received in his lifetime. Possibly dialogue was a form that earned him some rebuke.

unexpected and, at times, subversive intellectual issues in these dialogues less than obvious on first glance, so that the reader can be surprised and amused upon discovering what the issue at hand really is.

Irony can be usefully defined as a trope that involves incongruity between what is expected and what occurs. The question arises as to what Lucian subverts with his use of irony. The answer lies in the sources that he draws upon for these dialogues. There are two styles of source on which Lucian bases these dialogues. One is mythological sources such as pre-Classical epics, heroic or otherwise, like the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Theogony*, and Tragedy. These sources present myths largely devoid of literary play, and Lucian's response is similar to that of Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes in the use of allusive images and language to remind the reader of the traditional back-drop, which is then blended with later or less closely linked material to humorous and unexpected effect. The irony there comes from the contention between the well-known and usually highly-regarded original material and light-hearted adaptation of it to a different context. A second class of source material comes from existing light-hearted or ironic treatments, such as Lyric, Bucolic poetry, Comedy and Satyr plays. Lami and Maltomini note that there is a rich vein of sustained inversion of the narrative structure of stories from both types of source, giving as examples the subversion of treatments by Theocritus and Homer, in the case of the story of Polyphemus in dialogue 1 and Homer in the case of the story of Menelaus and Proteus in dialogue 4, *inter alia*.¹⁵ If this were the only source of literary irony within these dialogues, they could justly be described as works of mythographical and literary game play for their own sake.

What Lami and Maltomini overlook is the way that the sense of the unexpected often lies more in the application of the formal techniques of oratorical delivery, which Lucian's audience will have been well familiar with, to a light-hearted context. In the first dialogue, for example, where Doris and Galatea argue with the style and, at times, the language of forensic rhetoric, yet they are in fact debating Galatea's choice in lovers. This reflects a third class of source material, which comes from dialogues that are in no way associated with mythological themes, such as forensic, political and philosophical discourse. To understand the inclusion of this material it is important again to think of the passage at *Bis Accusatus* 33, where Dialogue personified complains that it has been down-graded by the unnamed Syrian and forced into close contact with other unsavoury genres such as Comedy. It is ironic not only that the mythological speakers can use the style of speech associated with an intellectually rigorous topic material, but that some more intellectu-

¹⁵Lami and Maltomini, 1986, 11-16.

ally challenging questions can even be mentioned in a mythological context that focuses on the gods, their quarrels and love affairs.¹⁶

The question of the unexpected occurrence of languages which reflects a formal education leads into a rather interesting point from Maffei¹⁷, who notes that the frequent descriptions of a scene beheld by one of the speakers in a manner clearly suggestive of visual art most likely owes its inspiration to the exercise of ecphrasis. In particular, Lucian focuses on the depiction of people in a style which, as Misener notes¹⁸, is described in the ancient world as εἰχονισμός, as in the rhetorical treatise *Auctor ad Herennium* 4.9.63. The author of that work notes that characterisation is an important part of such depictions, and this is a common feature of them in these dialogues, cf. for example the depiction of Polyphemus playing his home-made lyre as a rough bumpkin at dialogue 1. 4.3-5.3. Lami and Maltomini¹⁹, while not formally assigning the title of ecphrasis, note the central role of visual description by a bystander in dialogues 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14 and 15.²⁰ Maffei, too, provides a few suggestions of scenes within the *Dialogi Marini* that can be formally considered to be ecphrases, namely the rape of Europa at 15.2-3 and the meeting of Perseus and Andromeda at 14.3. The appearance of the scene of the meeting of Perseus and Andromeda at *De Domo* 22, as noted by Karavas²¹, in a description of a painting in a rich house, supports the view that we should think of ecphrasis when Lucian mentions the scene in the *Dialogi Marini*. Clearly Lucian has not, as is the case in other works²², relied on the familiarity of the reader with well-known works of art for these ecphrases. Instead, he draws upon images that were quite common in more readily available art-forms, such as ceramic works, and also, as a type of ironic play, takes images which were already the subject of ecphrases by other authors and describes them in such a way as a further ecphrasis. Hall, though, avoids the explicit connection with the ecphrastic style of composition, but this says more about the unconventional manner of inspirations from art in

¹⁶For an example of this, consider the debate between Menelaus and Proteus on what constitutes proof of Proteus' transformation into a blazing fire in dialogue 4. Lami and Maltomini, 1986, 16 note the ironic use of a formal tone when establishing standards of evidence in this debate, but do not set this against the background of the rhetorical discourse beloved of Lucian and the authors of the Second Sophistic more generally.

¹⁷Maffei 1994, xxi-xxiii.

¹⁸Misener 1924, 97.

¹⁹Lami and Maltomini, 1986, 22.

²⁰Lami and Maltomini overlook the striking scene of the arrival of Io in Egypt in dialogue 11.

²¹Karavas, 2005, 180-181.

²²See esp. the *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus*.

these dialogues.²³

This sense of immediate familiarity from the recollection of more everyday art would have added to the charm of these images. In addition to material suggestive of actual visual art, Lucian recalls other ecphrases in these dialogues. An example of this is the description of Io's arrival in Egypt and transformation from cow back into a woman in dialogue 11. This passage both recalls popular art works which show Io somewhere between the two physical forms and also plays on the ecphrasis on the basket of Europa in Moschus' *Europa*. This is quite apart from any other influence from sources such as the *Supplices* of Aeschylus or the *Prometheus Vincetus*, which is also an important factor in that dialogue. The connection of many of these scenes with works of art is also suggested by the numerous occasions when these scenes are also depicted in the *Imagines* of Philostratus.

1.2.2 Themes and Inspiration

Lucian draws freely on stories from Heroic Epic, Didactic Epic, Bucolic, Tragedy and related mythological genres such as *aetia*. When borrowing a theme from Homeric epic Lucian usually avoids the central story of the *Iliad* and focuses instead on the *Odyssey*, perhaps as a reflection of its suitability to a maritime theme. The episodes that he has adapted include the story of the blinding of Polyphemus in dialogue 2²⁴, the meeting of Menelaus and Proteus in dialogue 4, and the story of Enipeus and Tyro²⁵ in dialogue 13. Generally these episodes highlight some non-Epic source for the story. For example, the *Cyclops* of Euripides is strongly recalled in dialogue 2, as are Aristotle's *Mirabilia* in dialogue 4. In the sole case where the *Iliad* has been an inspiration, the discussion between the river Xanthus and Thalassa shortly after the river had been scorched to dissuade it from attacking Achilles by Hephaestus, the focus remains on the Homeric depiction, but with the question of the fairness of this onslaught being the focus. Equity is a recurrent theme in many of these dialogues, and is a favoured way for Lucian to bring something unexpected to his version of a myth.

The story of Polyphemus and Galatea, which appears in dialogue 1, is apparently borrowed from Lyric and Bucolic.²⁶ The abduction of Europa, which appears in dialogue 15, and the arrival of Io in Egypt, which features

²³Hall 1981, 32, drawing on Bompaire 1958, 550-83.

²⁴A second and potentially important inspiration for this is the *Cyclops* of Timotheus of Miletus, preserved at *PMG* 780-783.

²⁵This episode has its inspiration from *Od.* 11.235-59, where it is a digression during Odysseus' travels in the underworld.

²⁶It appears in the fragments of Philoxenus and Theocritus *Idyll* 6 respectively.

in dialogue 11 also come to us from Bucolic. An example of the incorporation of non-verse mythological material is the story of the meeting of the river Alpheus and the spring Arethusa, which features in dialogue 3. This appears to draw its inspiration from the writings of Hellenistic paradoxographers. Lucian does not seem to prefer verse mythological source material over prose in these dialogues, but the way that he introduces a novel element to each dialogue is suggestive of the source from which it is drawn. As an example, he innovates on the story of Odysseus and Polyphemus by telling the story from Polyphemus' point of view – a reversal of the scene in the *Odyssey* – whereas he makes the river Alpheus a slippery figure under questioning by Poseidon, an approach which appears to comment on the terse and gnomic nature of works on unusual natural phenomena such as the *Paradoxia* of Antigonus.

As has been noted above, personified Dialogue complains that it has been forced into close contact with Comedy at *Bis Accusatus* 33. Hall tends to run down the potential for influence from Old Comedy in the *Dialogi Marini*, finding the *Dialogi Mortuorum* more promising in this regard. A study of the language, however, suggests that the influence of Comedy is quite strong, with a range of small images from Comedy being alluded to throughout the *Dialogi Marini*. The impact of these small images is, however, consistent with the larger systematic allusions in other works, such as that which Hall notes to the *Demes* of Eupolis in the *Piscator*.

Nesselrath²⁷ notes that both Athenaeus and Julius Pollux, both of whom, like Lucian, wrote in the second century AD, mention and, on occasion, cite the γοναί plays of Middle Comedy.²⁸ It is possible, therefore, that Lucian may have partly derived the structure of these dialogues and the *Dialogi Deorum* from mythologically themed plays and that this would have been observed and appreciated by a learned reader of the period. The continuation of characters and, to a lesser extent, stories from one dialogue to another in the minor dialogues may reflect one of the limiting factors on the range of plots of these γοναί plays, namely that the specialised choice of theme in these plays, when compared with, say, Old Comedy, greatly reduces the 'pool' of possible stories. As a result, it is not unreasonable to expect that there would be a sense of continuity of plot and character from one play to the next, as in the various cycles of plays in Tragedy. Another influence that was likely to have been important, but is no longer extant, are the Ἐπιστολαὶ κεκομψευμένα ἀπὸ τοῦ τῶν θεῶν προσώπου of Menippus of Gadara, in which, apparently,

²⁷Nesselrath 1990, 65-79 and 92-102.

²⁸For a full discussion of the nature of these plays, which had their plots based on the story of a birth of a god, see Nesselrath 1995, especially 5-9, where the *Dialogi Deorum* are used as a starting point when considering what the plots of these plays may have been like.

a series of gods were briefly introduced in different humorous situations.²⁹ It is not possible to state whether these letters or Middle Comedy were a more important influence on the divine episodes of these dialogues, but it is important to acknowledge the potential importance of both sources.

Satyr plays were also an important linguistic influence.³⁰ The only completely extant Satyr play, the *Cyclops* of Euripides, is an obvious influence on dialogue 2, but the existence of a Satyr play with the title *Amymone* suggests that there may have been a light-hearted mythological source that could have influenced the treatment of the story of Poseidon and Amymone in dialogue 8. It is unfortunate that theme of the next most completely preserved Satyr play, the *Ichneutae* of Sophocles, does not appear in these dialogues, although a close examination of *Dial. Deor.* 11, which concerns the boyhood exploits of Hermes and his skills at theft, may reveal a similar influence from that work.

Tragedy more generally, too, is a very important influence on these dialogues, especially as Lucian seems to take great delight in playing upon the moral authority that is often associated with it by borrowing from its themes in a subversively light-hearted manner.³¹ One of the most striking examples worth mentioning here is the story of Perseus meeting Andromeda before her rescue in dialogue in dialogue 14. As Karavas mentions, this seems to draw strongly on the *Andromeda* of Euripides, as far as the large fragments of that play suggest. That dialogue is also highly suggestive of ecphrasis in its style, and would appear to try and provide a vivid visual image of a sign familiar from live performance.

As noted above under *Compositional Technique*, a complex, though rewarding, issue to consider is the influence from philosophical and scientific works on the expression of these dialogues. These influences are also reflected in themes that appear. As an example, a recurrent theme is criticism, both of myths, for their inconsistencies, and of works of science and philosophy, because they have little logical underpinning and are, as a result little better than myths themselves. Lami and Maltomini³² note the views of Erasmus on this topic. Erasmus³³ notes in a letter to Christopher Urswick concerning a

²⁹M.-O. Goulet-Cazé, 2000, 57-59 notes that there are a small number of other works on religious themes by the ancient Cynics, including the diatribes of Bion of Borysthenes and the *Κατὰ χρησθηρίων* of Oenomaus of Gadara, but that as a topic, religion was largely of limited interest to the Cynics.

³⁰Hall 1981, 32 and Bompairé 1958, 550-583 note the influence of the satyr plays on the *Dialogi Marini* and *Dialogi Deorum*.

³¹For a full treatment of the influence of Tragedy on Lucian's work see Karavas, 2005.

³²Lami and Maltomini, 1986, 87-88.

³³Erasmus *Epistola* 193 = Robinson 470-471. Tr. Mynors and Thomson, 1975, 116.

translation of the *Somnium* or *Gallus* that: Pythagoram velut impostorem ac praestigiatores taxat; Stoicorum fastum et sapientem barbaram ridet; diuitum ac regum vita quantis sit erumnis obnoxia docet. “He censures Pythagoras as an impostor and charlatan and laughs at the pomposity and sage’s beard affected by the Stoics; he explains how subject to anxieties are the lives of rich men and kings.” Erasmus’ comments apply equally to the *Dialogi marini* as to the *Somnium*, but in these dialogues the discourse of Plato is often invoked as a source of good sense in answer to the follies to be found in myths, while the Pythagoreans and Stoics show us the foolish side of philosophy and science.³⁴

For an example of criticism of a myth, it is worth observing dialogue 6, where the Nereids ask Poseidon why Helle was fated to die when her step-mother Ino, who mistreated her, is fated to be rescued by them. Lucian uses allusive language there to recall a passage from Plato’s *Theaetetus* 175a-d, in which men become dizzy when they are shown the fallacies behind myths which some rulers use to legitimise their rule. For a critique of scientific discourse, on the other hand, the depiction of the river Alpheus in dialogue 3 and Proteus in dialogue 4 are especially striking. Alpheus tells of his unusual behaviour while persistently refusing to explain the physical behaviour behind his travel through the sea to meet the spring Arethusa – a reticence which recalls the uncritical presentation of phenomena in works such as Aristotle’s *Mirabilia*. Proteus refuses to confirm to Menelaus whether he actually transforms into fire or only appears to do so in language which apparently recalls the works of Empedocles, who is a figure of fun in other dialogues of Lucian. At *Icaromenippus* 13 and *Fug.* 2 he is lampooned for his supposed plunge into the crater of Aetna, which was apocryphally known as an attempt to show his mastery of the transformations between the four elements.

1.2.3 Near Eastern, Hellenistic or Sophistic Dialogues?

There are a range of clues as to how Lucian’s unique identity as a Syrian-speaking author of Greek literature. Part of that answer may lie in the form of these dialogues. With the exception of briefer works by Plato, the small prose dialogue is not attested in extant literature greatly before Lucian other than in the now lost works of fellow Syrian Menippus of Gadara, and it may be that the small dialogue was a distinctly Syrian response within Hellenistic literature. The apparent form of the Ἐπιστολαὶ κεκομψευμέναι ἀπὸ τοῦ τῶν θεῶν προσώπου as brief introductions to a series of deities (see *Themes and*

³⁴Hopkinson 2008, 9 notes the special criticism that the Stoics receive in the *Timon*, while noting correctly that no school of philosophy is completely safe from Lucian’s satire.

Inspirations for further detail *supra*) suggests that the works of Menippus may have influenced the *Dialogi Marini* and *Dialogi Deorum*. The *Dialogi Mortuorum* include the mentions of Menippus himself in the underworld in dialogues 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20 and 30 and are likely to allude to Menippus' Νέκυια. With the exception of the *Dialogi Meretricii*, then, the minor dialogues *may* reflect a sort of Syrian sensibility through their connections with Menippus. Leaving Menippus aside, this connection can also be seen in the reference to the Assyrian ruler Sardanapalus or Aššurbanipal at *Dial. Mort.* 3.1.7 Σαρδανάπαλλος δὲ τῆς πολλῆς τρυφῆς “Sardanapalus of great luxury”. Sardanapalus is, however, also mentioned to us by Diodorus Siculus at 2.27, so we need to be careful of assuming a local connection that may not be there. A similar ‘regional’ sensitivity may be apparent in the dialogue between Diogenes and Mausolus the ruler of Caria from 377-353 BC in *Dial. Mort.* 29, when discussing his mausoleum built in Halicarnassus by his wife Artemisia.

It is more difficult still to address the question of influence from Syrian religion on the *Dialogi Marini*. Certainly Lucian is capable of talking about regional religious practice in the *Alexander* and, if we accept Lucian as the author of that work, the *De Dea Syria*. As has been noted above under *Themes and Inspiration*, all of the myths presented here are well represented in the Greek mythological tradition. If we try to identify specific non-Greek stereotypes that Lucian has drawn upon, whether to supplement the Greek tradition or supplant it, we run into the problem of deciding exactly which non-Greek myth to consider. Dirven³⁵ notes that of the sixteen religious sanctuaries in the Syrian city of Dura-Europos, only two have been examined in any detail – the Christian and Jewish sanctuaries – with Babylonian, Aramaic, Phoenician, Arab and Iranian cults remaining unconsidered. It is extremely difficult to identify what can be considered a ‘Syrian’ myth, given the role that the region plays as a mercantile and cultural cross-roads. It is more worthwhile to see the broader non-Greek underpinnings to the myths depicted in the *Dialogi Marini* and seeing what they can tell us when considered as a group. West³⁶ has provided a catalogue of such myths as they appear in Archaic and Classical Greek literature. Given the highly neo-Attic tone of these dialogues, this is a very useful starting point for discussion. As will be seen in the analysis below, a recurrent theme is that of contact between the Greek and non-Greek world, which is a highly topical one, given the fusion of cultures that began in the Hellenistic period and was well underway in Lucian’s own time:

Polyphemus appears in both dialogues 1 and 2. It is the would-be man-

³⁵Dirven 1999, xvii.

³⁶West 1997, esp. 276-333 and 402-585.

eater of the *Odyssey* and dialogue 2 that West³⁷ links with the one-eyed figure found in Sumerian cylinder-seals of the third millennium. Since we hear the story of the conflict between Polyphemus and Odysseus from the Cyclops' point of view in dialogue 2, this is a clever reversal from Greek to non-Greek perspective. While West does not comment on Proteus, whose conversation in dialogue 4 with Menelaus mirrors a story from the *Odyssey*, it is worth noting that this story is both in Homer and in Lucian set on the Egyptian coast and may reflect a non-Greek mythological tradition. West³⁸ would link the story of Arion that appears in dialogue 5 with that of Jonah being tossed into the sea by sailors to appease Jahweh after singing a song. There is a range of traditions for stories involving a boy and a dolphin from around the Mediterranean, such as those preserved in the *Halieutica* of Oppian.³⁹ As a result, it is difficult and unnecessary to link the story exclusively with the Bible. Surprisingly, Lucian connects the story of Ino and Melicertes to that of Arion, stating that the same dolphins who rescued Arion also rescued Ino and Melicertes at *Dial. Mar.* 5.1 – a tradition that otherwise only appears elsewhere at Pausanias 1.44.8 and may, therefore, postdate its mention by Lucian. Of course, Lucian also mentions this story in relation to that of Helle and Phrixus in dialogue 6. On a literary level, Lucian is possibly alluding to the epigramme in which these figures are invoked by Philodemus, himself a Syrian from Gadara, at AP 6.349 as protectors for his sea-travels to Athens, which is important, given the travels that Lucian himself made as a young man to pursue his career abroad. West overlooks the fact that Ino is the daughter of the Phoenician prince Cadmus and can also be fairly considered to be a Near-Eastern figure in Greek myth, as noted by Burkert.⁴⁰ While the story of the Golden Fleece alluded to in dialogue 6 does have links to Hittite rituals and myths⁴¹, the story of Helle falling from the ram, which is at the centre of that dialogue, does not. Certainly the location of the myth may make it, in a sense, a Near Eastern story, but the mythological record presented by West allows for no closer link than that.

The story of Amymone in dialogue 8 is one of those which has an explicitly Egyptian focus, given the story of the escape of her and her sisters from Egypt in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*. West finds parallels for the story of Io and Epaphus, which is the focus of dialogue 11, in Akkadian, Hittite and Ugaritic mythology.⁴² As West points out, what this myth shows us most is

³⁷West 1997, 424, citing Mary Knox 1979, 164-5.

³⁸West 1997, 441.

³⁹Bartley 2003, 98-104.

⁴⁰Burkert 1992, 41.

⁴¹West 1997, 479-480.

⁴²West 1997, 442-446.

a tradition of contact between Greek and non-Greek cultures, involving an apparent adoption of popular Near-Eastern stories. This is also a feature of the story of Amymone and that of Europa, which appears in dialogue 15, and can be fairly regarded as a popular thread in the *Dialogi Marini*. Any attempt to regard this as having special interest for Lucian due to the North Syrian mythological tradition is rather spoiled by its definitively Egyptian setting. The story of the river Xanthus in dialogue 10 should be regarded as Near-Eastern both for the location of the river itself and also for the sympathies that the river expresses for the Phrygians who suffer at Achilles' hands at dialogue 10.2. The story of Perseus, which is the focus of dialogues 12 and 14, is rather more difficult. West notes the difficulties of finding any model in extant Near Eastern literature for either the story of him and Danae being thrown into the sea or his slaying of the Gorgon Medusa, but notes that there is a common iconography in the region from Iran to Syria and Anatolia depicting a monster not unlike the Gorgon, although male.⁴³ Again, however, this myth involves contact with areas outside the Greek world, albeit in the form of a quest to slay a monster on the 'wild' Libyan frontier. The figure of the Phoenician maiden Europa, who is at the centre of dialogue 15, is linked with the Phoenician Astarte by Lucian himself at *De Syria Dea* 4, if we accept Lucian as the author of that work. That, together with the representation of contact between the Near East and Europe implicit in this myth may have been part of what influenced Lucian to include it here. West is rightly sceptical, however, of further efforts to find a Semitic etymology for Europa's name to establish a yet tighter idea of her as a Near Eastern figure in Greek myth.⁴⁴

Lastly, it is worth noting that West regards debates that take place before an action as having their roots in Near Eastern works such as the Gilgamesh epic, the *Atrahasis* and the Ugaritic Aqhat epic, with this motif being thoroughly incorporated into Greek literature by the period of the composition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.⁴⁵ This would account for the debate over plans by Polyphemus and Poseidon at dialogue 2 and Menelaus and Proteus at dialogue 4, both of which have Homeric antecedents. Other debates, such as those between Poseidon and the dolphins at dialogue 5, Poseidon and the Nereids at dialogue 6, Triton and Poseidon at dialogue 8, Iris and Poseidon at dialogue 9, Thalassa and Xanthus at dialogue 10, and Doris and Thetis at dialogue 12 have, however, no direct Homeric model. This would not mean that dialogues 2 and 4, due to the type of discourse that they employ, should be regarded as somehow more Near Eastern than others. The thorough in-

⁴³West 1997, 454.

⁴⁴West 1997, 451.

⁴⁵West 1997, 193-198.

corporation of this motif into archaic Greek literature noted by West means that the form of these debates is simply a literary commonplace that Lucian effectively exploits, regardless of the models that we may find in earlier literature.

1.2.4 The Language and Expression of the Dialogues

For the most part Lucian pursues a highly Atticising style with little influence from contemporary language compared with, for example, the *Alexander*, or the ironically archaic Ionic of the *De Syria Dea*. The learned Atticising in these dialogues is part of the broader fashion for the Attic dialect within the Second Sophistic.⁴⁶ As Hopkinson notes, Lucian's use tends more toward the Nicander, rather than the Oppian end of the spectrum, with acceptance of later vocabulary, flexibility in the use of οὐ and μή, and a less rigorous application of the subjunctive and optative moods than is the case with some of his contemporaries.⁴⁷ Lucian lacks no skill in writing in other dialects when it suits him, and this more relaxed approach in the *Dialogi Marini* certainly reflects a more informal approach to his material.⁴⁸ The language also necessarily reflects the literary inspirations at work, with readily recognisable language from Platonic and Aristotelian philosophical discourse, Old Comedy, historiography and Tragedy.

The grammar and style of these dialogues is deceptively straightforward.⁴⁹ At first glance the speakers speak in a rapid and simple mode, and further examination bears this out for the important narrative passages. The background stories and action of these dialogues are communicated by the speakers in a brief but attractive style which usually highlights some aspect of the story to become the point of discussion for the speakers.⁵⁰ It is when the speakers comment on this narrative, whether to highlight some point of it to the interlocutor – and, by inference, the reader – or discuss it in abstract or

⁴⁶Swain 1996, 20-27 notes that this fashion for the Attic dialect is a type of linguistic purism which has its roots with Dionysius of Halicarnassus. For a vivid example of the difference between the late Hellenistic period and the Second Sophistic, compare the language of Nicander, which is much richer in contemporary usage as adapted to epic verse, with the very conservatively Homeric dialect of Oppian in the *Halieutica*.

⁴⁷Hopkinson 2008, 6-7.

⁴⁸In fact he explicitly praises the language and style of Herodotus at *Her.* 1 as something worth aspiring to.

⁴⁹Hopkinson 2008, 7 notes the deliberate ἀφέλεια of Lucian's expression, with a preference for paratactic arrangement of clauses, rather than long sentences.

⁵⁰An example of this is the quick-fire description of Proteus' transformations by Menelaus at dialogue 4 1.1-6, which ends with a focus on the transformation into fire, which is the topic of the dialogue.

philosophical terms, that the language and expression takes on a more learned tone.

This implies, then that the choice of vocabulary and the means of its delivery is instrumental in the expression of irony, whether generally by the placement of educated material in situations that do not require it, or through the recollection of a specific point in an unexpected context. One way that Lucian does so is to adapt to technical discourse vocabulary that, until Lucian's time, had been traditionally used in verse mythography. Lucian also uses language that is readily identifiable as belonging to philosophical discourse, including works by Plato, Aristotle, and the philosophical dialogues of Xenophon. The incorporation of language characteristic of Old Comedy and satyr plays, where we might expect Homeric formulae and *hapax legomena*, or other learned vocabulary typical of Hellenistic mythological verse, also gives a sense of the unexpected to these works, though with a less ironic feel.

In a reflection of the attitudes to philosophers that Lucian displays more generally, language is used to allude to particular passages in the works of Plato (where the effect is positive, drawing attention to incongruities in the myth that is being depicted) or to the scientific works of Aristotle and the related *Mirabilia* by authors such as Diogenes Laertius (in which case Lucian appears to be suggesting that these works which promote themselves as being scientific are, in fact, little better than a form of secular mythology). Far more difficult to identify with confidence are allusions to the works of Empedocles, as the extant writings are so fragmentary in nature. Nonetheless, where the language appears to reflect that of his writings, the attitude which Lucian appears to take to Empedocles as a charlatan-like figure of fun is suggestive of that seen in other works where he refers to him explicitly, such as at *Veræ Historiae* 2.21, where he is mocked for his legendary plunge into the volcanic crater of Mount Etna.

The appearance of the language of Satyr plays suggests that these works were still preserved and commonly read in Lucian's time. In fact, they are equally likely as a source of inspiration for light-hearted dialogues on mythological themes as the plays of Middle Comedy. Seaford provides a useful list of themes of Satyr plays⁵¹, and themes of the care of divine infants, as with Helle in dialogue 6 and the infant Perseus in dialogue 12, sex, as in the abduction of Tyro in dialogue 13, and fertility, as in the creation of a spring after the abduction of Amymone in dialogue 8 are prominent. It is possible to speak with some confidence regarding influence from the wellnigh completely preserved *Cyclops* of Euripides in the depiction of Polyphemus in dialogue 2 and a number of other apparent references to Satyr plays of which there are

⁵¹Seaford 1988, 33-44

extant fragments. The more traditional tragic plays also provide language for these dialogues and this recollection reflects the focus of Lucian's use of a myth. An example of this is the description of Cassiopeia's boasting which leads to Andromeda being staked out as a sacrifice in dialogue 14 – a sacrifice which does not come to pass – and recalls the mocking comment in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, that Agamemnon can boast in the underworld of the way he sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia by the sea-side.

1.2.5 Lucian's Readers and the *Dialogi Marini*

The potential freedom from liturgies that had been introduced for travelling sophists had a striking effect on the culture of the second century AD. In part, it increased the availability and quality of education in rhetoric as a preparation for public life throughout the empire. This not only provided many of the employment opportunities that Lucian took up throughout his life, but also ensured that there was a considerable educated audience for Lucian to play to. There was a strong similarity to the situation that drove the developments in Hellenistic verse, namely a growth in an educated and well-informed audience who had sufficient background in the mainstays of Greek literature and culture as to be able to appreciate allusive references and participate in a learned game together with the author. This shared outlook makes learned readers co-conspirators of a sort in many of his games. This is not always the case if we consider, for example, the minatory nature of his criticism of Alexander of Abounoteichos in the *Alexander*, which has an earnest air about it, or the more light-hearted warnings about contemporary historians in the *De Historia Conscribenda*, or of dangerously inaccurate philosophers and technical writers in the *Dialogi Marini*.⁵² By coding these warnings, serious or otherwise, in the relevant dialect and vocabulary, a learned audience – the only one that is likely to engage with these dangerous-seeming writers and therefore be at risk from the misconceptions that they spread – is reminded vividly of the type of material they should be on guard against.

The prevalence of jokes at the expense of rhetorical education and those that provide it, as in his mock serious admonishment on the importance of a rhetorical education at *Rhet. Prec.* 2, shows us that the intended reader was a product of that same educational system. To get a sense of the breadth of the education that was in fashion then, it is worth considering the list of works of Greek literature deemed worthy of study by Quintilian at 10.1.42-84. This canon of authors ranges from Epic to Bucolic, from Tragedy to Comedy

⁵²See, for example, the evasiveness of Proteus when inviting Menelaus to test directly whether he can actually become fire in dialogue 4.

and from historiography to philosophy. While it is unreasonable to expect that every member of a well-off family in the Near East would have received education in every author on that compendious list, it does ensure that, if Lucian drew on material from those authors, there was a good chance that the reader would have a sense of what he was referring to.

More generally, Lucian was working towards a very different audience for the *Dialogi Marini* from that of the *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus*. In that case Lucian is writing ultimately for reception by the Imperial court and, potentially, in reaction to his detractors in that social sphere in the case of the *Pro Imaginibus*. The *Dialogi Marini* contain no dedication to contemporary figures and very little linkage to contemporary events. In works such as the *De Historia Conscribenda*, which makes veiled references to and praise of the actions of the emperors Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius in the Parthian wars, Lucian appeals to a reader who is politically interested. This is not the case with the *Dialogi Marini*. This stands in contrast to a near-contemporary of Lucian's, the poet of the *Cynegetica*, who puts considerable effort into drawing imperial attention to his works and anchoring them in local culture and history.

1.2.6 About the Text

For the most up to date and complete examination of the manuscript tradition for all of the works of Lucian, the reader should see the general introduction to the edition by Bompaire⁵³, of which the first three volumes are in print, up to the *Timon*, which is number 25 out of the 86 works by or attributed in antiquity to Lucian. Given the quality of Bompaire's work it is unfortunate that the *Dialogi Marini*, op. 78, will not be addressed for some time. Hopkinson suggests a few minor variations based on the edition of Macleod. Lami and Maltomini provide a full discussion of the manuscripts specifically as they relate to the minor dialogues, with special focus on their reception and reproduction in the Early Modern period.⁵⁴ For the manuscripts *per se*, however, they have based their discussion on that of Macleod. The text used here, then, is that of Macleod, taking into account the critique of that edition and its approach by Nesselrath.⁵⁵ Macleod himself provides a complete discussion of the collation of the manuscripts at pp ix-xxiii of his edition. Prior to Macleod the *Dialogi Marini* had received only very limited editorial attention. The primary modern edition is the Florentine edition of 1496. The

⁵³Bompaire 1993, lvii-lxxxiii.

⁵⁴Lami and Maltomini 1986, 37-81, and esp. 64-67.

⁵⁵Nesselrath 1990, esp. on dialogues 5, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12.

most recent new collation prior to that of Macleod which provided an edition of the *Dialogi Marini* is that of Hemsterhuis and Reitz, Amsterdam, 1743. This was, itself, used by Lehmann as the basis for his edition⁵⁶.

One of the most immediately apparent differences between the edition of Macleod and that of Hemsterhuis and Reitz was the renumbering of the dialogues according to the sequence presented in manuscript Γ . I have preserved this numbering, but have included the original numbering of the β manuscripts followed by Hemsterhuis and Reitz with each dialogue.

The following manuscripts and editions are used by Macleod for the text of the *Dialogi Marini*, with the appropriate sigla:

γ	= Γ Vaticanus 90	saec. x
	= Ω Marcianus 840 pars vestuta	saec. x/xi
	= Γ^c idem corrector	saec. xv
β	= B Vindobonensis Phil. gr. 123	saec. x/xi
	= N Parisinus 2957	saec. xv
	= L Laurentianus 57.51	saec. x
	= Γ^a Alexandri Correctiones	saec. x
	= Ω^b Corrector	saec. xiii/xiv

Important modern editions are indicated in the following manner:

v	= Amstelodamensis, 1743, Hemsterhuis and Reitz
Fl.	= Editio Princeps, Florentina, 1496

More generally Macleod has followed the γ manuscripts as the prime exemplar for the original text, with the occasional alternate reading from the β tradition, which he regards as being somewhat corrupted.

Nesselrath presented an extensive critique of all of the volumes of Macleod's *Luciani Opera*.⁵⁷ For the most part, the modifications that are recommended involve, at least in the case of the minor dialogues, a more rigorous application of the γ family of manuscripts than is sometimes the case with Macleod. This text includes the following amendments based on Nesselrath.

⁵⁶Lehmann 1822.

⁵⁷Nesselrath 1984 for Macleod's volumes 1-3 and 1990 for Macleod's volume 4, see esp. 500-501, 506-507 and 509-510.

Citation	Macleod	Nesselrath
Dialogue 7, 2.11	ἐκεῖνος	omit
Dialogue 8, 2.18-19	ἀποσχόπει ὁπόταν ...	ἀποσχόπει ὁπόταν ...
Dialogue 11, 2.7	ἤδη ... τὴν γῆν. ὀρθῶς	(ἤδη ... τὴν γῆν), ὀρθῶς
Dialogue 12, app. crit.	γ=γΩ	γ=ΓΩ
Dialogue 13, 1.10	ἡύχετο	οὐκ εἶχε

In addition, I have made a small number of modifications to the text, which have generally involved the acceptance of the reading from the β manuscripts where it provided a more logical outcome or better reflected the influences on Lucian's language. I have summarised these changes in the following table.

Citation	Macleod	Accepted Variant
Dialogue 8, 2.13	ἀφιππάσομαι	ἐφιππάσομαι
Dialogue 10, 2.2	ὅσον οἶμαι	οἶμαι ὅσον ἐν τῷ
Dialogue 10, 2.7-8	ἀπὸ	ὑπὸ
Dialogue 11.1.3	διαχόρησεν	διαχόρευσεν
Dialogue 11, 2.8	τετραποδιστὶ	τετραποδητὶ
Dialogue 12, 2.5	καὶ ἐμειδία	ὑπεμειδία
Dialogue 13, 1.3	διαχόρησας	διαχόρευσας
Dialogue 13, 2.7	διαχεκορήσθαι	διαχεκορεῦσθαι

The format of the text is that presented in Macleod's 1961 Loeb edition, rather than that of the Oxford Classical Texts series. As that edition provides the only modern translation of the text, and since its format is also used in the electronic distribution by the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, a format familiar to many readers has been preserved. The apparatus criticus is, however, that of Macleod 1987.

