shift from c to g in the spelling of Latin words: ut ait Ennius, quae “quod gerit fruges, Ceres”; antiquis enim quod nunc G C (LL 5.64 = Enn. Var. 49–50 V).13 A similar discussion of the interchangeability, at least under certain circumstances, of l and r is easily imaginable, though it is not a necessary precedent to Ovid’s wordplay; in fact, Ovid may have combined his observation of the pattern l > r with Varro’s notice of the Ennian etymology for Ceres to create his own variant etymology.14 With the ambiguity of Palilia/Parilia (and associated wordplay) already available to him, Ovid can easily be imagined to have exploited it to allow for several etymologies that are entirely his own. In any case, the association of Celeus with the Cerealia, by means of a hypothetical earlier form *Celealia, allows Ovid to introduce a new and purely Latin etymological etiology for the holiday of a Greek agricultural divinity now celebrated on Italian soil.

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14. O’Hara, True Names, 50, notes several other pairs of letters the interrelationship of which gained Varro’s notice in the extant books of De lingua Latina: s and r (7.26); l and s (5.138); i and e (6.95). Support for Ovidian linguistic experimentation may also be found in Leumann’s suggestion (Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre, 230–31) that dissimilation can sometimes be a result of “folk etymologizing”; “Lautlicher Anklang an ein anderes Wort, also das Spiel der Volksstämologie, begränsacht offenkundig vielfach diese Fernwirkungen; nicht immer ist allein die Lautschwierigkeit auslösend. Besondere Gelegenheit für Fernwirkungen bieten etymologisch isolierte Wörter, also auch Fremdwörter, und zwar in der Volkssprache.” Ovid’s application of this etymological play to unusual and, as in Celeus’ case, patently foreign names is a clever variation upon what might otherwise seem an unconscious linguistic process.

PROBLEMS WITH THE GENRE OF PROBLEMS:
PLUTARCH’S LITERARY INNOVATIONS

The place to start is where Boulogne concluded: the purpose of all of the quaestioneshypoθέματα is “augmenter les chances d’appréhender les réalités humaines dans leurs diverses dimensions.”1 Upon such a project Plutarch exercised skills far beyond quaint antiquarianism and hollow erudition, although he claimed nothing more for himself than that his works be μὴ παντελῶς ἁμοιοῦσα (Quaest. conv. 612E). The practiced craftsmanship that Plutarch transparently brought to bear on word choice and organization clearly indicates that in his several essays he enfolded a series of related inquiries about philosophical or natural phenomena with the same lavish conscientiousness that he brought to his Lives and the more formal essays within the Moralia.

Much more than an illustration of style, however, these essays perhaps afford the greatest opportunity to glimpse a side of Plutarch so rarely heralded: his role in the

transformation and revitalization of several genres most suited to the elegant evolution of philosophical disquisition. Thirteen essays, seven of which survive in whole or in part, have a conversational or question/answer format:

Aitiai

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<tr>
<th>LAMPIAS²</th>
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<tr>
<td>AD III/IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>Aitiai τῶν Ἀράτου δοσθημῶν</td>
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<td>218</td>
<td>Aitiai φοισκών</td>
<td>911C–19E</td>
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<td>166</td>
<td>Aitiai Ἡλληνικά</td>
<td>291D–304F</td>
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<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>Aitiai γυναικῶν</td>
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<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>Aitiai Ἑρωδικά</td>
<td>263D–91C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>Aitiai βαρβαρικό τῶν περιφρομένων Στοιχίων</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Aitiai καὶ τόπων</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>Aitiai ἄλλα ἀλαζόν</td>
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²Frags. 13–20 Sandbach

**Sometimes considered to be the same as 1.126, the extant Mulierum virtutes. The Lamprias catalogue places the Quaestiones mulierum among other essays restricted to Greek topics while the Mulierum virtutes extols courage among women of many cultures.

Ζητήματα

136 Πλατωνικά ζητήματα 999C–1011E

Προβλήματα

* Συμποσιακῶν προβλημάτων βιβλία θ’ 612C–748D

Περί προβλημάτων

* Perhaps to be identified with L.62, since content of symposium at least in part approximates lemma.

Συμπόσια

110 Τῶν Ἐπτά Σοφῶν Συμπόσιον 146B–64D

It is to these as a group that Plutarch seems to have turned his attention. Just as he forged the recounting of men’s lives into a tool for illustrating ethical biography, saving it from the excesses of encomium and apologia, so he recognized that the examination of phenomena could be retailed in a lively manner or that the investigations could be framed inside an evening’s conversation.

Semantics matter:³ the one essay to have come down described as a symposium⁴ mimics closely the formal aspects of those of Xenophon and Plato, while its choice

2. The date of the Lamprias catalogue is a surmise made by Max Treu in 1873; see Ziegler, “Ploutarchos,” RE 696–97.

3. Although Plutarch would seem to have been determined to preserve the distinctions among the genres, perfect consistency is illusory. Even Plutarch himself occasionally mixed terms, and the consistent use of quaestiones for the four genres by medieval and Renaissance scholars and commentators recognizes a connection between the give-and-take of sympotic literature and the more straightforward question-and-answer format of aitia.

4. Not all titles are secure. There are disagreements between the catalogues of Lamprias and Photius, as well as with Latin titles assigned by editors since the time of Xylander and Etienne.
of interlocutors, the seven sages of Ancient Greece, already distances it from the contemporary historical participants of his models. The word αἰτία, although routinely translated quæstio in Latin, signifies an inquiry for which a probable answer can be found or identified. This clearly seems to be the understanding of a scholiast who has preserved eight fragments of Plutarch's work on Aratus' Phaenomena, an understanding that is evident throughout Plutarch's collections on natural phenomena, Greeks, women, Romans, and barbarians. *Explanations*, that is, clarifying information, also seems the most appropriate translation for the term in the title of the essay about the published opinions of the Stoics. Because of their placement just before Περὶ ταυτολογίας, both the Αἰτία καὶ τόπος and the Αἰτία ἀλλαγῶν would seem to be concerned with rhetoric and style, and, therefore, the meaning of αἰτία might be quite different.

Ζητήματα seems originally to have been applied to the exegesis of vexing literary passages, particularly Homer and the other poets. The nature of the inquiry, that is, drawn out and restricted to a single issue, is further revealed through its frequent application to legal proceedings in Dinarchus, papyri, and inscriptions. It seems to have been assigned a technical philosophical meaning to describe a search or inquiry across a broad canvas for abstracts or qualities, such as τὰ θέτο in Xenophon *Memorabilia* I.1.15, or ἀφρέτης τι in Plato's *Meno* 79D. It was Plutarch's archaizing innovation to recall this term back to the examination of a tightly defined query, yet one more often than not of a philosophical nature. It remained one that normally required a long development yet did not necessarily admit of a finite answer agreeable to all parties. All but one of the ten ζητήματα in Plutarch's *Quaestiones Platonicae* are longer and more elaborate than individual αἰτία and most also begin with τι δήποτε, τι οὖν, τις οὐ τις ποτε rather than διὰ τι, the most frequent phrase introducing the question in the several collections of αἰτία.

Πρόβλημα (from προβάλλω) by its etymology means to "throw forward," as in "throwing forward an idea for discussion," rather like the Latin *proponere*, if perhaps a bit stronger. In the *Banquet of the Seven Sages*, however, the questions put to the wise men are almost without exception riddles, a meaning reinforced by the numerous appearances of αἰσθήσαι and its frequentatives. The essay functions not just as


6. Plutarch's use of the term seems to be by metonymy for αἰτιολογία or αἰτιολογία, so, e.g., *Quaest. Conv.* 689B, which would seem in turn to imply that Plutarch looked to one or another of Epicurus' lost works for inspiration in modifying this genre.

7. As to παραμετρέων this word is sometimes translated "contemporary." Plutarch's preference for "current," however, is καθ' ἐνυπό, cf. L165 Περὶ διοίκων τῶν καθ' ἐνυπό, and passim.

8. Τόπος in its rhetorical meaning of "commonplaces" requires that αἰτία refer to "invective." Plutarch's aversion to rhetoric has occasioned skepticism about this entry as well as L56, Τῶν Ἀριστοτέλους τοπικῶν βίβλων τι; for another view, cf. G. W. M. Harrison, "Plutarch, Writing and Rhetoric," *Ancient Society* 18 (1987): 271–79.


10. There are exceptions: at *Quaest. conv.* 737D discussion of the letter *alpha* is labeled a φιλόλογον ζητήματι.

11. *Quaest. Plat.* 6 is the exception.

12. τι δήποτε: numbers 1, 2, and 4; τι οὖν: number 3; πάς ποτε: numbers 6 and 7; and πάς: number 8.

one of Plutarch’s experiments with the genre of the symposium, but it is also in places a brilliant parody of Xenophon’s *Symposion*. The intimacy of Solon and Thales with leading Egyptians and the relationship of Bias to Amasis, the Egyptian Pharaoh, colored the dinner with constant references to Egyptian learning and Egyptian customs. Neileoxenus, a court functionary, appears bringing to Bias the more recent of two riddles sent by the King of Ethiopia to Amasis. The seven sages answer both in clipped phrases, just as each answers in a few words what his favorite possession is, at Xenophon *Symposion* 3. In both Plutarch and Xenophon the preceding chapters had been devoted to exchanging pleasantries and entertainment, more formal in Xenophon, more light-hearted in Plutarch’s badinage. Differences between Plutarch and Xenophon are informative and telling: in Plutarch’s essay nearly every question is answered in turn by all seven, and almost every question, at least in the first half, is a riddle. The inclusion of Aesop in the symposium has often been remarked but rarely commented upon, yet for an evening full of fables and riddles his presence should seem appropriate, not superfluous.

Difficulties abound, however, with the characterization of Plutarch’s *Συμποσιακά Προβλήματα*, the longest work preserved in the *Moralia*. The title as printed in the standard texts is not attested in the Lamprias catalogue. In the introduction to his collection of symposiac recollections, Gellius defended his highly personal and idiosyncratic title since the genre had attracted an extremely wide range of appellations. Among the thirty he cited are *Προβλήματα*, the title Planudes assigned to this work, *Memoriales*, the Greek for which is Lamprias catalogue item 125, and *Στραματεύτης*, item 62 in the Lamprias catalogue, whose description of content partly approximates the material. Plutarch’s own preference when describing his project in his prefaces to several of the nine books is either τα *Συμποσιακά* or *Συμποσιακά Ζητήματα* (Bk. 3 645C, Bk. 4 660D, and Bk. 9 736C). Forms of *προβλήματα* occur four times either in the preface to a book or in the initial paragraph to the first question of a book; *ζήτημα* occurs at 1.1 612E. The terms *ζήτημα* and *προβλήματα* would appear to be interchangeable in this work since no pattern is detectable. The anecdotes, which invite the reader in as an *umbra*, that is, the tag-along of an invited guest, are so finely crafted that the question is often insinuated seamlessly.

Teodorsson has noted that Plutarch fused two genres in his *Table Talks*, that of the symposium and the collections of problems. He is undoubtedly correct, yet Plutarch’s aims are perhaps even more complex than this. The crowded, staccato miscellanies once attributed to Aristotle, which have come down under the title *Προβλήματα*, are aetiological and catechismal in nature, as unlike Plutarch’s elegant *Symposion* as possible...


15. About the *Περί Προβλήματος* no more is known than its title, which is preserved in the Lamprias catalogue.

16. Απομνημονεύσατε; this is the choice of Hubert, Teubner editor to the *Quaestiones convivales*.

17. *Στραματεύτης* ἵππες ὑποκρίτης (τοις κατημένοις ἀνέκα οὗ καὶ ἰδιών, *κ. F. 179 Sandbach, 141*). The fact that frag. 179 Sandbach, allegedly coming from Plutarch’s *Στραματεύτης*, is transparently spurious is no bar to a possible application of this title to the *Quaestiones convivales*.


19. *Quaest. conv. 7.6.706F–10A* is devoted to the custom of welcoming *umbræ* (Gr. οὐκίδ) at dinners. Plutarch approves, crediting its origin to Socrates; as self-aware as self-effacing, Plutarch certainly had to know that we all are his grateful *umbræ*. It is, in fact, Periander’s anonymous *umbra* who recounts the symposium of the seven sages.

sible. The nine books, one for each Muse,\textsuperscript{21} of ten queries each,\textsuperscript{22} allowed Plutarch to examine customs and phenomena that might not have found comfortable places within other of his A\textit{t}r\textit{i}a: and the exegesis of which did not warrant a separate essay.

Plutarch's avowed purpose was to transcend the limits of the genre of the symposium. By his own admission in the introduction to the first book (612D–E) he enumerated his predecessors: Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Speusippus, Epicurus, Prytanis, Hieronymus, and Dio the Academician. In defending the suitability of philosophic discourse to banquets, Plutarch cited the examples of Plato and Xenophon (\textit{Quaest.} conv. 6, \textit{Praef.} 686D) and, significantly, he adduced Epicurus when indicating the wide range of topics that could be discussed at a symposium (\textit{Quaest.} conv. 3.6.653B). Beyond expanding its scope so that it could encompass all the different genres of \textit{quaestiones}, Plutarch brought an episodic structure to the symposium, which allowed the reader to take up and put down his convivial reminiscences at will and browse through them rather like a collection of poems or fables instead of a work whose argument had to be followed sequentially.\textsuperscript{23} The measure of his success is in his imitators: the \textit{Noctes Atticae} of Gallius, Athenaeus' \textit{Deipnosophistes}, and Macrobius' \textit{Saturnalia} follow the form of Plutarch's symposia.

It is very tempting to try to impose a framework of evolution on Plutarch's works within the genre of "Problems." \textit{Termini} have been established by Sandbach for some early material\textsuperscript{24} and by Boulogne for the latest\textsuperscript{25} between which the other \textit{quaestiones} can be placed. On stylistic evidence, Sandbach concluded that \textit{De sollertia animalium} must have been composed before \textit{Quaestiones naturales} 19–31, which in turn is prior to \textit{De amicorum multitudine}. Boulogne adduced statements made by Plutarch to demonstrate that the \textit{Quaestiones Romanae} were written before the \textit{Vitae} of Romulus and of Camillus. The calibration of Boulogne's surmise to the relative chronology of the composition of the \textit{Vitae} emerging from modern scholarship would place the writing of a substantial number of essays within the \textit{Moralia} after the composition of many of the \textit{Vitae}.

### RELATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF PLUTARCH'S \textit{QUAESTIONES}

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<tr>
<td>\textit{De sollertia animalium}</td>
<td>\textit{Quaestiones naturales} 1–18</td>
<td>Convivium septem sapientium</td>
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<td>\textit{Quaestiones convivales} 1–3</td>
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\textsuperscript{21} Extrapolating from the comment in the preface to Book 9 of the \textit{Quaest.} conv. 736C. His own declared compositional method was to have ten \textit{quaestiones} per book, the first three of which were composed as a set: \textit{Quaest.} conv. 1 \textit{Praef.} 612E. The continued organization by decades is confirmed by comments at 697E and 736C, and elsewhere. It would thus seem reasonable to infer that the remaining six books were likewise published in two sets of three, given that Books 3 and 6 each begin with a defense of his project and that they each end with discussions about preserving meat; for the latter, cf. E. Teixeira, "Remarques sur l'esprit scientifique de Plutarque d'après quelques passages des \textit{Propos de table}," in \textit{Plutarco e le scienze, Atti del IV Convegno plutarcheo, Genova-Bocca di Magra, 22–25 Aprile 1991}, ed. L. Gallo (Genoa, 1992), 220–21.

\textsuperscript{22} Except for the last book, which has fifteen. Nearly every book opens with sympotic queries and then wanders off to other subjects.

\textsuperscript{23} In this Plutarch was following the trend of his times; cf. Tac. \textit{Dial.} 20, where Aper excoriated his peers for no longer having the patience to read a long book or listen to a long speech.


\textsuperscript{25} J. Boulogne, \textit{Plutarque: Un aristocrate grec sous l'occupation romaine} (Lille, 1994), 75–77.
Some of the other relationships can be proposed without grave risk of controversy. The same stylistic features that Sandbach used argue as convincingly that *Quaestiones naturales* 1–18 must have been written before *Quaestiones naturales* 19–31, and the great difference in the use of metaphor, simile, semi-synonymous pairs, and language signaling Plutarch's choice might indicate that the interstice could be substantial.26 Whether it also predates *De sollertia animalium* is a matter for further inquiry. The similarity of composition of the *Quaestiones Graecae* to the *Quaestiones Romanae*, as well as some apparent internal cross-reference, would suggest simultaneous, or near simultaneous, composition.

The rest is less secure, although the repeated round-robin short answers given by the seven sages and the numerous riddles loosely stitched together would seem to point to an earlier date, rather than a later one. The relative chronology of the *Quaestiones convivales* and *Quaestiones Platonicae* is perhaps the most important and most interesting, yet least easy to settle. The fully developed style of the *Quaestiones convivales* would seem to indicate that it should be placed among the later of the *quaestiones*. That there was a gap in composition between Books One through Three and the rest is known from Plutarch himself, as is the information that the order of the books is his own. Eight of the ten *Consolations* in the *Quaestiones Platonicae* have parallels with *Quaestiones convivales* Book 8.2 and Book 9.2 and 14; there are almost no correspondences to any other part of the *Quaestiones convivales*. It would seem an unavoidable conclusion that the last three books of Plutarch's *Quaestiones convivales* were written at the same time as the *Quaestiones Platonicae*.

One hardly feels constrained any more to state that these essays were meant to stand on their own: the misconception that the *Moralia* served as notebooks for the *Vitae* is finally being rooted out from all but a few handbooks. Perhaps as confining is the view of Plutarch as unimaginative defender of Plato and guardian of Platonic orthodoxy.27 He has a far greater importance as the central transfer point from the pre-Roman imperial past through to late antiquity.28 When so many genres left his station, they departed fundamentally changed. Just as *consolationes* were altered in intent and focus,29 and biographies came to have a high degree of cohesion and ethi-


27. In fact some of the most amusing and irreverent conversations are those that took place during the annual celebration of Plato’s birthday; cf. *Quaest. conv.* 717A.


Notes and Discussions

A century ago the Oxford undergraduate E. O. Winstedt discovered in a late eleventh/early twelfth-century Beneventan manuscript (Bodleian MS Canon. Class. 41; O for Oxoniensis) thirty-four previously unknown lines embedded in Juvenal's sixth Satire. The authenticity of the unique lines and their nearly total lapse from the tradition, if they are genuine, remain subjects of dispute. This study presents new evidence for the lines' antiquity, if not genuineness. I argue that Decimus Magnus Ausonius, the scholar and poet of fourth-century Bordeaux, alludes in a single poem to Juvenal's sixth satire as a whole and especially to the Winstedt lines. From this I propose that he knew the Winstedt lines and knew them as belonging to Satire 6.


4. J. A. Willis, in his 1997 edition (Teubner), rejects the lines, without comment; cf. his earlier ("Juvenalis") effusive comments.

30. This paper was first read at the 1996 Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association, which expanded upon remarks made at the Fifth Congress of the International Plutarch Society (Leuven, 1996). The author is grateful to everyone who made comments and suggestions at these two jous, and also to the referees for this journal.

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