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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of Classics

Pastiche and Appropriation in “Philip the Philosopher’s” ἐρμήνευμα

By

Alexander Max Leedom

A thesis presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts

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Parentibus Meis Sanctissimis

“I try all things, I achieve what I can.”
- Herman Melville

ἔξεστι γὰρ καὶ τὸν Κόσμον μῦθον εἰπεῖν, σωμάτων μὲν καὶ χρημάτων ἐν αὐτῷ
φαινομένων, ψυχῶν δὲ καὶ νῶν κρυπτομένων...

—Sallustius, *de Diis* 3

I: "PHILIP THE 'PHILOSOPHER'"

Both the poetry of Homer and the philosophy of Plato left behind lasting interpretive traditions. Christian literature developed a similar path of its own—"hermeneutics" enters literary discourse as a term for the exposition of scripture. These traditions rarely intersected: pagan commentators continued to expound on pagan poets and philosophers, while Christian authors focused on their own spiritual literature. While these two traditions were the most extensive and best documented through late antiquity, a text preserved in one Calabrian manuscript proves the existence of (at least ludic) interpretations of even more kinds of literature, neither philosophical nor metaphysical. That manuscript contains Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, or *Theagenes and Chariclea* (or simply *Chariclea*), probably the latest (most scholars support a fourth century date)¹ and certainly the longest of the extant ancient romances. The *Aethiopica* is a novel overtly concerned with issues of hermeneutics and interpretation, although certainly not "committed to any particular religious or philosophical tradition."² Fittingly then, there is appended to the end of the novel an interpretation (ἐρμηνεύμα) of the *Aethiopica*, coming down to us under the name of "Philip the Philosopher" (Φιλλίπου τοῦ φιλοσόφου).

Philip's text is unique. It is the earliest known Greek interpretation of a work of prose fiction, and therefore stands at the beginning of a very long and important history of literary criticism. This thesis will show that Philip's interpretation, while

¹ The novel was almost certainly written after 350, based on certain linguistic similarities between the description of the siege of Syene in book 9 of the *Aethiopica* mimics Julian's description of the siege of Nisibis in his panegyric to Constantius II. It seems more likely that Heliodorus was imitating Julian than vice versa. Cf. Bowersock 1997, 154: "The notion of Julian's borrowing from a work of fiction in official praise of an emperor concerning a recent historical event seems so obviously absurd" that no one could believe it.

² Lamberton 1986, 149.

singular in its subject matter, shares undeniable similarities with the literary culture of twelfth century Byzantium, during which time Christian and pagan cultural traditions were closely intertwined. I will examine Philip's relationship to the literature and criticism of the Byzantine Middle Ages, with a focus on Michael Psellus in the eleventh century and the Komnenian novelists in the twelfth, with an eye to dating the manuscript and placing it in its proper context. The Byzantine Middle Ages preserved an élite, literate class of citizens who formed an interpretive community receptive to the forms and genres of the past. In this context of Christian empire and pre-Christian rhetoric we find increased interest in imitations of the ancient romance and a penchant among Byzantine critics for allegorical interpretation modeled (roughly) on Neoplatonic ideas. I will begin with a brief summary of the previous scholarship on the piece before proceeding to a discussion of the manuscript that contains Philip's interpretation. The MS contains a short comment after the novel that hints at a potential audience and way of reading. I will proceed with a brief discussion of the theoretical approach this thesis takes to the *έρμήνευμα*.

Because it is a unique text, the *έρμήνευμα* has attracted critical attention since its initial publication in 1869³ and the publication of a complete English translation in 1986.⁴ The text exists somewhere between, rather than within, traditions that are better known and better defined, so most modern discussions aim at fixing Philip's date and cultural context. A. Colonna, who published the piece in

³ See R. Hercher "Τῆς Χαρικλείας ἐρμήνευμα τῆς σόφρονος ἐκ φωνῆς Φιλίππου τοῦ φιλοσόφου," *Hermes* 3 (1869): 382-88.

⁴ See Lamberton 1986, 306-11.

his 1938 edition of the *Aethiopica*, identified the author as Theophanes of Cerami (also known as Philagathos of Cerami), bishop of Rossano (d. 1154). Gärtner (1969)⁵ accepted Colonna's identification. L. Tarán, in 1992, returned to the subject to argue for a late antique date, suggesting that the piece "could hardly have been written much later than the sixth century AD."⁶ Tarán, however, whose claim for an earlier date is based largely on cultural grounds,⁷ seems not to have credited the degree to which Christian writers were able to write in and thoroughly assimilate a pagan cultural tradition. Compared with the Hellenizing literature of the Komnenian period, Philip's curious mixture of Christian and pagan citation looks to be the rule rather than the exception. The evidence Tarán cites in support of a late antique date might instead be marshaled in support of the opposite claim: as this thesis argues, the paganizing milieu and philosophy, coupled with Christian scriptural citation, as well as the fact that the novel is being discussed at all, point more comfortably to a date in the Byzantine Middle Ages.

A Byzantine date seems to be the consensus among authors of more recent treatments of the piece,⁸ and this study will support that now-current view by considering the similarities between Philip's essay and Byzantine literary scholarship through the twelfth century. It will also consider some linguistic points of the ἐρομήνευμα that appear to have gone unnoticed in previous studies of the piece and point to a *terminus post quem* in the tenth century. Philip's essay is coordinate with a Byzantine fascination with signs and semiotics in both sacred and

⁵ See Gärtner 1969, 47-69, esp. 60-4.

⁶ Tarán 1992, 229.

⁷ "In fact, the [Neoplatonizing] tendency of the philosophical interpretation, the literary character of the dramatic setting, the wealth of allusions to classical Greek literature and the probability that it was meant to address an audience" suggest the sixth century date (Tarán 1992, 228).

⁸ This is the assumption of Roilos 2005 and Burton 2008.

profane texts, as a survey of their literary and critical discourse will show; and Philip's interpretation results from the natural intersection of an allegorizing approach to literature, and the literature the Byzantines read and maintained in rhetorical curricula.

The first clues to reconstructing Philip's literary and reading culture come from the manuscript itself. Philip, critic and philosopher, reflects the reading tastes, habits and practices of greater and lesser Byzantine men of letters. He shares with them an aesthetic approach and vocabulary characteristic of contemporary Byzantine criticism and rhetoric. Though Philip appears to have been familiar with Byzantine patterns of reading it is doubtful that he himself had any impact on them. If we can judge the size of a work's readership from the number of manuscripts left behind, then Philip's audience probably did not extend very far. Philip's text exists in only one manuscript (*Venetus Marcianus* 522, now 410, = D). The manuscript found its way to the Biblioteca Marciana sometime between 1468⁹ and 1475.¹⁰ The manuscript originally came from Southern Italy, and this piece of evidence has been marshaled in support of various identifications of the author.¹¹ (This is based especially on the mention of the "gate of Rhegium" (τὴν πύλην Ῥηγίου) in line 1.) The manuscript contains one other curiosity that hints at Philip's intended audience and the likely readership of the novel: a postscript to the story that suggests the

⁹ Colonna notes: *Olim cardinalis Bessarionis, ut notula in fronte ostendit*. Presumably the note (this particular one not quoted in Colonna) is most likely similar to the one found in the Z manuscript: Ἡλιοδώρου τὰ Αἰθιοπικά... Βησσαρίωνος καρδινάλεως τοῦ τῶν Τουσκουλῶν (XIII). Before—and after—his death, Bessarion gifted the library in Venice with items from his collection. His donations were first indexed in 1468; the *Aethiopica* is not among the listed items.

¹⁰ See Lebowsky 1979, 193.

¹¹ Colonna, for example, cites this as support for an author from Southern Italy; Tarán puts less emphasis on the provenance of the manuscript for his identification of the author.

novel was written for “lovers of learning” (φιλομάθεσιν).¹² The manuscript suggests, in more immediate terms, the same audience and type of reading that a survey of Philip’s contemporary literature had already implied: this novel is read for instruction—moral, allegorical, parodic or otherwise. Philip understands this and identifies himself as the hermeneutic key to unlock the novel for the lovers of learning.

Here I reproduce A. Colonna’s brief description of the manuscript from his 1938 edition of the *Aethiopica* (with my translation):

Foliis constat 123 forma oblonga (0,234 x 0,162) membrana subfusca confectis et passim dilacerata, quae tantum Heliodorum complectuntur. Fabulam sequitur foll. 122 r. sqq. commentario quaedam sub fine multita a Philippo philosopho (Theophane Cerameo) in *Aethiopica* conscripta... Fol. 121 v. subscriptionis loco versiculi adiecti sunt: τέλος πέφυκεν ὧδε τῶν Θεαγένους — καὶ Χαρκλείας συνταγμάτων, ὧ φίλοι — ὅπερ ἀνὴρ ἄριστος ἐν λόγῳ μέγας — Ἡλιόδωρος Θεοδοσίου... παῖς — συντάξας ἀπέδωκε φιλομάθεσιν — σπεύδοιο λοιπῶν (sic) πᾶσαν δρέπε γνῶσιν λόγων. Libri autem fol. 106 vacuum in pagella versa exhibit quadam Homeri excerpta (ῥ 217-232) quae cum c familia Allenianae editionis omnino lectionibus congruunt: versibus scholia nonnulla adsunt... (XIII-XIV)

The manuscript contains 123 pages of parchment (rectangular, of dimensions 23.4 x 16.2 cm) dark and cut up in many places, which contain only Heliodorus. A certain commentary on the *Aethiopica* follows the story on the *recto* of p. 122 and the following page, cut off at the end, written by “Philip the Philosopher” (Theophanes of Cerami). Some lines have been appended in the place of a postscript: ‘so has come the end of the novel (συντάγμα), friends, which a great man— Heliodorus, the son of Theodosius—best in storytelling, wrote and gave away to lovers of learning (φιλομάθεσιν). Be diligent (λοιπῶν), then, and harvest complete understanding of the story.’ The empty page 106 has, on the *verso*, some excerpts of Homeric verses (Od. 17.217-32) which agree with the c family of Allen’s edition [the OCT]. There are, in addition, some scholia appended to the verses.

Here Colonna refers to a postscript (*scriptio*) that appears to have heretofore gone

¹² This word is relatively common, and occurs throughout the extent of the TLG. Socrates, for example, describes himself as φιλομαθής at *Phaedrus* 67b; it is a favorite word of Philo of Alexandria, who uses it 32 times, and still appears frequently in Byzantine sources (four times in Psellus).

unnoticed in studies on this piece. This is the later of two such *subscriptions* that hint at a potential audience for the romance, both doing so in similar terms.¹³ Since a single hand wrote the D manuscript, whichever scribe wrote the postscript was also responsible for copying down Philip’s text—a text that takes as its point of departure the φιλόλογοι and their criticism of the novel. If the scribe himself did not know the ἐρμήευμα was to follow, nevertheless he anticipated the kind of playful, ludic reading in which Philip takes part.¹⁴

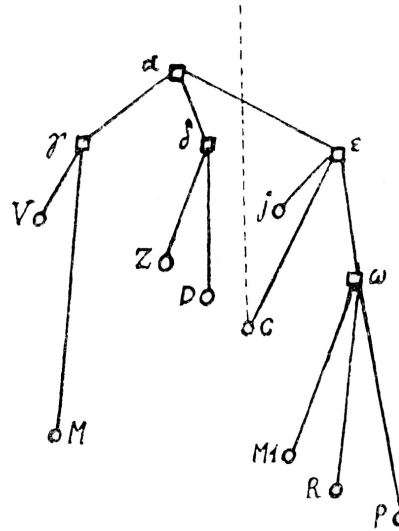
As for the manuscript itself, we are interested in MS D, descended from the δ (Venetian family) exemplar. I reproduce Colonna’s *stemma* for reference below:

¹³ There are six other *subscriptions* contained in manuscripts of the *Aethiopica*; e.g. the identification of the author in the V manuscript: “Heliodorus, who wrote the *Aethiopica*, was a bishop of Tricca, a city of Thessaly, which the countrymen now call Tricala, as Socrates the ecclesiastical historian says” (Ἡλιόδωρος ὁ τὰ Αἰθιοπικὰ ταῦτα γράψας ἐπίσκοπος ἦν πόλεως μᾶς τῶν Θεσσαλῶν Τρίκκης καλουμένης ἦνπερ οἱ νῦν ἄγροικοὶ Τρίκαλα λέγουσιν, ὡς φησὶ Σωκράτης ὁ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν συγγραψάμενος ἱστορίαν). Cf. Bowersock 1997, 149: “Most scholars have refused, perhaps a little too hastily and indignantly, to countenance this identification.” We should note, however, that Achilles Tatius too was identified as a Christian bishop. This might be a way of facilitating the integration of “pagan” and Christian literary traditions.

¹⁴ Only one other manuscript contains a *scriptio* that speaks to the novel’s imagined audience. The *scriptio* in the 10th/11th century MS V, in addition to the biographical factoid about Heliodorus’ bishopric, continues on in terms that are similar to those we see in D: “Heliodorus, son of Theodosius, has given away a portrayal of chastity for young men, so that those young men who see it will crown themselves in chastity” (σωφροσύνης θήγατο πίνακα νέους Θεοδοσίου παῖς Ἡλιόδωρος· ὡς ἂν ὀρώντες νέοι σωφροσύνης μέγ’ ἄθλον ἀναδήσονται). Thus, in two different manuscripts, separated in date by some three centuries, postscripts suggest the same audience for the novel, and praise it as an exemplary teacher of σωφροσύνη (prudence, discretion or chastity). We thus find that the manuscripts themselves suggest the audience—and a mode of reading—of both the novel and Philip’s exegesis.

STEMMA CODICVM

(Signo rotundo (o) codices exstantes, quadro autem (◊) deperdita exemplaria notavi).



α = librorum archetypum ix vel x saeculi;
 γ = exemplar familiae Vaticanae x vel xi in. saec.;
 δ = exemplar familiae Venetae x vel xi saec. in;
 ε = exemplar contaminatae familiae x vel xi saec. in;
 ω = recensio docta xii (vel xiii) saec.

Figure 1: The Manuscript Tradition of the *Aethiopica*, in Colonna 1938, LIX

D is, according to Colonna,¹⁵ a good manuscript, derived from a good exemplar:

“the model of the copies of Heliodorus from the γ and δ recensions, by comparison, decidedly exhibits the best text, nearly altogether free of irregularity and errors.”¹⁶

Colonna additionally notes that “in the δ recension, the omitted, transposed parts of the story (*orationis*) seem to indicate the work of a certain not-unskilled reader.”¹⁷

The scribe who copied the piece was certainly not the author of Philip’s ἐρμήνευμα,

¹⁵ In an earlier (1925) article, R.M. Rattenbury had listed five MSS “of value for establishing the text:” *Vaticanus Graecus* 157 (V), *Vaticanus Graecus* 1390 (C), *Vindobonensis Graecus* 130 (S), *Monacensis Graecus* 157 (M), *Palatinus Graecus* 125 (P). Of these, only V (10th/11th c.) is earlier than D (13th). Rattenbury, unlike Colonna though, does not appear to put much faith in D.

¹⁶ *Aethiopicorum archetypum ex γ et δ exemplarium comparatione constitutum optimum exhibet textum salebris atque erroribus fere omnino expertem* (XLVII).

¹⁷ *in δ autem exemplari omissa orationis membra, addita, transposita lectoris cuiusdam haud inertis operam indicare videntur* (XXXV).

according to both Tarán and Colonna.¹⁸ Colonna dates the manuscript to the 13th century, though his dating criteria are unclear at best, presumably paleographical: “I have concluded that D was produced by one hand of the 13th century” (xxxvi).¹⁹

There is, unfortunately, only so much we can learn from the manuscript without further careful and physical study. We must accept Colonna’s 13th century date, which would allow sufficient time for a text like Philip’s to develop and then possibly find its way first into public readings²⁰ and then into the manuscript. We have no way of knowing at what point—or even how—Philip’s piece was incorporated into the manuscript. If Tarán and Colonna are both right about the manuscript, then there is the possibility that Philip’s allegory had existed in an original version of which our manuscript D is a copy. However, the fact that a single hand is responsible for the content of the entire document—*Aethiopica*, Homeric excerpts, scholia, Philip’s ἐρμήνευμα—means that there is no way to ascertain when Philip’s text was added to the manuscript, nor whether it had an original, as there are no comparanda.²¹ One could interrogate the *subscriptio* at the novel’s end

¹⁸ Tarán 1992, 208f: “Certainly the codex *Marcianus Graecus* 410 cannot be either the original or even a recent copy of that original. For the manuscript exhibits not only mistakes but also lacunae. These lacunae have all the appearance of being due to the fact that the scribe could not read his original (it is even possible that the scribe of *Marcianus Graecus* 410 himself had a model which already had left empty spaces where its scribe was unable to read his original). Tarán goes on to use this evidence to suggest that the provenance (Calabria) of the manuscript is of no aid in determining the dramatic setting of the story. If Philip’s story is not original to the D manuscript, lacking any comparanda, there is simply no way of telling how the text got into the manuscript in the first place.

¹⁹ *Atque primum codicem D una eadem manu XIII saeculi exaratum didicimus.*

²⁰ Colonna, at least, attributes public performance to the origin of the Venetian (δ) recension of the manuscripts: *et facillime ut recensio δ in publicis fabulae lectionibus originem haberet evenire potuit; consuetudinis enim illius praeclaram testimonium haberemus in Philippi commentatione, quam stirpis δ liber D nobis adservavit* (xxxv). This may actually have been the way novels in the twelfth century were usually consumed: it seems that particular scenes from the Comnenian novels were selected for public recitation. In Prodromos’ *Rhodanthe and Dosicles*, for example, individual scenes are highlighted with rubricated titles like Ἐκφρασις Ῥοδάνθης or Ἐπιστολή Βραδύξου πρὸς Μιστόλον.

²¹ One could make the same argument of the Homeric lines and scholia in the manuscript as well, especially since Colonna fails to give any context for their inclusion seemingly in the midst of the *Aethiopica*. Perhaps this occurs in one of the lacunae Tarán mentions, but this is unlikely since (we are told) the verses occur on fol. 106 of 122 that contain the novel. This means that the verses would fall some 87% of the way through the novel, or somewhere around books 8 or 9. Colonna reports seven lacunae in the last three books of the *Aethiopica* in D, but none of these is any longer than two lines long—certainly not enough to warrant an entire page break and time for the scribe to forget about the *Aethiopica* altogether.

similarly: was it an inherited part of the tradition, or the ludic invention of a clever scribe? In any case, the postscript and its identified readers (τοις φιλομάθεσιν) are, I contend, more important than other scholars have previously recognized.²² The note serves as an indication that the scribe (or the author of the document that formed the basis for D) knew the kinds of games the novel plays with the reader—the kind that Philip, who is very aware of the ludic nature of the novel and his own ἐρμήνευμα, will play when the φιλόλογοι are insulting the novel and its heroine.

If the Italian provenience of the manuscript suggests an Italian author, then we may consider here how widespread Byzantine cultural influence extended. Roger II of Sicily (r. 1130-54), and his successor William I (r. 1154-66) oversaw and supported the entrenched Greek culture of Sicily and Southern Italy. There were, of course, practical, political benefits to supporting the Greek community: the area had been under Byzantine control since the conquests of Justinian in the sixth century, and was an active center of Greek monasticism.²³ Roger himself embraced Greek culture—the majority of Roger’s royal charters were written in Greek, and he signed his name in Greek as well.²⁴ Greek monasteries in Sicily and Calabria, despite the imposition of Latin and Norman authority in the twelfth century, “kept open links with Constantinople and Mount Athos.”²⁵ Roger modeled his court on the Byzantines,²⁶ and his “court preacher” was one Philagathos Keramides—identified as the author of our piece.²⁷ While the Norman conquest of Southern Italy is marked

²² There is no mention in either Tarán’s or Colonna’s work on Philip of the manuscript’s *subscriptio*.

²³ See Matthew 1992, 93-106, and Cf. Vitolo 1996, 99: “Le monachisme fut en effet le mode d’expression le plus original des régions hellénisées du Sud de l’Italie.”

²⁴ Houben 2002, 108.

²⁵ Matthew 1992, 94.

²⁶ See Burgarella 1987.

²⁷ See Houben 2002, 101.

by the gradual Latinization of what had long been a highly Greek area, the Byzantines still provided an attractive and influential cultural model. Roger wished to distinguish his kingdom from the East in religious terms, but not in cultural ones. Hence, if Philagathos Keramides is in fact Philip the Philosopher, we are nonetheless justified in a study of his document as a relic of a widespread and influential Medieval Byzantine culture.

The preservation of the Hellenic past was rooted in the whole Byzantine state's makeup: the very Christian Empire maintained for a thousand years a stable bureaucracy that required a supply of young, educated men conversant with the Hellenic classics and the liberal arts.²⁸ Thus at a very deep level within the state, the Empire maintained a community groomed to read certain texts in certain ways by both theorists and rhetoricians.

The period between the battle of Manzikert in 1071 and the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204 treated the Hellenic past particularly warmly. This reception was also flexible, finding expression in "modern" Greek vernacular and archaizing literary forms: it is during this period that we see the first references to the proto-romance *Digenes Akritas*, the great Greek vernacular poem, and a revival of the form of the ancient romance that had originally flourished between the first and fourth centuries CE. Classicizing hermeneutics, influenced particularly by Plato, persisted along with the literary tradition, and similarly interacted with pagan and Christian texts. Platonic philosophy—at least that form of it developed through the fifth

²⁸ Cf. Browning 1975, 3: "There existed in the Byzantine world a complex and sophisticated apparatus of government, which had need of men who could not only read and write, but had some acquaintance, however superficial, with the heritage of Greek antiquity." The superficial acquaintance of many should not blind us to the deep understanding of this tradition by some." And cf. cod. Theod. 14.1.1 on the importance of liberal arts for the *decurii* of Rome: *In decuriarum ordine insigni, cui librariorum vel fiscalium sive censualium nomen est, nequaquam aliquis locum primi ordinis adipiscatur nisi is, quem constiterit studiorum liberalium usu adque exercitatione pollere et ita esse litteris expoliturum, ut citra offensam vitii ex eodem verba procedant....*

century by Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus—and modes of reading, especially allegorical interpretations of myths and literature both sacred and profane, continued through Medieval Byzantium. The Byzantines, after all, had provided an implicit response to Tertullian’s famous dictum:²⁹ centuries of cultural interaction between the Hellenic classics and dominant Christian milieu proved that Athens had everything to do with Jerusalem—there was no need for a divorce from profane literature that had proved so useful for the state’s purposes.

H.R. Jauss’ “horizon of expectation” proves useful in understanding the implications of this system in the reception and production of classical imitations. Jauss’ work focuses on the reader’s expectations when approaching a text. The “horizon of expectation” is “constituted for the reader from out of a tradition or series of previously known works, and from a specific attitude, mediated by one (or more) genre and dissolved through new works.”³⁰ The Byzantines of the Middle Ages understood this implicitly: the literati knew and exploited the gaps between different registers of language, which corresponded to different levels of literature.³¹ What was written in Attic Greek (literary criticism, history, romance) was read and interpreted differently from that written in *Koine* (the New Testament) or the vernacular (the proto-romance *Digenes Akritas*). That Byzantine literature announced its genre immediately at the textual level is perhaps obvious,³² but it is also

²⁹ *Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? (De Praescriptione Haereticorum, 7.9).*

³⁰ Jauss 2000, 131.

³¹ See Beaton 1996, 13-15.

³² The majority of Roilos’ 2005 study of the Komnenian novels of the twelfth century is concerned with the ways the authors conform to and “modulate” the generic expectations of romance. Cf. p. 303: “Below the apparent stagnation of established discursive modes and narrative techniques, undercurrents of subtle allusions seem to point to different intersections of cultural and literary discourses—ancient and synchronic medieval Greek.”

revealing.³³ The Byzantine critic was charged with mediating between a text's place within a genre and the reader's own conceptions and generic expectations. Critics like Psellus and Philip, and even the scribe responsible for the *subscriptio* in *D*, are responsible for reshaping the horizon of expectation for a middle Byzantine reader.³⁴ Philip's emphasis on reader preparation and perspicacity reflects similar concerns in other Byzantine critics, and mediates between the modern and the medieval.

The Byzantine East, very much a product of two interrelated yet often oppositional cultural traditions, thus maintained élites conversant with the pagan classics and Christian scripture. The system served the Byzantines well: though the state's influence tended to wane more than wax in the 900 years between the founding of Constantinople and the Latin conquest of the city in 1204, its political system was among the most stable of Medieval Europe.³⁵ Hellenic literature was subject to different appraisals during these centuries, though some texts—mostly those we still think comprise the classical canon—proved more enduring than others.

This thesis will focus especially on situating Philip's interpretation in the literary and cultural context of the Byzantine twelfth century, a time more receptive to both archaizing language and form than any other in the Middle Byzantine period. Though Philip is the only text we have that allegorizes a romance, his essay

³³ The Byzantine concern with language and style manifests itself in the broader intellectual efforts of the ninth and tenth centuries resulting in massive compendia like Photius' *Bibliotheca* and the *Suda*. The *Bibliotheca* is especially concerned with the style of the volumes it summarizes. Cf. the entry on Heliodorus: "The work is dramatic, and the style employed is suited to the subject, being full of simplicity and charm. The narrative is diversified by actual, expected, or unexpected incidents that appeal to the feelings, by strange escapes from danger, by clear and pure diction" (trans. Henry).

³⁴ It is important to note that Photius and Psellus were not only important in the world of Byzantine letters, but also occupied influential positions in the Church and state: Photius was Patriarch of Constantinople from 858-867, and 877-886; Psellus was a court advisor to emperors Michael VI, Isaac I Komnenos, Constantine X Doukas, and Michael VII Doukas.

³⁵ Empires in the medieval west, lacking an elite dedicated so exclusively to the state, appear ephemeral by contrast to Byzantium. Charlemagne's Frankish empire and Germany's first Reich shook themselves apart in the course of three generations. The Islamic caliphate poses a more complex problem, but it, too, fragmented within 150 years.

testifies to the deep roots of Christian and paganizing interpretive efforts; even literature that was not on a par with Plato, Aristotle or Homer, or with the Pauline epistles and the New Testament, did not escape the voracious appetite for interpretation and exegesis the Byzantines cultivated. Dating the fragment exactly, as well as establishing its authorship beyond a doubt, is at this point impossible, but Philip's ἐρμήνευμα coordinates with critical precepts and modes of reading familiar from major Byzantine critics, especially Michael Psellus. And although the piece seems to have its origins in the Italo-Greek context of medieval Sicily, Philip's methodology and allegorical strategy nevertheless reflects the far-reaching cultural influence of Byzantine critics and writers. I will show how Philip is indebted to these critics and adapts their own judgments to his interpretation of the novel. Philip, whose methodology is decidedly ancient, appears remarkably modern by emphasizing the relationship between the text, the reader, and the interpreter. Philip's interpretation is important not only as a document in literary theory, but also a representative product of medieval Byzantine thought. If his ἐρμήνευμα "verges on parody,"³⁶ then Philip shows no signs of insincerity—he is a graybeard playing an old, familiar game with an old, familiar text by new rules.

³⁶ Lamberton 1986, 152.

II: THE LITERARY MILIEU OF TWELFTH CENTURY BYZANTIUM

The Greek literature that comprises today's classics curricula played a similar, if not wholly analogous, role in the Byzantine East. These texts were transmitted through the Byzantine period not just because of their value in defining "Greekness,"³⁷ but also as a stable curriculum of rhetorical education that formed a part of every aspiring civil servant's background.³⁸ In addition, the texts helped cement Byzantine cultural identity after the territorial losses of the battle of Manzikert in 1071 virtually homogenized the empire into a monolingual Greek state. The ancient Greek past was thus not something to be aware of, but rather, by the proper adaptation of classical literary forms, something to participate in. This crystallization and canonization generated a social framework of forms and genres commonly intelligible to a certain segment of Byzantine high society. As the Empire became more and more Greek in the 11th and 12th centuries, and as the gap between the literary Attic and vernacular languages widened, participation in the preserved Hellenizing past grew.

In the twelfth century we see the reappearance of the ancient, erotic romance, now infused with the same mixture of Christian citation and pagan culture that is so prominent in Philip's piece. The romance, then, had at this point a new kind of social cachet. H.R. Jauss, whose work informs this chapter, elegantly summarizes the social

³⁷ Cf. Breyer 1971, 97: Manzikert's lasting effect on the Byzantines was the formation of "a largely Greek state out of what had been a multilingual Empire."

³⁸ Cf. Jenkins 1963: 43: "This [rhetorical] education was the indispensable qualification not only, as in Hellenistic times, for all who wished to pass for educated men, but also for all who wished to earn their living in one or other of the enormous offices of the imperial bureaucracy."

nature of genre: “Literary forms and genres are thus neither subjective creations of the author, nor merely retrospective ordering-concepts, but rather primarily social phenomena, which means that they depend on functions in the lived world.”³⁹

Byzantine readers and interpreters through the twelfth century, then, laid a foundation of criticism and modes of reading that contemporary authors—including Philip—adopted.

Philip’s ἐξομήνευμα is, unfortunately, probably undatable⁴⁰ (barring the unlikely discovery of another copy in a different manuscript) and it may be impossible to settle debate about its true authorship and contemporary milieu. While some scholars prefer to move Philip’s date back earlier and earlier—as far as the 6th century⁴¹—the tract actually best fits two strands of literary criticism and practice that were current in the Byzantine twelfth century. First is Philip’s commitment to the emulation and imitation of a wide variety of ancient texts; and second, his positioning himself within an important and long-lived discourse on the role of pagan literature in a Christian empire. A twelfth-century context for Philip, if not beyond doubt, is nonetheless very comfortable; the Komnenian novelists, especially Eustathios Makrembolites, also share Philip’s love of the ancient novel and penchant for truths expressed in riddles and enigmas. Philip’s own use of allegory to “defend” *Chariclea* is also characteristic of some earlier treatments of

³⁹ Jauss 2000, 135.

⁴⁰ This fact is itself somewhat consistent with the Byzantine norm. Cf. Kennedy 1980, 169: “Not only the diction and grammar of classical Greek, but classical literary genres, commonplaces, and allusions were expected in serious writing. One result is that it is often impossible to date a Byzantine literary work unless one has external sources of reference to it or its writer.”

⁴¹ The most thorough and attentive argument for an earlier date is Tarán 1992. Tarán’s conclusions are drawn mostly from the paganizing milieu: it is clear that “the author [i.e. Philip] addressed, or meant to address, an audience which at the very least included many pagans, or perhaps was mainly pagan. Such an unlikely setting for twelfth century Southern Italy leads us to infer that our work was written several centuries earlier than that date, and, hence, that its author could not have been Philip-Philagathos” (106).

pagan literature in the hands of, among others, Michael Psellus in the eleventh and John Tzetzes in the twelfth centuries. “Philip the Philosopher” is just as much “Philip the Literary Critic:” Philip shares his opinion of—and interpretive approach to—the novel with established modes of reading in a Byzantine context.

A renewed interest in ancient literary works, style, and modes of discourse reached its peak in the mid-twelfth century, between about 1130 and 1180, when the Komnenian novelists were writing, and this occurred simultaneously with a heightened recognition of the difference between elevated (i.e. Atticizing) and vernacular discourses. The Hellenizing tendencies of the Komnenian novels had precedents in a renewed critical interest in ancient literature. The Byzantine empire, facing pressure from the Turks to the East, Slavs to the North, and Latins to the West, became territorially and culturally more Greek during the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and the literature of the Komnenian period and Philip’s *ἐρμήνευμα* reflect those Hellenizing tendencies.⁴² As the Empire itself became more territorially and politically Hellenized, so too did the literature: it imitated ancient modes of reading and writing. It is the aim of this chapter to place Philip’s *ἐρμήνευμα* in the context of Byzantine literary criticism and the renewed interest in pagan genres and literature and to argue, therefore, that Philip’s text is best seen as part of the Hellenized literature of twelfth-century Byzantium.

⁴² Cf. Kennedy 1980, 169: “This extraordinary value put on classical language and style, exceeding the role played by Latin in the West, was also in part a search for cultural stability and permanence in the face of the destruction of the classical world and the dangers from the alien societies of Slavs to the north, Arabs to the south, Turks to the east, and a varied horde of semi-barbaric “Latins” to the west.”

A: CONTEMPORARY CLASSICS

Modern European historians are fond of referring to a “long nineteenth century,” bookending their studies with the French Revolution in 1789 and the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Similarly, many Byzantine historians assume a “long twelfth century,” bracketed by the disastrous battle of Manzikert in 1071 and the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204. The intervening 133 years saw dramatic changes in Byzantium: a partial restoration of the old frontiers of the Empire; establishment of a new dynasty; and a cultural revolution of sorts,⁴³ in which new (albeit archaizing) forms of literature and language appeared, expanded and altered to suit the needs and tastes of contemporary audiences.

The crushing defeat of the Byzantines at the hands of the Seljuk Turks at Manzikert in 1071 shaped the Empire in the coming decades and centuries, geographically, politically, and also culturally. A resurgent Bulgaria and the revolt of the mercenary forces that had protected the Empire’s western front destabilized the borders on the west, and revolts by the Byzantine generals Nikephoros Bryennios and Nikephoros Botaneiates created dangers both in the Balkans and Anatolia. Alexios I Komnenos, the general and later emperor (1085-1118) who, with Seljuk support, defeated that mercenary revolt in 1074, began the long process of rebuilding Byzantium’s fortunes: he stabilized the frontiers and calmed a turbulent political scene.⁴⁴ For our purposes, Alexios I’s reign is most important for the

⁴³ Paul Magdalino uses the terms “renaissance” and *renovatio imperii* to describe the political and cultural changes of the twelfth century. See Magdalino 2002, 382-412.

⁴⁴ The Komnenian dynasty presided over one of the more politically stable periods in the history of the Empire. J.C. Cheynet, in 1990’s *Pouvoir et Contestations à Byzance* measured political stability (in part) by the number of attempted coups and revolutions beginning with the reign of Basil II (976-1025) and ending with the sack of Constantinople during Fourth Crusade in 1204. His results show that, comparatively, the Komnenian period was one relatively free of political

widespread increase in the practice and teaching of rhetoric.⁴⁵ Alexios I was not intentionally a champion of artistic expression.⁴⁶ Yet in stabilizing the state he preserved the need for a bureaucracy and administrative class capable of both clear expression and rhetorical bombast. The way into the civil service was through the classics and the attendant rhetorical curriculum.⁴⁷

Alexios fought wars against the Normans in Southern Italy, the Pechenegs in Thrace, and finally against the Seljuks in Asia Minor. It was this final conflict that proved to be the hinge for Byzantine history. Lacking the forces necessary to take on the Turks, the emperor turned to the West for help. In 1091 or 1092, Alexios wrote⁴⁸ a letter to Robert, count of Flanders, appealing for aid. Alexios petitioned again, in 1095, to the council of Piacenza for further help. It was this entreaty that sparked Pope Urban II to begin preaching the First Crusade in 1096. The knights of the Latin West brought with them “the martial virtues that Christianity required,” that were seen to be lacking in the East.⁴⁹ Anna Komnena reports that the emperor noted that

unrest: during the dynasty’s tenure between 1081 and 1185, Cheynet lists 49 attempted revolutions: a rather remarkable figure for a 100-year dynasty in a culture where revolutions were so common. By contrast, between 1025 and 1081, Cheynet lists 113 revolts, and between 1185 and 1204 a further 60. Thus, of the 223 revolts Cheynet documents in over the course of 179 years, only 22% of those occurred during under the Komnenians.)

⁴⁵ See R. Browning, 1975 and Jenkins 1963.

⁴⁶ The show trial of John Italos, then the ὑπάτος τῶν φιλοσόφων, the highest endowed rhetorical chair in Constantinople, suggests to some an interest in tighter control over the intellectual output of academics than under previous emperors. Cf. Browning 1975, 15: “The condemnation of John Italos, the motives of which were political rather than scientific, upset the delicate balance between intellect and faith in Byzantium, re-established control by the Janus-headed state and church on the content of education, and set limits to the speculations of reason.”

⁴⁷ Cf. Constantinides 2003, 41-2: “Byzantine emperors recruited their administrators from the public schools and high officials were selected from among the better-trained students in rhetoric. For the administrative structure of the empire relied on a civil service trained to think and write clearly and precisely... There was hardly a ceremony which was not accompanied with an official speech by a high official. Thus rhetoric played its role in the political system of the empire and the training of good officials was the concern of the Emperor himself.”

⁴⁸ Angold 1997, 158: “As it stands, Alexios’ letter is certainly a forgery, but it may be based on a genuine document. It contains a description of conditions in Anatolia and the Aegean which fits the early 1090s quite uncannily.”

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 165.

the knights “in the prime of their life, at the height of their strength, of noble lineage, seemed to rival the heroes of old.”⁵⁰

The Emperor Alexios was himself like one of the “heroes of old.” His conquests, reforms, and foreign policy helped establish Byzantium on firmer footing than it had been just a decade before he took the throne.⁵¹ He excelled on the battlefield by solidifying and reinforcing the crumbling military establishment he took over; he established a dynasty that oversaw Byzantine rule until the Latin conquest; and his court, and those of his successors, fostered a new interest in the ancient Greek past that would reach its fullest expression in the Atticizing *Alexiad* and in the romances of the twelfth century. The emperor’s successes on the frontiers, coupled with a revived Hellenic identity, generated a moment ripe for the return of romance: the Byzantines combined the very Roman tendency to lionize their leaders with Greek literary forms and language. It is at this point that we see the first reference to *Digenes Akritas*—the hero of the “proto-romance” that bears his name, and it is at this point that the Komnenian novelists also revived the form, language and cultural references of the ancient romance.

The 11th century thus witnessed a contraction of Byzantium in purely territorial terms, weighed against something of a cultural expansion centered on the Greek past. The First Crusade greatly increased contact with the West.

In response to further contact with the neighboring Latins, Byzantine culture and literature began to adopt new (really, old) modes of expression, focusing on the

⁵⁰trans. Sewter 1969, 313.

⁵¹ In exchange for short-term benefits, Alexios may also have weakened the empire, especially in granting the Venetians a prominent position in the imperial economy in exchange for military aid that they never really delivered. The Italians saw their trade empire grow, while the Byzantines opened themselves up for foreign exploitation and gradually lost control over their own economy.

Hellenic past. This phenomenon coincided with another, unforeseen consequence of the territorial losses of Manzikert. With Anatolia and Armenia lost to the Turks “the spoken language of almost all Byzantines was for the first time Greek.”⁵² Along with the homogenization of language came a new focus on linguistic register: the difference between the low vernacular Greek of *Digenes Akritas* and the hyper-correct Atticism of, for example, Anna Komnena’s *Alexiad* was both pronounced and self-conscious. Certain authors expressed their preferences for specific levels of diction, while others, notably Theodore Prodromos, shifted between linguistic levels with ease. Each register, whether the vernacular, Attic, or the *Koine* based on the New Testament, was preferred for different purposes: the vernacular to communicate with “the man in the street,” *Koine* for didactic literature and saints’ lives, and Attic to lend an air of “authentication of [an ancient, Greek] identity in a past as remote, and therefore as authoritative, as that of the Bible”⁵³ to works of history such as the *Alexiad* or the romances of Prodromos and Makrembolites.

Anna Komnena’s *Alexiad* stands at one extreme of the spectrum of linguistic (and thus cultural) levels with which the Byzantine literati were conversant. Its Greek is as Atticizing and pedantically correct as anything the twelfth century produced. Her language, very different from that heard on the streets of Constantinople or the Anatolian plateau, reflects her effort to characterize Alexios I as a hero and an emperor worthy of the same treatment as the great Greek heroes or the Persian kings whose historians the Byzantines still read and revered. At the other end of that spectrum is the “proto-romance” *Digenes Akritas*, a poem probably

⁵² Beaton 1996, 13.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 14.

written “within a generation of the defeat at Manzikert,”⁵⁴ which is of epic length (recensions vary in the number of lines from 1,867 to 4,778), written for the most part in low, vernacular Greek⁵⁵ in which one finds ancient vocabulary alongside “modern” Greek syntax. Other versions of the poem exist—there are a total of seven MSS: five metrical, Greek versions; one prose, Greek version; and one Russian version.⁵⁶ The number and variance of so many different recensions strongly suggest that the poem was an active part of the contemporary literary scene; the poem’s blend of epic and romance would have broad appeal in an empire reflecting on its ancient heritage while witnessing its own cultural revival.

Byzantine critics reacted favorably (although not unanimously so) to the ancient romances, and the appeal of the proto-romance *Digenes Akritas* was widespread. The growing interest in Hellenism found its greatest expressing in the occasionally slavish imitations of the ancient romances by the Komnenian novelists. Of the three twelfth century romances that survive, one in particular, Eustathios Makrembolites’ *Hysmenias and Hysmene* displays a fascination with the semiotics of experience and the process of decoding works of art. Makrembolites owes a deep

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 50.

⁵⁵ Compare some brief, representative passages of the *Alexiad* and *Digenes Akritas* for an illustration of the differences in their “linguistic register:”

A: ῥέων ὁ χρόνος ἀκάθεκτα καὶ αἰεὶ τι κινούμενος παρασύρει καὶ παραφέρει πάντα τὰ ἐν γενέσει καὶ ἐς βυθὸν ἀφανείας καταποντοῖ ὅπου μὲν οὐκ ἄξια λόγου πράγματα, ὅπου δὲ μεγάλα τε καὶ ἄξια μνήμης, καὶ τὰ τε ἄδηλα φύων κατὰ τὴν τραγωδίαν καὶ τὰ φανέντα ἀποκρυπτόμενος. Ἀλλ’ ὁ γε λόγος ὁ τῆς ἱστορίας ἔρυμα καρτερώτατον γίνεται τῷ τοῦ χρόνου ῥεύματι καὶ ἴσῃσι τρόπον τινὰ τὴν ἀκάθεκτον τούτου ῥοῆν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ γινόμενα πάντα, ὅποσα ὑπερέλιγε, ξυνέχει καὶ περισφίγγει καὶ οὐκ ἔῃ διολισθαίνειν εἰς λήθης βυθοῦς. (1.1)

D.A: Ἐπειδὴ ὄρκους προὔβαλλοντο γαμβρόν να τον ἐπάρουν

ἐπήρε τοὺς ἀγρούς του ὁ ἀμηρᾶς εὐθέως,

εἰς Ῥωμανίαν ὑπέστρεφε διὰ τὴν ποθητὴν του.

Ὅταν δὲ κατελάμβανε μέρη τῆς Ῥωμανίας,

ἤλευθέρωνεν ἅπαντας οὓς εἶχεν αἰχμαλώτους,

ἐκάστῳ δοὺς ἐφόδια εἰς τὴν ὁδὸν ἀρκούντα. (2.1-6)

⁵⁶ See Mavrogordato 1956, xv-xxix.

and obvious debt to Achilles Tatius: the characters, plot, and many individual scenes border on word-for-word replication.⁵⁷ The first-person narrator, Hysmenias, like Philip, dwells on the symbolism of a work of art: he frequently disrupts his story with bouts of ekphrasis, as if the narrative itself were incidental to the description and interpretation of art.⁵⁸ Makrembolites' ekphrases are often introduced similarly: Hysmenias pauses to notice some feature (gardens, paintings, Hysmene); he describes the piece in detail and pauses to reflect on its meaning; unable to decipher the true meaning of the work of art, he is directed to a sign or epigram (often as not "an iambic line" written somewhere on or around the piece)⁵⁹ that functions as a hermeneutic key explaining an allegorical meaning of the piece Hysmenias was previously unable to grasp; this new discovery leads to further discussion. Thus the allegorical explanation itself functions as an extended rhetorical showpiece. Hysmenias and Philip both presuppose that there are multiple levels to a work of art; Hysmenias lacks the ability to interpret them, while Philip's long course of rhetorical and philosophical education has prepared him to unravel the riddles of texts sacred and profane.

It will be useful to end this section by bringing things back around to Philip's ἐρμηνεύματα and its place within the literary tradition I have tried to sketch here. Philip's curious admixture of Christian and pagan citation in an analysis of a

⁵⁷ Cf. M. Marcovich's introduction to the 2001 Teubner edition: *Eustathius Macrembolita in fabula sua amatoria... Achilles Tatii Leucippen et Clitophontem tamquam umbra hominem sequitur* (vii).

⁵⁸ See Roilos, 2005, for further discussion of the relationship between narrative and allegorical interpretation in Makrembolites, esp. pp. 139-203. Roilos, emphasizing the rhetorical nature of *Hysmenias and Hysmene*, argues that the text itself is constructed as an "enigmatic fictional discourse;" allegory becomes something of a rhetorical figure that an audience familiar with contemporary allegorical readings of Homer by Tzetzes and the slightly older writings of Psellus could appreciate (224). This allegorical construction of the novel is "where pagan narrative conventions and Byzantine patterns of thought converge in Makrembolites' fiction" (*ibid.*).

⁵⁹ At e.g. 1.4.2. when Hysmenias describes and analyzes a tableau of the 12 months of the year in the garden of his host Sosthenes.

Hellenizing romance written in what was no doubt a deeply Christian society, and thus written for consumption by a Christian audience, ceases to be troublesome if we consider the likely possibility of a twelfth century Byzantine context for Philip. Byzantine reading and literary education had for centuries been grounded in a rhetorical tradition that remained relatively static.⁶⁰ One consequence of such a longstanding and inert tradition was to preserve a share in the classical past as a “living tradition for a thousand years.”⁶¹ The 11th and 12th century “renaissance” of classical genres—like the philosophical dialogue or erotic romance—is therefore less a revival, and more a renewed participation in a mutually intelligible (at least to the initiated) semiotics.⁶²

Philip, who takes pains to prove his *bona fides* through the first half of his essay, fits himself into a community and tradition of reading that shares a common background. Especially in the twelfth century, Byzantine literati who had been instrumental in the preservation of a classical tradition became more ardent participants in that tradition, creating new literature by reassembling old semiotics; Philip adapts the same cultural-melting pot to his own new analysis of a text that was read, appreciated, interpreted and adopted by Byzantine critics and philosophers.

⁶⁰ Cf. Jeffreys 2003, 89: “Byzantine rhetorical education promoted a series of forms belonging unusually far in the past, while contemporary Greek speech was avoided with unusual strictness.... [Byzantine rhetoric] was more successful than most comparative structures in defying the passage of time, thus organizing Byzantine Greek literature as if the Greek language had not changed for many centuries.”

⁶¹ Kennedy 1980, 171.

⁶² Cf. Jauss 2000, 138: “The function of a genre depends not only on its relation to a real, lived procedure, but also within its position within a comprehensive symbolic system familiar to contemporaries.”

B: THE RHETORICAL TRADITION OF THE *AETHIOPICA*

Two ancient novels—*Leucippe and Clitophon* and the *Aethiopica*—were especially popular among the Byzantines: these were known by the elite, and we have several detailed descriptions and analyses of these two novels by Photius and Michael Psellus. Photius gives us the best evidence that ancient novels still had a place in Byzantine literary circles. Photius' *Bibliotheca* summarizes 279 works, some of which we know only in his volume. The commentary suggests that the ancient romances had some literary (chiefly stylistic) credibility, even if the genre itself was always a little *déclassé*. Photius includes four of the ancient novels in his survey: *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, Iamblichus' *Babyloniaca* and Antonius Diogenes' *Wonders Beyond Thule*. His opinion of the genre is not the most favorable: according to Photius, Iamblichus could have applied his talents to more serious pursuits, and should have instead focused "on really serious subjects, not on frivolous fictions."⁶³ Photius' indictment of romances notwithstanding, he has generally positive things to say about the individual works he summarizes. He mentions the *Aethiopica* specifically on five different occasions,⁶⁴ treating the novel once individually and comparing it to other romances on the other four occasions, and Heliodorus often comes out ahead when compared with the other novelists in matters of style and temperance (σωφροσύνη). Photius' verdict on the novel,⁶⁵

⁶³ "Ὅσα γε εἰς λέξεως ἀρετὴν καὶ συνθήκης καὶ τῆς ἐν τοῖς διηγήμασι τάξεως, καὶ τοῖς σπουδαιοτάτοις τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλλ' οὐχὶ παιγνίους καὶ πλάσμασι ἄξιός τὴν τῶν λόγων τέχνην καὶ ἰσχὺν ἐπιδείκνυσθαι. (Bib. cod. 94.73b.36-74a.3) (trans. G. Sandy in Reardon, ed. 1991)

⁶⁴ Bib. cod. 73 (twice), 87, 94, 167

⁶⁵ ἀνεγνώθη Ἡλιοδώρου Αἰθιοπικόν. ἔστι δὲ τὸ σύνταγμα δραματικόν, φράσει δὲ πρεπούση τῇ ὑποθέσει κέχρηται· καὶ γὰρ ἀφελία καὶ γλυκύτητι πλεονάζει. καὶ πάθει δὲ τὰ μὲν παροῦσι, τὰ δὲ ἐλπίζομενοι, τὰ δὲ καὶ ἀνελπίστοις διαποικίλλεται ἡ διήγησις, καὶ παραδόξοις ἐκ συμφορῶν σωτηρίαις· λέξει τε εὐσήμοις καὶ καθαραῖς, καὶ εἰ που, ὡς εἰκός, καὶ ταῖς εἰς τροπὴν κλινοῦσαις ἀποχρήσασαι, εὐσημοὶ τέ εἰσι καὶ ἐναγρῶς παριστώσαι τὸ

which simultaneously praises the language and literacy of the author and denigrates the genre as a whole, is indicative of the stance Byzantine literary critics and educators would take toward romances for the next several centuries.⁶⁶ In Philip’s piece, we see this attitude manifested in the φιλόλογοι who give Nikolaos, hence Philip, a reason to defend the novel in the first place. Similarly, we see Philip assume the role of a literary critic as much as a philosopher⁶⁷ to correct their misreadings. Philip himself represents the position of Byzantine criticism, and the aim of his essay—to defend the novel—is coordinate with their position that the novel is an art form worth defending. It is literary critics like Philip and Psellus who take on that responsibility.

Michael Psellus in the 11th century, two centuries after Photius, wrote about the *Aethiopica* twice. In the first of those essays, a σύγκρισις (*iudicium*) or comparison⁶⁸ of *Leucippe* and the *Aethiopica*, he echoes Photius’ praise of Heliodorus. The *iudicium* suggests an audience for the novels that extended beyond the presumably quite small, bookish group of Byzantine *literati*: “I know many of the overly educated who argue about these two erotic novels [*Leucippe* and *Chariclea*].”⁶⁹

προκειμενον. περίοδοι σύμμετροι καὶ πρὸς τὸ βραχύτερον οἶα δὴ συστελλόμεναι. καὶ ἡ συνθήκη δὲ καὶ τᾶλλα τῶ λόγῳ ἀνάλογα. Ἐρωτα μὲν ἀνδρὸς ὑφαίνει καὶ γυναικὸς, σωφροσύνης δὲ δείκνυσι πόθον καὶ φυλακὴν ἀκριβή... (cod. 73).

“Read the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus. The work is dramatic, and the style employed is suited to the subject, being full of simplicity and charm. The narrative is diversified by actual, expected, or unexpected incidents that appeal to the feelings, by strange escapes from danger, by clear and pure diction. If, as is only natural, there is a tendency to use figures of speech, they are easy to understand, and vividly illustrate the subject matter. The periods are symmetrical, and concisely arranged with a view to brevity. The composition in other respects corresponds to the subject. The story is about the love of a man and a woman, and shows a desire for the strict observance of propriety.” (trans. Freese)

⁶⁶ This is still the implicit critical position of the φιλόλογοι who are deriding the *Aethiopica* when Philip begins his defense of the novel.

⁶⁷ It is no coincidence the Psellus the literary critic and Philip the Philosopher highlight the same aspect of “self-restraint” (σωφροσύνη) in *Chariclea*.

⁶⁸ For the text, see Colonna, pp. 364-5.

⁶⁹ Πολλοὺς οἶδα καὶ τῶν ἄγαν πεπαιδευμένων ἀμφισβητοῦντας περὶ τῶν δύο [τῶν τῆς Λευκίπης καὶ τῆς Χαριχλείας] τούτων ἐρωτικῶν συγγραμμάτων.... (ll. 1-2, Dyck)

These two novels, then, were familiar to “many of the very educated,” implying that the novels enjoyed relative success, and were at least sufficiently known in the Byzantine literary culture of the 11th century to inspire debate about their literary merits. In his own way, Philip the Philosopher takes the same position as Psellus: this novel is worth reading on stylistic and didactic grounds. Philip of course expands the scope of Psellus’ mostly superficial essay, but is nonetheless very comfortable within the same tradition. Though it would be perhaps too bold to suggest outright that Psellus influenced Philip, we might still acknowledge a consistency in their method of reading: they expect the same things from the text (a moral message and proper characterization to support that message) and make similar arguments.

The novels retained a place in the literary circles of the twelfth century, and we must imagine they had some currency in Philip’s time. The *Aethiopica* enjoyed particularly lasting success (if not universal acclaim) with Byzantine readers. The rhetorical skill of the ancient novelists seems to have been what the Byzantines admired most about them: the imitations of *Leucippe*, and the *Aethiopica*, especially, are indications of their continued readership through the twelfth century. Psellus, in his *de Chariclea et Leucippe Iudicium*,⁷⁰ initially claims that “each of the [two] novels surpasses the other in certain parts, but that of *Chariclea* (i.e. the *Aethiopica*) wins in the greater share. The beauty of the novel about *Chariclea* is not too over-styled and theatrical, nor indeed too Atticizing and overweening, but suitable in its grandeur” Psellus further highlights his appreciation of the linguistic skill on display in the

⁷⁰ The piece’s Greek title is perhaps more fitting for the rhetorical discussion to follow: Τίς ἢ διάκρισις τῶν συγγραμμάτων, ὧν τῷ μὲν Χαρίκλεια, τῷ δὲ Λευκίππη ὑποθέσεις καθεστήκατον; Introducing the following essay as a question to be answered allows Psellus to pass his judgment off as a lecture or rhetorical showpiece to mimic the rhetorical ornamentation of the authors he is judging.

Aethiopica by twice designating the author as a ῥήτωρ.⁷¹ Heliodorus' rhetorical skill is, in fact, remarkable according to Psellus. Some readers complain that Chariclea herself does not speak like a real woman, and that Heliodorus has failed to characterize her properly; but Psellus defends her characterization vigorously:

ὁ δὲ πλείστου ἐπαιτιωμένους οἶδα, τὸ περὶ τῆς Χαρικλείας φημί, ὅτι μὴ γυναικεῖον μηδὲ θῆλυ τῷ ῥήτορι φθέγγεται, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν τέχνην ἐπῆρται αὐτῇ ἢ γλῶττα πρὸς τὸ σοφιστικώτερον, τοῦτο αὐτὸς οὐκ ἔχω ὅπως ἂν ἀρκούντως ἐπαινέσαιμι. οὐ γὰρ κατὰ κόρας ἰδιώτιδας εἰσῆκται τῷ συγγραφεῖ, ἀλλὰ τετελεσμένη κακὰ τοῦ Πυθίου, διὸ καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῶν θρηῶν χρηστηριάζει, ἐνθεάζει τε κατὰ τὰς ἔκφρονας μάντιδας καὶ ὅλη τοῦ τριποδικοῦ πέφυκε λέβητος (ll. 36-42, Dyck)

But as for the point which, I know, a great many persons find fault with, namely the fact that the author cannot get Chariclea's speech to sound womanly or feminine, but, contrary to the art, her language has been raised to a more sophistic tone—I myself do not know how to praise this adequately. The author has not introduced a character like ordinary girls, but an initiate and one who comes from Pythian Apollo; hence most of her lamentations contain oracles. She is inspired in the manner of a mad prophetess and is wholly the offspring of the tripod's cauldron (trans. Dyck).

Philip's attitude toward *Chariclea* is a logical extension of Psellus' rhetorical praise: Philip recognizes that Chariclea is "not like ordinary girls," he simply explains why on a level Psellus does not approach.

Psellus treated the *Aethiopica* in another essay, *περὶ χαρακτήρων συγγραμμάτων τίνων*. He again lauds Heliodorus as an author of romance, but in this case, like Photius, Psellus suggests that romance is not a genre suited to serious study, but rather should be viewed as a kind of educational capstone, to be dealt with only after a student has studied more serious literature. No critic, ancient or modern, would suggest that a course of study with a basis in Thucydides, Plato and Demosthenes, as Psellus suggests a proper course ought to be, would culminate in

⁷¹ Colonna ll. 24; 30 (364)

the romances; Psellus' essay seems rather to suggest that the novels are worth reading for the aspiring student of literature, but are not fundamental to a student's education. The overarching metaphor of the essay is that of the construction of a house:

οί τὸ τῆς Λευκίππης βιβλίον καὶ τὸ τῆς Χαρικλείας, καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο ἐπιτερεπὲς καὶ χάριτας ἔχον, ἀναγινώσκοντες... δοκοῦσι μοι οἰκίαν μὲν ἐπιβεβλῆθῆσαι οἰκοδομεῖν, πρὸ δὲ τῆς τῶν κρηπιδῶν καταβολῆς καὶ τῆς τῶν τοίχων καὶ τῶν κιόνων ἀναστάσεώς τε καὶ τάξεως, τῆς τε τοῦ ὀρόφου συγκορυφώσεως, βούλεσθαι περιανθίζειν ταύτην γραφαῖς καὶ ψηφῖσι καὶ ταῖς λοιπαῖς χάρισι (*de operatione daimonum*, p. 48 Boissonade).

Those reading the books *Leucippe* and *Chariclea*, even if they have some other pleasing and graceful qualities... seem to me to have undertaken to build a house, but wish to ornament this structure with paintings and mosaics and other adornments, before raising and arranging the columns and completing the roof (my translation).

Those influenced stylistically by the novels concern themselves with adornment before laying down a firm foundation. Nevertheless, as Trzaskoma's evidence from *Leucippe*⁷² and Psellus' own judgment of *Leucippe* and the *Aethiopica* suggest, the rhetorical and stylistic conventions of the ancient novels were admired by Byzantine literary critics, even if the canonized classics were always more esteemed.

The romances' penchant for vivid description and ekphrasis is replicated in the Komnenian novels of the twelfth century: readers would have seen them as part of their rhetorical education, probably after having established a firm foundation in the classics of the ancient Greek past, as Psellus recommends. The Byzantine attitude toward the novels thus seems to have remained fixed between Photius and the Komneni. Romances are important, worthwhile, occasionally well-written works of fiction, that have a mixed impact on those who read them: those who are ready and

⁷² See n. 62, above.

who have a foundation in classical education will benefit from the romances. Those who do not are trying to install decoration before the building is built.⁷³

If the novels themselves were never taken quite as seriously as other, more “established” works of classical literature, they still made enough of an impression on their readers, ancient and medieval, to be recognized in allusions and quotations, and to serve as paradigms for later imitation. The φιλόλογοι Philip confronts at the beginning of his ἐρμήνευμα are thus representative of the typical Byzantine readership of the ancient novels: conversant with the genre and its particular works without necessarily holding them in the highest esteem. And Philip himself acts as an analog to a Byzantine critic like Psellus: in Philip’s eyes, the novel *should* be read, and should in fact be read by the φιλόλογοι for reasons unrelated to their stylistic bombast--although presumably that isn’t a bad thing. Reading the novel correctly, like progressing through a correctly designed curriculum, requires the proper introduction and preparation before one can understand its underlying message of ethical instruction and philosophical fulfillment. The role of the critic is thus essential to proper reading of the Byzantine text: Philip is equal parts a philosopher and literary critic, representing a Byzantine taste for allegory and rhetorical skill.

⁷³ I would point out that this is in many ways the situation in modern departments of classics. Plato is always taught before Achilles Tatius, Homer before Heliodorus. The reasoning behind the choice of texts is, presumably, much different, but I doubt a Byzantine would be exceptionally surprised at the average university classics curriculum.

III. "PHILIP THE PHILOSOPHER'S" ἘΡΜΗΝΕΥΜΑ

The cultural milieu of 10th-12th century Byzantine secular literature and its attendant criticism thus provides the most credible context for Philip's ἔρμηνευμα, and Philip focuses on the same qualities of the *Aethiopica* those men did: its style and potential for moral instruction. Accordingly, his ἔρμηνευμα divides itself neatly into an "ethical" section and an allegorical one. Further, Philip adopts the same admixture of pagan and Christian citation and archaizing tropes that the Komnenian literati explored. Philip, in the very first lines of his story, situates himself within a distinctly (Neo)Platonic tradition, before collocating citations from Plato and Hesiod with the *Song of Songs* and Pauline Epistles. Although Philip's ἔρμηνευμα may appear (and sometimes is) at the same time silly and tendentious,⁷⁴ his exegesis emphasizes a commitment to questions that are still central to modern literary criticism: What should be the relationship between the hermeneutic tools used to decipher a text and the text itself? What is the relationship between text and criticism? Philip's implicit response is that the source suggests a methodology, and that criticism is a tool for illuminating the mysteries of the text: the critic himself is a hermeneutic key to a text's deeper meanings. Given a goal, Philip appropriates (or fabricates) his own reading of Heliodorus' novel. Though his agenda is overt, by emphasizing the link between reader, text and interpretation "Philip" testifies to the sophistication of medieval literary criticism and interpretive practice.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Cf. Hunter 2005, 137: "Perhaps if he [Philip] had been set a different task he would have accomplished that too with equal ease."

⁷⁵ Cf. Stein 2010, 326: "Modern functional linguistics holds that all the work [of interpretation] is done by the reader (or comprehender, in more neutral parlance): the meanings are not 'in the text' in any passive ('autosemantic') sense, nor are they mysteriously and automatically given, with no constructor intervening."

Philip's choice of source material is fitting. The *Aethiopica*, with its fixation on, among other things, signs, oracles, etymologies and dreams, is a special case among the ancient novels, and especially apt for attempts at interpretation. Other ancient romances share an interest in hermeneutics,⁷⁶ but the *Aethiopica* takes up and amplifies the interest. Like Longus and Achilles Tatius, Heliodorus treats the explication of enigmas within the text; the *Aethiopica's* innovation is to treat the text itself as an enigma (a position Philip assumes as a basis for his exegesis). The romance all but insists its readers attempt to analyze it—and even offers up the tools for analysis. Near the beginning of the romance (2.35.25-30) an oracle delivers what is essentially a summary of the novel's plot in verse:

τὴν χάριν ἐν πρώτοις αὐτὰρ κλέος ὕστατ' ἔχουσιν
 φράζεσθ', ὦ Δελφοί, τὸν τε θεᾶς γενέτην·
 οἱ νηὸν προλιπόντες ἔμὸν καὶ κῦμα τεμόντες
 ἴζοντ' ἡελίου πρὸς χθόνα κυανέην,
 τῇ περ ἀριστοβίων μέγ' ἀέθλιον ἐξάψονται
 λευκὸν ἐπὶ κροτάφων στέμμα μαλαινομένων.

One who starts in grace and ends in glory, another goddess-
 born
 Of these I bid you have regard, O Delphi!
 Leaving my temple here and cleaving Ocean's swelling tides,
 To the black land of the Sun will they travel,
 Where they will reap the reward of those whose lives are passed
 in virtue:
 A crown of white on brows of black (trans. Morgan).

This oracle is part of Kalasiris' extended narrative to Knemon, as he relates the meeting and early adventures of Theagenes and Chariclea, delivered to him and witnessed by both Charicles and Theagenes. Heliodorus invites readers of his romance to participate in the interpretation of the story they are receiving from Kalasiris and the one about Theagenes and Chariclea that takes up the rest of the

⁷⁶ Longus and Achilles Tatius also centralize interpretation: the story of *Daphnis and Chloe* is presented as an extended commentary on a certain painting, and *Leucippe and Clitophon* too begins with an extended ekphrasis that serves as the inspiration for the succeeding narrative (1.1).

novel. Heliodorus has made his romance a deliberate challenge for the interpreter, suggesting at once a grander message in the romance as a whole (as Philip suggests), while at the same time emphasizing how slippery that message is to grasp.⁷⁷ For immediately after presenting the rest of novel in oracles, Heliodorus undercuts the reader's ability to come to a "correct" judgment:

ταῦτα μὲν ὡς ἀνεῖπεν ὁ θεός, ἀμηχανία πλείστη τοὺς περιεστῶτας εἰσεδύετο, τὸν χρησμὸν ὃ τι βούλοιο φράζειν ἀποροῦντας. ἄλλος γὰρ πρὸς ἄλλο τι τὸν λόγον ἔσπα, καὶ ὡς ἕκαστος εἶχε βουλήσεως, οὕτω καὶ ὑπελάμβανεν (2.36.1-4).

So spake the god, but the bystanders were completely nonplussed and quite at a loss to explain the meaning of the oracle. They each tried to extract a different interpretation from it; each understood it in a sense that matched his own wishes (trans. Morgan).

Philip's response to the φιλόλογοι is exactly the kind of response to the novel Heliodorus' romance solicits. Philip insists that there is one reading (his own) privileged above others, but the novel he ardently defends simultaneously endorses multiple interpretations and so undercuts a single, authoritative version. Philip, of course, does not acknowledge Heliodorus' ambivalence; rather, in his own way, Philip acknowledges the allegorical impetus within the romance and adapts it to suit an agenda where there *is* a single, correct reading.

⁷⁷ Cf. descriptions of Heliodorus in two modern critics: Doody in *The True Story of the Novel* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1975), called the novel a "hermeneutic sponge" (105), and J.R. Morgan in his 1996 article "Heliodorus," (in in *The Novel in Antiquity: A Handbook* edited by Gareth Schmeling, 417-456. Leiden: Leiden University Press 1996) a "hermeneutic hothouse" (445).

A: ORGANIZATION AND FRAME STORY

Philip's text divides neatly into three defined sections:

1. The initial frame story, ll. 1-35. Philip meets Niklaos, the "royal scribe,"⁷⁸ who right away asks Philip to defend *Chariclea* from the derision of the φιλόλογοι.
 - a. Philip initially hesitates (ll. 16-26)
 - b. And finally agrees to "play" Nikolaos' game with the announcement:
"παίζει καὶ πολιὰ, τὰ δὲ παίγνια σεμνὰ"
2. The ethical section, in which Philip uses the characters in the *Aethiopica* as a series of moral exempla. Philip begins with a brief narrative interlude followed by general warning to the φιλόλογοι, lest they try the book before they're ready. (ll. 27-37) He calls the book παιδαγωγική (pedagogical) and then singles out the novel's cast of characters into
 - a. Good men: Kalasiris, Theagenes, and Hydaspes.
 - b. Good women: Persina and CharicleaPhilip goes on to the pedagogical qualities of Kalasiris, and then he moves on to the moral example of Theagenes and Chariclea. He proceeds to the converse: the novel, "by presenting those who live blameworthy lives... puts upon evil the name it deserves." So much for the novel's "capacity for moral instruction."
3. The allegorical section. The first premise is that "Chariclea [the name itself] is a symbol of the soul and of the mind that sets the soul in order." Philip explains this by:
 - a. An etymological argument (Χαρικλεία = Χάρις + Κλέος) (ll.79-84)
 - b. A numerological argument (Based on the "holy" number seven; there are seven different letters in "Χαρικλεία") (84-92)

An allegory of Chariclea's (=the soul's) journey out of Ethiopia ("for man comes forth out of the invisible as if out of darkness into the light"), and through Greece ("proceeds to life in this world as she is taken to Greece"), and then back again through "the Egypt of ignorance" (92-131). The piece

⁷⁸ τὸν βασιλικὸν ἐπιγραφέα

breaks off before the exegesis is complete. Since Chariclea makes it back to Ethiopia eventually, the allegory must end similarly, as the soul “ascends,” in Neoplatonizing fashion, upward in contemplation back beyond Nous toward the One.

The opening lines of Philip’s story that establish the frame story closely imitate those of the pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus*. Here I reproduce L. Tarán’s side-by-side comparison:⁷⁹

<p>[211] [Plato], <i>Axiochus</i> 364 A 1–B 2 Ἐξιόντι μοι ἐς Κυνόσαργες καὶ γενομένω μοι κατὰ τὸν Ἰλισὸν διῆξε φωνὴ βοῶντός του. “Σώκρατες, Σώκρατες.” ὡς δὲ ἐπιστραφεὶς περιεσκόπουν ὁ- πόθεν εἶη. Κλεινίαν ὀρῶ τὸν Ἀξιόχου θεόντα ἐπὶ Καλλιπ- ρόην μετὰ Δάμωνος τοῦ μουσικοῦ καὶ Χαρμίδου τοῦ Γλαύκωνος ἤστην δὲ αὐτῶ ὁ μὲν διδάσκαλος τῶν κατὰ μουσικῆν. ὁ δ’ ἐξ ἑταιρείας ἔραστής ἅμα καὶ ἐρώμενος. ἄμφω προσφιλεστάτω ἐμοὶ ἐδόκει οὖν μοι ἀφεμένω τῆς εὐθύ ὁδοῦ ἀπαντᾶν αὐτοῖς. ὅπως ῥᾶστα ὁμοῦ γενοίμεθα.</p>	<p>Philip, Ἑρμῆνευμα, li. 3–8 Ἐξιόντι μοί ποτε τὴν πύλην Ῥηγίου τὴν ἐπὶ θάλατταν ἄγουσαν καὶ γενομένω κατὰ τὴν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης πηγὴν διῆξε φωνὴ βοῶντός τινος καὶ καλοῦντος με ἐξ ὀνό- ματος. ὡς δὲ περιστραφεὶς⁷⁷ Νικόλαον εἶδον τὸν βασι- λικὸν ὑπογραφέα³⁸ θεόντα ἐπὶ θάλλαταν μετὰ Ἀνδρέου τοῦ Φιλήτου.³⁹ ἤστην δὲ ἄμφω προσφιλεστάτω ἐμοὶ ὅτι μάλιστα. ἔδοξεν οὖν μοι ἀφεμένω τῆς ἐπὶ θάλλαταν ὁδοῦ ἀπαντῆσαι αὐτοῖς.</p>
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Figure 2: The introductions of the ἑρμῆνευμα and the *Axiochus* in Tarán 1992, 211

Philip’s text thus immediately identifies itself as both highly literate and pagan(izing); in so doing, he ties his essay into a Byzantine cultural tradition that had readopted the Hellenic past for greater cachet. The *Axiochus*, although not by Plato,⁸⁰ is an apt inspiration for Philip: it is a Platonizing *consolatio*,⁸¹ a dialogue delivered to the elderly Axiochus on his deathbed. Socrates consoles him, offering arguments of various philosophical schools (Platonic, Stoic, Epicurean) to comfort Axiochus. The imitation ends within those first few lines, but if Philip knew the

⁷⁹ Tarán 1992: 210.

⁸⁰ It is unlikely to have been regarded as spurious by its Byzantine readership though.

⁸¹ A genre that endured in popularity “from at least the third century BC to the end of the pagan world, before being adapted by Christian writers.” Cooper 1997, 1734.

Axiochus well enough to mimic it almost word-for-word, we may presume his ideal reader did as well. Readers of Philip's text—presumably the same φιλόλογοι reading Heliiodorus—would know within the first five lines what kind of essay to expect in content, strategy, and methodology. The choice of an obscure Platonic-style dialogue as source material proves Philip is learned (even arch)—he is conversant with the same classics as his contemporary literati, perhaps even more so, and likely a product of the same rhetorical and philosophical education; we can imagine Philip being one of the φιλόλογοι as a young man.

The *Axiochus* is also an apt thematic template. Philip cleverly establishes himself within a certain Neoplatonic discourse, but cannot help from slipping into others; he inherits arguments from rhetorical theory and Neopythagoreanism, as well as Neoplatonism, and blends these together to create his own kind of *consolatio*. Although the exegesis is incomplete, and breaks off at a point likely very near the end of the piece,⁸² we can, at least on the basis of literary form, fit Philip's essay into a certain context familiar to the Byzantine readers of the ancient novels.⁸³ Philip's piece is interesting beyond its attestation to allegorical/interpretive literature outside of Platonic philosophy or Homeric poetry. Rather, the text provides a unique view into a discourse where the mutual interaction of different cultural traditions and corresponding allegorical strategies creates a theoretical basis for interpretation, although not necessarily a very consistent one. The organization and choice of framing story establish his credibility on rhetorical and theoretical grounds as a man

⁸² Cf. Lambertson 1986, 156: "It is difficult to say how much is missing, though the analysis has brought us to the events of the eighth book of the ten that make up the novel, and may well be nearly complete."

⁸³ Cf. e.g. Roilos 2005, 121: "Psellos composed eight short allegorical treatises on ancient Greek themes. Half of these deal with specific Homeric passages; the rest address general mythological subjects. It has been persuasively argued that these works contain a considerable amount of Neoplatonic and Stoic elements."

of letters in the style of Byzantine antiquarians and philosophers.

Of course, choosing Plato as a model carries certain connotations. Philip takes on the role of Socrates; just as the one responds to particular demands made of him by Clinias in the *Axiochus*, so Philip must respond to particular demands made of him by Nikolaos. Just as Socrates uses various strategies from various philosophical schools to console Axiochus, Philip uses arguments from different schools to defend Chariclea. And yet as great as the parallels are between the two passages, even in these introductory lines Philip moves to suppress certain elements of the Platonic literary character. The greatest departure from the source material in Philip's story is to excise the characteristically homoerotic Platonic vocabulary of ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος and the nature of the relationship between Charmides and Clinias. By employing "Plato's" language, Philip thus acknowledges a literary debt to the Platonic tradition while at the same time distancing himself from something very Platonic. He sets his reader up to have specific expectations of a characteristic genre, and then quickly subverts them, a move that characterizes the interpretation as a whole: he appears to side firmly with one tradition, but then knocks out one of its main tenets, thereby leaving the interpretation in methodological limbo. Such a strategy means, among other things, that readers must pay careful attention, for this is a text in which things are seldom what they seem.

Philip adapts several other Platonic tropes and arguments into his text and makes essentially the same "appropriative" moves with them. The *Phaedrus* (a stylistic archetype for Achilles Tatius as well)⁸⁴ provides the scene—the elderly

⁸⁴ *Leucippe and Clitophon* 1.2:

καὶ ταῦτα δὴ λέγων δεξιούμαι τε αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπὶ τινος ἄλσους ἄγω γείτονος, ἔνθα πλάτανοι μὲν ἐπεφύκεσαν πολλοὶ καὶ πυκναί, παρέρρει δὲ ὕδωρ ψυχρὸν τε καὶ διαυγές, οἷον ἀπὸ χιόνος ἄρτι λυθείσης ἔρχεται. καθίσας οὖν αὐτὸν

Philip conversing with and educating the young φιλόλογοι. But Philip actually ends up inverting the original source material: the Socrates of the *Phaedrus* is only too willing to sit with the young man and listen to speeches about love.⁸⁵ But Philip takes some convincing. Initially unwilling, since “we [i.e. Philip] left these things behind, the milk, as it were, of our infant education, when we reached the philosophic time of life and went on to live in the temples of divine truth,”⁸⁶ he finally acquiesces, exhorting himself “since the sage said so” (κατὰ τὸν εἰπόντα σοφόν) that “even graybeards play, but the games are solemn.”⁸⁷ So Philip, playing the role of Socrates, reverses the opening story of the *Phaedrus* after calling overt verbal attention to it, the same trick he had performed with *Axiochus*.

To see Philip locating himself in the critical context of Byzantine philologoi, consider just the phrase “παίζει καὶ πολιά, τὰ δὲ παίγνια σεμνά”. The phrase stands out for two reasons: First, it marks a turning point in the narrative. This is the end of the introductory section; after a brief narrative interlude while Philip settles down in front of the φιλόλογοι, he begins his ethical defense of the novel in earnest. Secondly, the phrase is in and of itself unusual. Colonna puts the phrase in guillemets, and Lambertson in quotation marks. (This is natural because of the way

ἐπὶ τινος θώκου χαμαιζήλου καὶ αὐτὸς παρακαθιστάμενος ὥρα μοι ἔφην ἑτῆς τῶν λόγων ἀκροάσεως: πάντως δ' ὁ τόπος ἡδὺς καὶ μύθων ἄξιος ἐρωτικῶν.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Phaedrus* 227C-D: **Φ**: καὶ μὴν, ὦ Σώκρατες, προσήκουσα γέ σοι ἡ ἀκοή· ὁ γὰρ τοι λόγος ἦν, περὶ ὃν διετρίβομεν, οὐκ οἶδ' ὄντινα τρόπον ἐρωτικός....

Σ: ἔγωγ' οὖν οὕτως ἐπιτεθύμηκα ἀκούσαι, ὥστ' ἐὰν βαδίζων ποιῆ τὸν περίπατον Μέγαράδε καὶ κατὰ Ἡρόδικον προσβάς τῷ τείχει πάλιν ἀπίης, οὐ μὴ σου ἀπολειφθῶ.

Phaedrus: Indeed, Socrates, you are just the man to hear it [Lysias' speech]. For the discourse about which we conversed, was in a way, a love-speech....

Socrates: I am so determined to hear you, that I will not leave you, even if you extend your walk to Megara, and, as Herodicus says, go to the wall and back again (trans. Jowett).

⁸⁶ ταῦτα γὰρ οἶον γάλα τῆς νηπιώδους παρέντες παιδεύσεως ἐπὶ τὴν φιλόσοφον ἡλικίαν μετήλθομεν, εἴτα εἰς τὰ τῶν θεῶν δογματῶν νάκτορα εἰσφικίσθημεν, li. 18-21.

⁸⁷ παίζει καὶ πολιά, τὰ δὲ παίγνια σεμνά, 26.7.

Philip introduces the phrase: “well, since the sage said....”⁸⁸) Colonna and all other discussions of the piece that I know leave the phrase unattributed. A quick TLG search turns up a few interesting results, some of which we might assume influenced Philip.⁸⁹ The idea seems to have originated sometime during the 4th century, first in Libanius, epistle 23.1, to Basil:⁹⁰

Τί παθὼν Βασίλειος ἐδυσχέρανεν τὸ γράμμα, τῆς φιλοσοφίας τὸ γνῶρισμα; Παίζειν παρ’ ὑμῶν ἐδιδάχθημεν, ἀλλ’ ὅμως τὰ παίγνια σεμνὰ καὶ οἰονεὶ πολιὰ πρέποντα. Ἀλλὰ πρὸς τῆς φιλίας αὐτῆς καὶ τῶν κοινῶν διατριβῶν λῦσόν μοι τὴν ἀθυμίαν ἣν μοι ἔτεκεν ἡ ἐπιστολή....

What thing took Basil to be angry at my letter, a token of philosophy? For we were taught to play by you, but nevertheless the games are solemn, and as befit an old man. But by friendship herself and our common studies, release me from this dispiritedness which the letter bore for me (my translation).

Even more interestingly, we find the phrase almost verbatim in the letters (collected between 928 and 943) of a certain Nicetas Magister (fl. 10th c.), a hagiographer. What we know of him is very little, aside from scanty biographical information,⁹¹ one saint’s life (*De Ste. Theociste Lesbia in insula Paro*), and a collection of letters, *Epistulae ex Hellesponto*,⁹² written sometime after his exile from Constantinople in 928. He uses the phrase almost exactly the way Philip does twice, in ep. 28.9 and 31.28. The two letters are addressed respectively to one Sergios and to the Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos (r. 913-959). There is no way of telling which is earlier chronologically. Nicetas’ letter to Sergios begins with the author’s own writing

⁸⁸ ἀλλ’ ἐπειδη, κατὰ τὸν εἰπόντα σοφόν... (I. 26).

⁸⁹ It is possible that Philip’s interpretation was more impactful and influential than we know. We have no way of judging its circulation—or place or date of composition for that matter.

⁹⁰ Basil, who because he asserts that there was in fact a role for pagan literature in a Christian cultural milieu is an apt figure for Philip to imitate. Hunter 2005 argues that “Philip’s phraseology is very close to... Basil’s essay [*On Greek Literature*]” (126).

⁹¹ He was sent as an envoy to the Arabs of Crete by Leo VI (r. 866-912) and later exiled to the Hellespont c. 928.

⁹² For the text, see Westerlink 1973.

process:

Ἀλλὰ μὴ σκώψῃς παίζειν ἀκούων τοὺς γέροντας, καὶ γέροντας πολλοῖς τετραχωμένους δεινοῖς, ἐπεὶ καὶ τούτου καιρὸς, καὶ παίζει καὶ πολιὰ, καὶ παίγνιά που σεμνότερα. (28.1-11)

But do not mock when you hear that old men are playing games, and old men worn out by many dire things, since there is a time for this as well, and the gray-haired play, and the games are somewhat more solemn (my translation).

Presumably, then, Nicetas knew Basil,⁹³ and possibly knew him quite well, for Nicetas uses the same idea in another epistle. Epistle 31 begins with a discussion of the author's literary tastes, and how some literature affects him more than others:

Οἱ παλαιοὶ διηγούμενοι... ἀναφορᾶ τε χρῶνται καὶ βεβαιώσῃ καὶ πιστοῦνται τὰ πράγματα οὐ παριστῶντες ἀπὸ τῶν φύσεων ταῦτα καὶ πείθοντες αὐτοῖς ἐκείνοις τοῖς πράγμασιν, ἀλλὰ κηλοῦντες μόνον καὶ θέλοντες τοὺς ἀκούοντας. Εἰσάγουσί τε γὰρ, γλυκαίνειν ἐθέλοντες τὸν λόγον, ἱστορίας καὶ μύθους καὶ τὸ πολλάκις προσομιλεῖν τοῖς ἀψύχοις· ἃ κηλοῦν μὲν οἶδε τὰς ἀκοάς, οὐ λυσιτελεῖν δὲ πρὸς σωτηρίαν ψυχῆς. (31.2-6)

The ancients, in their stories... use anaphora and firmness and, to give credence to the facts, rather than present these things out of nature and persuade by the deeds themselves, they charm and delight the audience. Wishing to sweeten their narrative, they introduce stories and myths, and willingly converse with inanimate objects, all processes that can charm the ear well, but profit nothing to the salvation of the soul (my translation).

Nicetas lists two examples of pagan classics—two lines of Sappho (fr. 45, Bergk) and an excerpt from Herodotus 7.35—but pagan literature does not contribute to saving one's soul (οὐ λυσιτελεῖν δὲ πρὸς σωτηρίαν ψυχῆς), and Nicetas therefore “makes no to-do about it” (ἐγὼ δὲ τούτων μὲν οὐδενὸς λόγου ποιούμενος). He goes on to

⁹³ Perhaps coincidentally, Basil is also one of those we presume was reading the novels in the fourth century. See S. Trzaskoma and n. 31, above.

bewail his absence from the emperor with purple phrases like Χαίρω γὰρ καὶ ἀγάλλομαι προσομιλῶν σου τῇ γλυκύτητι καὶ συνεχῶς ἀσπαζόμενος, and ends his letter commenting on his own occasional difficulties with composition:

μὴ μέμψη, φιλάγαθε βασιλεῦ, γέροντα παῖξαι βουλόμενον· παίζει γὰρ καὶ πολιὰ, τὰ δὲ παίγνια παίγνια⁹⁴ σεμνά. (31.27-8)

Don't find fault with me, O Emperor my good man, being an old man wishing to play games. For even men with gray hair play, but the games are solemn games (my translation).

If we eliminate the second *παίγνια*, we have the exact phrase we hear later in Philip's words. Nicetas, unlike Philip, offers nothing to introduce the phrase. I think it more likely, based on the exact verbal reproduction and the fact that Philip identifies the phrase in his text as a quotation, that Philip knew Nicetas rather than vice-versa.⁹⁵ This would not only be a further testament to the extensiveness of Philip's bookshelf and rhetorical repertoire, but it would also help us establish a firmer date of composition. If the allusion to Nicetas is real, then we have at least established a new *terminus post quem* sometime in the 10th century for this piece.

The frame story in Philip's *ἐρμηνευμα* alerts the reader to a cultural tradition before the Philosopher himself begins changing the terms of his defense. Nevertheless, educated Byzantine readers would know, both from the initial imitation of the *Axiochus* and from other quotations, citations, and references hidden throughout the piece, that Philip too was a critic *par excellence*, and thus an interpreter *par excellence*. In a world where an appreciation of the stylistic graces of a piece are tantamount to an ability to see the other levels of the text, Philip proves he

⁹⁴ The second is possibly a dittography, although it is included in Westerlink's edition with no alternate readings given.

⁹⁵ There is also, of course, the question of who τὸν εἰπόντα actually refers to. Philip seems to have known a source for the quotation though.

can do both by appropriating a pastiche of earlier critical discourse for his own, defensive purposes.

B: PHILIP THE *RHETOR*

The next section of the text (ll. 35ff), in which Philip begins his actual defense of the novel, is defined by two methodological techniques, both familiar from the introductory frame story. Philip here draws equal inspiration from Byzantine rhetorical practice, particularly the exercise of *ethopoiia* (“character study”), and tenets of reading and interpretation familiar from Byzantine and Neoplatonic modes of reading. Philip’s hermeneutic strategy begins as a detailed *explication de texte*, adopting a familiar methodological strategy of understanding a text first by a thorough understanding of the author’s own words: Heliodorus should be able to explain Heliodorus.⁹⁶ The ethical section draws its inspiration especially from Byzantine literary judgment: as Philip is a representative of the critic and exegete, so too the φιλόλογοι who are “treating [*Chariclea*] scornfully” are characteristic readers of the novels (or Platonic dialogues), and more particularly the kinds of students not yet prepared for higher literary or philosophical studies. Naturally, Philip’s ethical section blends methodologies as Philip makes arguments that would be at home in a Byzantine rhetorical school that used Neoplatonizing methodologies.

Philip, by his use of citation and imitation in the first 35 lines of the essay, has tipped the perceptive reader off to his rhetorical acumen and facility with centuries of lesser-known literature. In the following 44 lines he moves explicitly into the

⁹⁶ An interpretive principle derived ultimately from Aristarchus—Homer should explain Homer. Cf. the preface to Porphyry’s *Homeric Questions*: “Frequently in our conversation... questions concerning Homer arise, and while I try to show that although he regularly provides the explanation of his own verses, we, because of our childhood instruction, read into him rather than reflect upon what he is saying.” (μάλλον ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις ἢ νοοῦμεν ἃ λέγει) Quoted in Hunter 2005: 123.

realm of rhetorical criticism: his arguments and his mode of reading are coordinate with those made by the Byzantine readers of novels (see chapter 2). Philip especially echoes Michael Psellus in his attitude to the text and its ideal student. Most important is his emphasis on σωφροσύνη and the didactic qualities of the novel's rhetoric. Compare Psellus, *de Chariclea et Leucippe Iudicium (Synkrisis)*, 49-53:

καὶ τό γε θαυμασιώτερον ὅτι ἐν ὑγρῷ οὕτω καὶ διακεχυμένῳ συγγράμματι τὸ συνεστηκός τε καὶ οἷον αὐθαδὲς τῆς σωφροσύνης ἐτήρησε καὶ τὴν τῆς Χαρικλείας ψυχὴν ἅπαξ κατασπᾶσας εἰς ἔρωτα ἀπὸ τῆς πανδήμου ταύτην Ἀφροδίτης τετήρηκε, οὐδ' ἐν οἷς νενίκητο ἀποσεισασμένην τὸ ἔννομον.

Still more remarkable that in a novel so moist and well irrigated he preserved the firm and, as it were, stubborn quality of chastity (σωφροσύνη) and when he had once drawn Chariclea's soul down to love, he protected it from ordinary lust, and even in defeat she did not divest herself of orderly behavior (trans. Dyck).

And Philip, ll. 52-57:

σωφροσύνην δὲ αὐτός τε ἐκδιδάσκει τὴν Ῥοδῶπιν φυγῶν καὶ Κνήμων Δημαινέτης τὸν ἄθεσμον ἔρωτα, πάντων δὲ μάλιστα Θεαγένης τε καὶ Χαρίκλεια, ὧν ὁ μὲν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν τὴν ἐρωμένην σωφρόνως διέκειτο καὶ τῇ Ἀρσαάκῃ μανικῶς ἐρώσῃ οὔτε θωπευόμενος ὑπεῖξεν οὔτε μὴν μαστιγούμενος· τῇ δὲ τοσοῦτον περιῆν τὸ τῆς σωφροσύνης, ὡς κὰν τοῖς ὀνειροῖς τὴν μετὰ τοῦ ἔραστοῦ ὁμιλίαν ἀπηύχετο.

He [Kalasiris] also teaches self-restraint in fleeing Rhodopis, as does Knemon fleeing the illicit love of Demainete. Most of all, however, Theagenes and Chariclea are models of self-restraint, he by acting with restraint toward the woman he loves and refusing to give in to Arsace, who is insanely in love with him, either when she fawns on him or when she has him whipped. For her part, Chariclea was so clothed in self-restraint that she avoided intercourse with her lover even in dreams and fantasies (trans. Lamberton).

Both Philip and Psellus identify the didactic⁹⁷ qualities of the novel and its ability to teach students valuable lessons. Yet both emphasize too the necessity of the proper approach and guide to the material.

C: PHILIP THE PHILOSOPHER

Philip's philosophical arguments, while they share common vocabulary and imagery with the Neoplatonists, especially Plotinus, are rooted in the novel itself. Philip plays a role in his own *ἐρμήνευμα* as a "wise man" privy to unseen levels of truth in the novel. Kalasiris plays a closely analogous role in the *Aethiopica*, as he relates and interprets the lengthy story of Theagenes and Chariclea to Knemon in books 2-5. Kalasiris allegorizes their meeting, just as Philip does. First, Kalasiris hypothesizes two kinds of (Egyptian) "wisdom" (σοφία), each of which looks to different kinds of knowledge. One is dangerous (it is essentially witchcraft), the other is the kind which "looks to the heavens" (πρὸς τὰ οὐράνια βλέπει), which requires a teacher like Kalasiris (or Philip) to understand.⁹⁸ Philip's long years of study translate into access to a story's higher meaning, which he as a qualified

⁹⁷ Or, "pedagogical." Cf. Philip, 37: παιδαγωγική γὰρ ἡ βίβλιος.

⁹⁸ Kalasiris' explanation is as follows: ἡ μὲν [σοφία] γὰρ τίς ἐστι δημώδης, καὶ ὡς ἂν τις εἴποι, χαμαὶ ἐρχομένη, εἰδώλων θεράπεινα καὶ περὶ σώματα νεκρῶν εἰλουμένη... πρὸς οὐδὲν ἀγαθὸν τέλος οὔτε αὐτὴ προσιοῦσα οὔτε τοὺς χρωμένους φέρουσα.... ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα, τέκνον, ἡ ἀληθῶς σοφία, ἣς αὐτὴ παρωνύμως εἰρηθεύθη, ἣν ἱερεῖς καὶ προφητικὸν γένος ἐκ νέων ἀσκοῦμεν, ἄνω πρὸς τὰ οὐράνια βλέπει, θεῶν συνόμιλος καὶ φύσεως κρειττόνων μέτοχος... πάντα δὲ πρὸς τὸ καλὸν καὶ ὃ τι ἀνθρώποις ὠφέλιμον ἐπιτηδεύουσα, δι' ἣν ἀγῶ τῆς ἐνεγκούσης εἰς καιρὸν ἐξέστην... (3.16.11-27).

There is one kind [of wisdom] that is of low rank and, you might say, crawls upon the earth; it waits upon ghosts and skulks around dead bodies...no good ever comes of it; no benefit ever accrues to its practitioners.... But there is another kind, my son, true wisdom, of which the first sort is but a counterfeit that has stolen its title; true wisdom it is that we priests and members of the sacerdotal caste practice from childhood; its eyes are raised towards heaven; it keeps company with the gods and partakes of the nature of the Great Ones.... And this wisdom was the cause of my timely departure from the land of my birth... (Trans. Morgan).

teacher can pass along to the qualified student.⁹⁹ As in Byzantine criticism, the skill of the interpreter is critical to a text's proper understanding, or at least a higher one; Philip is like Psellus is like Kalasiris, each a skilled interpreter of the semiology of literature and reality.

This kind of adaptation of his source material (as is perhaps suggested by the sources themselves) is indicative of Philip's protreptic agenda. While Kalasiris characterizes his kind of privileged knowledge with a reverent and visual metaphor (ή σοφία... πρὸς τὰ οὐράνια βλέπει), Philip's ἐρμηνευμα—and the ascent (or perhaps more appropriately, descent) into deeper understanding of the novel—is, instead of an inquiry into celestial truths, rather a gradual undressing of Chariclea the maiden. Philip starts with certain premises of narration and interpretation suggested in the novel, yet ends in a place very distant from the religious atmosphere of the novel and fastidious propriety of its characters. It is characteristic of Philip to adapt and refract hermeneutic strategies derived from the novel in ways that seem at odds with the probity of the source material: consistency is not a part of his agenda. Rather, his ἐρμηνευμα is protreptic: to direct the φιλόλογοι from a reproachful reading of *Chariclea* to an enlightened one. Leaving the erotic aspect of the novel as a theme in his own interpretive essay—likening the unveiling of the novel's hidden meaning to removing Chariclea's clothes—seems an apt way for Philip to get the young φιλόλογοι interested in what he has to say, and one can easily imagine them crowding around for a better listen as Philip describes Chariclea's (and of course, *Chariclea's*) denuding.

⁹⁹ Note too that Kalasiris is here narrating the story of Theagenes and Chariclea, and interpreting his words for Knemon; we readers of course have no way of verifying Kalasiris' account (even though Kalasiris' later praise of "the lie" (τὸ ψεῦδος) all but begs the reader to try). Kalasiris could be dealing with a fictionalized erotic romance as Philip is.

Philip treats his other sources in much the same way: he adapts allegorical and interpretive strategies from Neoplatonism, Neopythagoreanism and other literary exegetes to his own apologetic purposes. Plotinus informs a great deal of Philip's philosophical language and imagery, especially in the initial simile comparing the novel to Circe's potion.¹⁰⁰ Approaching the text "in the manner of Odysseus" (κατ' Ὀδυσσέα) is an appropriate symbol for allegorical reading, following precedents like Porphyry's essay *de Antro Nympharum (de Ant.)*, which allegorizes Odysseus' journey as that of the soul. The language of the ἐρμήνευμα echoes that of *Enneads* 5.9.1 and Plotinus' discussion of "the ordering" of the soul.¹⁰¹ There are further echoes of Neoplatonic literary criticism when Philip begins his talk of "the material dyad," a trope familiar especially from *de Ant.* The metaphor of the ocean as the world of matter and the soul (ψύχη) striving to escape it links Philip's text to Porphyry's. Yet characteristically, the firm Neoplatonic *topos* coexists comfortably alongside a Neopythagorean one.¹⁰² Philip's "philosophical" reading

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Ennead* 1.6.8: ὁ ἐχόμενος τῶν καλῶν σωμάτων καὶ μὴ ἀφίεις οὐ τῷ σώματι, τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ καταδύσεται εἰς σκοτεινὰ καὶ ἀτεροπῆ τῷ νῷ βάθη, ἔνθα τυφλὸς ἐν Ἄιδου μένων καὶ ἐνταῦθα κάκει σκιαίς συνέσται.... Τίς οὖν ἡ φυγή καὶ πῶς; Ἀναξόμεθα οἷον ἀπὸ μάγου Κίρκης φησὶν ἢ Καλυψοῦς Ὀδυσσεὺς αἰνιττόμενος, δοκεῖ μοι, μείναι οὐκ ἄρρεσθεῖς, καίτοι ἔχων ἡδονὰς δι' ὀμμάτων καὶ κάλλει πολλῶ ἀισθητῶ συνών. "So, too, one that is held by material beauty and will not break free shall not be precipitated, not in body but in Soul, down to the dark depths loathed of the Intellectual-Being, where, blind even in the Lower-World, he shall have a commerce only with shadows, there as here... But what is this flight? How are we to gain the open sea? For Odysseus is surely a parable to us when he commands the flight from the sorceries of Circe or Calypso—not content to linger for all the pleasure offered to his eyes and all the delight of sense filling his days." (Trans. MacKenna)

¹⁰¹ οἱ δὲ ἤρθησαν μὲν ὀλίγον ἐκ τῶν κάτω κινούντος αὐτοὺς πρὸς τὸ κάλλιον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡδέος τοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς κρείττονος, δυνατήσαντες δὲ ἰδεῖν τὸ ἄνω, ὡς οὐκ ἔχοντες ἄλλο, ὅπου στήσονται, κατηνέχθησαν σὺν τῷ τῆς ρετῆς ὀνόματι ἐπὶ πρᾶξις καὶ τῶν κάτω, ἀφ' ὧν ἐπεχείρησαν τὸ πρῶτον αἰρεσθαι. Τρίτον δὲ γένος θεῶν ἀνθρώπων δυνάμει τε κρείττονι καὶ ὀξύτερι ὀμμάτων εἶδε τε ὡσπερ ὑπὸ ὀξυδορκίας τὴν ἄνω αἴγλην καὶ ἤρθη τε ἐκεῖ οἷον ὑπερὸ ὠβρεathing?εφῶν καὶ τῆς ἐνταῦθα χλύος καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐκεῖ τὰ τῆδε ὑπεριδὸν πάντα ἡσθὲν τῷ τόπῳ ληθινῶ καὶ οἰκείῳ ὄντι, ὡσπερ ἐκ πολλῆς πλάνης εἰς πατρίδα εὖνομον φικόμενος ἄνθρωπος.

"Others do indeed lift themselves a little above the earth; the better in their soul urges them from the pleasant to the nobler, but they are not of power to see the highest and so, in despair of any surer ground, they fall back in virtue's name, upon those actions and options of the lower from which they sought to escape. But there is a third order—those godlike men who, in their mightier power, in the keenness of their sight, have clear vision of the splendour above and rise to it from among the cloud and fog of earth and hold firmly to that other world, looking beyond all here, delighted in the place of reality, their native land, like a man returning after long wanderings to the pleasant ways of his own country." (Trans. MacKenna)

¹⁰² Tarán cites the Neopythagorean influence on Philip's desire that Chariclea's name represent the number 777 Cf. Tarán 1992, 77-9 and 94, n79. Tarán notes the "Neopythagorean influence on our author [Philip], as is... shown by his calling

of *Chariclea* is methodologically similar to his ethical interpretation: he begins from principles derived from the novel and appropriates and conflates various traditions—Christian, pagan, Neoplatonic, Neopythagorean—to suit his own apologetic purposes.

Adapting Heliodorus' serpentine narrative to a singular and consistent allegory is a dubious enterprise. Ascertaining a text's "higher" levels of meaning, that is, working hermeneutically and not proairetically,¹⁰³ is an effort at uncovering something hidden (something that the novel hints is there). After all, Philip embarks on his defense of *Chariclea* "for the sake of truth herself!" (ἐνεκα καὶ ἀληθείας αὐτῆς).¹⁰⁴ Yet Philip's apologetic and didactic speech suggests that the truth depends on the skill of the interpreter, as appreciation of the truth depends on the readiness of the student. Though he works with an overt purpose different from that of Neoplatonic synthesizers like Porphyry and Proclus, we might easily imagine Philip nodding earnestly if and when he read Proclus on the Republic:

Therefore myths incite those who are naturally more intelligent to a desire for the theory hidden within them and through their apparent monstrosities (διὰ τὴν φαινομένην τερατολογίαν) incite them to

seven μυστικός and παρθένος" (78). Tarán cites parallel passages in Philo of Alexandria, "in which we also find explicit the connection of *septem* with σεπτά" (77). And Nicomachus, *apud* [Iamblichum], *Theologoumena Arithmeticae* p. 57, 13-20 De Falco: "The Pythagoreans say that *hepta* is not like the other numbers, but worthy of reverence; they call it *septa*. Just so Poros the Pythagorean says in his *On the Number Seven*. On which account, he says that on purpose they express *hex* (six) through the pronunciation of the *kappa* and *sigma* (for these are heard together in *ksi* (ξί)) in order that in the continuous sequence the sigma is assimilated to *hepta*, so that, imperceptibly, *septa* is pronounced." (ὅτι τὴν ἑπτάδα οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι οὐχ ὁμοίαν τοῖς ἄλλοις φασὶν ἀριθμοῖς. ἀλλὰ σεβασμοῦ φασὶν ἄξιαν· ἀμέλει σεπτάδα προσηγόρευον αὐτήν. καθὰ καὶ Πῶρος ὁ Πυθαγορικὸς ἐν τῷ Περὶ τῆς ἑβδομάδος φησί· διὸ καὶ ἐξεπίτηδες τὸ ἕξ διὰ τῆς ἐκφωνήσεως τοῦ κάππα καὶ σίγμα (ταῦτα γὰρ ἐν τῷ ξί συνεξακούεσθαι) ἐκφέρουσιν, ἵν' ἐν τῇ συνεχεῖ καθ' εἰρμόν ἐπιφορᾷ τὸ σίγμα συνάπτηται τῷ ἑπτά. ὥστε λεληθότως ἐκφωνεῖσθαι σεπτά.)

¹⁰³ Taken from Barthes' five codes in *S/Z* (1970). The "hermeneutic" code unravels the "enigmas" of the text; the proairetic code is the "empirical" voice of the text—reading for the plot.

¹⁰⁴ And, somewhat typically, one of the characters central to Philip's interpretation is Kalasiris, noted for his "mendacity" both by Philip and modern critics. See esp. Winkler 1982, 93-158.

search for the truth that lies enshrined in the sanctuaries of the myths...¹⁰⁵

IV: CONCLUSIONS

Heidegger's generalizing claim that all art is in some sense allegorical would have resonated with "Philip the Philosopher," and might have seemed too obvious to mention.¹⁰⁶ To return to Sallustius, and the epigram at the beginning of this thesis, the universe itself becomes a text to interpret. Skill comes not so much from knowing where to look as how. Interpretation is necessarily tied to the reception of a text. That reception is circumscribed by the reader's "horizon of expectation," a social phenomenon that dictates the terms on which a reader is conditioned to interact with a text. Byzantine critics like Photius, Michael Psellus and Philip the Philosopher conditioned reader expectations on stylistic and moralistic grounds. Philip takes this one step farther: the prepared reader can access even deeper levels of a text with the proper training and the proper interpreter.

Philip was almost certainly a Christian writing in a pagan tradition for a Christian audience brought up reading pagan literature. The Byzantine empire maintained this kind of milieu for a thousand years, and it is thus likely that Philip

¹⁰⁵ Proc. In R. pp. 85.26-86.5, ed. W. Kroll (1899; repr. Amsterdam 1965) in Sandy 1982, 155.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. M. Heidegger 1971, 19-20: "The art work is, to be sure, a thing that is made, but it says something other than the mere thing itself is, ἄλλο ἀγορεύει. The work makes public something other than itself; it manifests something other; it is an allegory. In the work of art something other is brought together with the thing that is made. To bring together is, in Greek, συμβάλλειν. The work is a symbol." Roilos 2005 also treats this passage. While he believes the formulation is of "some theoretical value," nevertheless Heidegger's "assertion is based on a rather forced 'ab-use' of the term and concept of allegory" (139). (Philip himself uses the term σύμβολον to describe Chariclea, which is coordinate with his allegorical interpretation of *Chariclea* l. 79.)

belongs to that tradition, probably sometime between the 10th and 12th centuries, during which time authors began to produce similarly classicizing works with a similar mixture of pagan and Christian citation. Philip himself sounds like Michael Psellus, who praised the *Aethiopica* on similar terms, against critics who seem similar to Philip's φιλόλογοι. Philip's interpretation, though it sits comfortably in a Byzantine context, looks remarkably modern in retrospect, as the reader (= the interpreter) appropriates the text for his/her own purposes—writing a thesis or defending a novel. If Philip's work is sometimes silly, tendentious or both, it nevertheless demonstrates a very serious current in Byzantine thinking. Sallustius was right: the cosmos is full of hidden meaning. It is up to philosophers like Plato, Psellus and Philip to expose it, parodically or not.

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