

Metaphor and the riddle of representation in the *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri*

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It is characteristic of philosophical writing that it must continually confront the question of representation.

Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*.

Aristotle says that metaphor is ‘the application of a word that belongs to another thing: either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy’.¹ Studies of metaphors in specific texts – such as those considered in the present volume – are, on the whole, served well by the sort of definition Aristotle offers. But that Aristotelian definition, in presupposing that proper names belong to their objects, raises some awkward questions about naming and essence. And those questions become more threatening if the metaphors to be considered are found in fiction. Ken Dowden’s chapter raises the possibility of fiction as a reconfiguration of the narratives of our own lives, and as an instructive defamiliarisation of our own individually felt experience. This is no doubt true, but it is also disconcerting: if a fictional text can itself be seen as a kind of metaphor, what are the consequences for the metaphors we discern within it?

The *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri* (*History of Apollonius King of Tyre*) is a late work of ancient fiction but it might serve as a useful coda to the ancient novels preceding it in quite another way – by prompting thought about the metaphorical nature of an entire work of fiction, in tandem with the metaphors it contains. That concern will be central to this paper, as it is cen-

¹ Aristotle *Poetics* 1457b. Boys-Stones 2003 contains important discussions of metaphor in ancient thought. Ricoeur 1977 examines the role of metaphor on a ‘macro-level’ in literary discourse.

tral to the *Historia Apollonii* itself.² The story is about riddles and the kind of riddle involved is really a highly flagged metaphor: an expression or set of expressions which conventionally denote one thing being used in order to refer to something else. It will also become clear that the riddles in this text exemplify – and stand in parallel to – a more general notion of representation.

Indeed a riddling exchange occurs at the beginning of the *Historia Apollonii* – between Antiochus’ daughter and her nurse. This takes place just after the daughter has been raped by her own father:

Puella vero stans dum miratur scelesti patris impietatem, fluentem sanguinem coepit celare: sed guttae sanguinis in pavimento ceciderunt. (2) Subito nutrix introivit cubiculum. Ut vidit puellam flebili vultu, asperso pavimento sanguine, roseo rubore perfusam, ait ‘quid sibi vult iste turbatus animus?’ Puella ait ‘cara nutrix, modo in hoc cubiculo duo nobilia perierunt nomina.’ Nutrix ignorans ait ‘domina, quare hoc dicis?’ Puella ait ‘ante legitimam mearum nuptiarum diem saevo scelere violatam vides.’ Nutrix ut haec audivit atque vidit, exhorruit atque ait ‘quis tanta fretus audacia virginis reginae maculavit thorum?’ Puella ait ‘impietas fecit scelus.’ Nutrix ait ‘cur ergo non indicas patri.’ Puella ait ‘et ubi est pater?’ et ait ‘cara nutrix, si intellegis quod factum est: periit in me nomen patris...

HA 1–2

The girl stood in amazement at the impiety of her wicked father, and then began to hide the flowing blood. But drops of blood fell on the floor. Suddenly her nurse came into the bedroom. When she saw the girl’s tearful face and the blood on the floor she said ‘Why are you so upset?’ The girl said ‘Dear nurse, two noble names have found ruin in this bedroom. Still unaware the nurse said ‘My girl what are you talking about?’ The girl said ‘You see me violated before the legitimate day of my wedding by a violent crime. Now the nurse had heard and seen this evidence, she shuddered and said ‘Who has been so bold as to stain the

² Kortekaas 2004, Schmeling 1996, Schmeling 1998, Schmeling 1999, and Puche López 1997, 1–90 (a detailed account of the work introducing a modern Spanish translation) are very useful surveys of the *HA* with penetrating critical observations and recent bibliography.

bed of a virgin princess?’ The girl said ‘*Impietas* committed the crime’ The nurse said ‘So why do you not reveal it to your father?’ The girl said ‘And where is my father?’ and then, ‘Dear nurse, if you can understand what has happened, the name of my father has perished in me.’

The painful, enigmatic revelation of this kind is a form of literary convention.³ But there is also an important ethical dimension to Antiochus’ daughter’s riddling.⁴ *Impietas*, the negation of family and religious norms, is both the prompt for the questions the nurse asks Antiochus’ daughter, and the solution to them.⁵ Riddles will have a special significance in this text, which accumulates as the story develops. The first to be formally posed is the grim brainteaser King Antiochus presents to his daughter’s suitors:

scelere vehor, materna carne vescor, quaero fratrem meum, meae matris virum, uxoris meae filium <et> non invenio.

HA 4

‘I ride on crime; I feed on a mother’s flesh; I seek my brother, my mother’s husband, my daughter’s son; I do not find them.’

The puzzle is correctly solved by Apollonius:

³ The way Livy’s Lucretia baffles her husband in recounting her rape by Tarquin is comparable: *quarentique viro... ‘Minime’ inquit; ‘quid enim salvi est mulieri amissa pudicitia? Vestigia viri alieni, Collatine, in lecto sunt tuo; ceterum corpus est tantum violatum, animus insons; mors testis erit. sed date dexteras fidemque haud impune adultero fore. Sex. est Tarquinius qui hostis pro hospite priore nocte vi armatus mihi sibi, si vos viri estis, pestiferum hinc abstulit gaudium’* Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 1, 58, 7–11 [‘Not at all well’ she said to her husband when he asked her, ‘What can be well with a woman who has lost her honour? The traces of another man, Collatinus, are in your bed; but only my body has been raped, my soul is unharmed. Death will be my witness. But give your right hands and pledge that the adulterer will not go unpunished. It is Sextus Tarquin who came last night, an enemy in the guise of a guest, and took his pleasure, to my ruin – and to his – if you are men.’]

⁴ Schmeling 1989 surveys approaches to morality in the *HA*; see also Chiarini 1983.

⁵ On riddles in antiquity (which are not entirely confined to *symposia* and recreation), see West 1996. The oracle in Herodotus 1,67 is in effect a riddle issued in a sacral context; the riddle of the Sphinx solved by Sophocles’ Oedipus is certainly worth recalling here for its connections with death and incest. Schmeling 1998, 3288–91 is a probing assessment of the role of riddles in the *HA*.

Iuvenis accepta quaestione paululum discessit a rege; quam cum sapienter scrutaretur, favente deo invenit quaestionis solutionem; ingressusque ad regem sic ait: ‘domine rex, proposuisti mihi quaestionem; audi ergo solutionem. Quod dixisti: ‘scelere vehor’, non est mentitus: te respice. Et quod dixisti: ‘maternam carnem vescor’ nec et hoc mentitus es: filiam tuam intuere’.

HA 4

The young man took the question and in a while departed from the king’s company. After he had wisely examined it, he found the solution to it by favour of God. (4) He set out to the king and spoke thus ‘My lord king you set me a question. Therefore hear its solution. When you said ‘I ride on a crime’ you did not lie, look to yourself. When you said ‘I feed on a mother’s flesh’ you did not lie about this either: look to your own daughter.’

This mention of divine help (*favente deo*) involved in this solution is made in all the versions of this text.⁶ King Antiochus refuses to admit that Apollonius is right and gives him thirty days to come up with a new answer (at the same time he contrives to kill him). Apollonius goes home and checks on the answer he gave:

et aperto scrinio codicum suorum inquisivit quaestiones omnium philosophorum omniumque Chaldaeorum. Et dum aliud non invenisset nisi quod cogitaverat, ad semet ipsum locutus et dicens ‘Quid agis, Apolloni? Quaestionem regis solvisti, filiam eius non accepisti, sed ideo dilatus es, ut neceris.’⁷

HA 6

⁶ Recent editions include Tsitsikli 1981, Kortekaas 1984, Kortekaas 2004, Schmelting 1988.

⁷ The sentence that follows *Atque ita onerari praecepit naves frumento* (‘And so he orders his ships to be loaded with provisions’) after the deliberative *Quid agis?* quoted here shows that this passage echoes Virg. *Aen.* 4,283–89: *heu quid agat? ... /Mnesthea Segestumque vocat fortemque Serestum, /classem aptent taciti sociosque ad litora cogant* [Oh what should he do?... he calls Mnestheus, Segestus and brave Serestus: let them make ready the fleet in silence, marshal the crews down to the shore.]

He opened his bookcase and consulted the riddles of all the philosophers and all the Chaldaeans. And when he found nothing apart from what he had already worked out, he said to himself ‘What are you doing, Apollonius? You solved the king’s riddle, you didn’t win his daughter and you are being fobbed off so that you can be killed.

Riddles are not commonly associated with philosophy in ancient literature.⁸ But in the *Historia Apollonii* the Latin word *quaestio* (which the narrator and speakers in this text use for ‘riddle’) has more intellectual connotations. A scholastic patina was already apparent in the language of the passage previously quoted (from 4): *sapienter scrutaretur* (‘he wisely examined’); *proposuisti mihi quaestionem; audi ergo solutionem* (‘you set me a question; now hear its solution’). Moreover, in the passage here the mentions of Apollonius’ bookcase and especially of the Chaldaeans serve to elevate the status of riddles. The *quaestiones Chaldaeorum* must refer to the Chaldaean oracles: these oracles, which were cited by Iamblichus and later neo-Platonists, offered a guide to oracular doctrine, cosmology and theurgy.⁹

This attempt, early in the work, to ennoble riddles appears to stand in tension with the fact that the romance contains a number of riddles, set pieces in hexameter verse, from the *Aenigmata* of Symphosius. Symphosius was the reputed author of a collection of a hundred riddles, each in three hexameter lines.¹⁰ That collection probably dates from the 4th–5th century AD. Symphosius’ verse preface disavows that what follows has any high cultural or intellectual value: the author says he composed his verses ‘off the cuff’ during the Saturnalia and that they contain no *sapientia* (‘philosophical wisdom’):

hoc versus feci subito † e carmine vocis †. 15: ex tempore vocis (?)
 insanos inter sanum non esse necesse est.
 da veniam, lector, quod non sapit ebria Musa.

Symphosii Scholastici *Aenigmata*: Praefatio 15–17¹¹

⁸ Petronius’ narrator mocks Hermeros’ pathetic attempts to display erudition with his knowledge of riddles in *Satyricon* 58,8. Plutarch (*Moralia* 2,988a) noted that ignorant people turn to riddles as a form of after-dinner amusement.

⁹ For a text of the Chaldaean oracles, see Majerjik 1989.

¹⁰ For the text, see Shackleton Bailey 1982, 202–34; for Symphosius’ relation to the *HA*, Muñoz Jiménez 1987.

¹¹ *ex tempore vocis* is my conjecture for the end of 15.

I made these verses up suddenly as I came out with them. There's no need to be sensible in insensible company. Grant pardon, reader, for a drunken Muse not showing any wisdom.

But the writer of the *Historia Apollonii*, by reframing some of Symphosius' riddles in the context of his story, manages to endow them with a kind of intellectual profundity which they do not possess when considered on their own.

Thus riddles might provide one part of the key which helps to interpret this romance. Riddles carry the narrative forward at every turn – even when they are not formal set pieces. Consider even the way Antiochus' henchman asks a question and how he is answered when he comes to Tyre in search of Apollonius:

supervenit Taliarchus, qui a rege Antiocho missus fuerat ad necandum iuvenem. Qui ut vidit omnia clausa, ait cuidam puero 'indica mihi, si valeas, quae est haec causa, quod civitas ista in luctu moratur?' Cui puer ait 'o hominem inprobum! scit et interrogat! quis est enim qui nesciat, ideo hanc civitatem in luctu esse, quia princeps huius patriae nomen Apollonius reversus ab Antiochia subito nusquam comparuit?'

HA 7

Taliarchus arrived who had been sent by Antiochus to kill the young man. When he saw everything was closed, he said to a boy: 'Reveal to me, if you are up to it, what is the cause of this? Why is this nation stuck in mourning?'

The boy said to him 'O foolish man! He knows and yet he asks! For who could there be who does not know that this state is in mourning because the leader of this country, Apollonius, by name, came back from Antioch and is suddenly nowhere to be found?'

And in the recognition scene, at a climactic part of the story when Apollonius and his daughter are unwittingly reunited, riddles play a very prominent part. Tarsia goes down to the hold of the ship, where Apollonius, stubborn and suicidal at the loss of his family, refuses any company or consolation. She insists that she will not leave until he undoes the knot of her riddles (41). He solves the first and she sets him nine more, which Apollonius solves only

because he is desperate for her to leave. All the riddles Tarsia goes on to present are found in Symphosius, but their sequence is cleverly arranged by the narrator to provide a set of images to mirror Apollonius' condition in a kind of *mise en abyme*. But the biggest riddle, of course, is that of their identity – which Apollonius and Tarsia only establish at the end of the scene. In anger at her refusal to depart from his company, the father strikes his daughter (*HA* 44). Disturbingly for the reader, the blood flowing from Tarsia's nose recalls the image of the lost virginity of the daughter of Antiochus. But the significance of is bound to be lost on Apollonius. Instead, his aggression prompts Tarsia to lament her consistent bad luck as she tells the sad story of her life. This enables the recognition to occur and Apollonius to declare 'You are my daughter, Tarsia' (45).

Representation itself is a riddle: it can only be conceived in a way that is effectively metaphorical. The function of representation is to *re-present* something; whatever is represented can never be present. There is never access to the 'presence' which is the supposed object of representation; just as one cannot apprehend the elements of a story without the narrative that conveys them.¹² Ideas of presence are really generated by, and have their origin in, representation. Preoccupation with the 'riddle' of representation is by no means confined to philosophy and theories of meaning.¹³ A father conceived as an absent presence or present absence is of particular interest in post-Freudian theory – such puzzles and paternal perplexities befall both Apollonius and Antiochus – but the point I am trying to hammer home is that the paradox of representation is a fundamental part of human life, as numerous studies of language and ethnographic surveys now suggest.¹⁴ It is worth hammering this home in case anyone is tempted to regard application

¹² Heidegger 1962 (e.g. 1,1.5, 35 at 211–4) has provided the principal source for post-structuralists critiques of 'presence' in philosophy and literary theory. But the problem was always an element of ancient theories and practices of *mimesis* and *imitatio*. For a play on *praesens* in Apuleius' *Met.*, see Laird 1993, 168. Williams 1988 offers a historical definition of representation.

¹³ It is evident for example in debates about political representation: Rousseau pointed out that legislative representation is impossible because it means 'willing for others' when nobody can will for another, but only *instead* of another. Pitkin 1972, a classic study of this problem in political science, has important implications – even for those who think they are only interested in *textual* forms of representation.

¹⁴ Geertz 1980; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Crapanzano 1992.

of that paradox to a late Latin romance as either anachronistic or overelaborately theoretical. It cannot be, because all forms of action, communication, and interpretation ever involve this paradox. In fact, the problem of how to represent what is not present is given remarkable prominence in the *Historia Apollonii*, and it is especially conspicuous as a metaphor in this text.

The story is carried forward not only by riddles – its soliloquies as well as its exchanges of speech are constituted by questions and answers, *quaestiones* and solutions – but also by *representations* of things that have already been presented and indeed re-presented, with greater or lesser degrees of truth and explicitness. In chapter 9 Apollonius gives an enigmatic account of his experiences up to this point to Stranguillio, explaining that Antiochus put a price on his head:

quia filiam eius (immo ut verius dixerim, coniugem) in matrimonio petii.
HA (Redactio B) 9

[Because I sought to marry his daughter, or to put it more truthfully, his wife.]

Again in 10, Apollonius explains his circumstances to the citizens of Tarsus and offers them grain. They dedicate a statue to him in gratitude. In 12 he is shipwrecked and recounts his fortunes to a fisherman, and later to King Archistrates and his daughter; in 28 Apollonius recounts the loss of his wife to Stranguillio and Dionysias when he charges them to bring up his daughter Tarsia. In 29, Tarsia's nurse relates her true parentage – again an account prefaced in a riddling way: 'Who do you think your father and mother are, and what do you think your native land is?' In 34, Tarsia, after she has been sold to a pimp, saves her virginity by recounting her lineage and her own misfortunes to Athenagora. She continues to do this to a succession of clients and to the pimp's assistant, whilst her treacherous foster-parents give a false account of her death to Apollonius. Through the mediation of Athenagora, Tarsia is able to tell her father the story she had rehearsed for her clients. This adds further significance to the detail of the blood that is now running from the virgin's nose (as it recalls the powerful hymenaeal image in *HA* 1). Incidentally, virginity is always referred to as a knot (*nodum*) from the very beginning of this text, and Tharsia had thus opened the exchange with her unrecognised father:

Si enim parabolarum mearum nodos absolveris, vadam.

HA 41

If you undo the knot of my riddles, I will leave.

Compare:

filiae suae nodum virginitatis eripuit

HA 1

He [Antiochus] tore out the knot of his own daughter's virginity.

The final, full, embedded narration of the whole story comes in 48, when Apollonius recounts everything that has happened up to this point – before the apparition of the goddess Diana. This re-presentation and recapitulation of events is the fullest, and, *de facto*, more up to date than any which have preceded it. It includes even an account of the latest event in the story: Apollonius' dream of an angel who instructed him to go with his daughter to the temple of Diana in Ephesus. However the context of Apollonius' narration to Diana means that some of what he says represents no more what is true than what is present:

hanc filiam parvulam enixa est, quam *coram te*, magna Diana, *praesentari* in somnis angelo admonente iussisti

HA 48

My wife gave birth to the little girl whom you ordered through the advice of the angel in my dream *to be presented before you*, great Diana.¹⁵

Apollonius does not realise as he addresses the goddess Diana that it is actually his wife, whose death he has (re)presented in these words, who is before him. The object of his representation is thus construed or misconstrued by the situation in which that representation is given.

¹⁵ Compare the dream earlier in 48: *Vidit in somnis quendam in angelico habitu sibi dicentem* ('In his dreams he saw someone in angelic dress speaking to him').

Crucially, at this point in the story the *problem* of representation in general, and the problem of metaphor come together. Neither the angel nor the goddess were quite what they seemed to be: the narrator told us that Apollonius saw in his dream someone who had ‘angelic dress’. It is *Apollonius* who decides to infer here in his speech that it *was* an angel. But what is ‘angelic dress’ or ‘angelic bearing’? How would the reader, Apollonius, or even the narrator recognise angelic bearing anyway? Moreover, the figure in the dream never specifically instructed Apollonius to recount his experiences to the goddess Diana. The instruction was merely to go to the temple with his daughter and son-in-law and to relate in order everything he had experienced as a young man. Again, it is Apollonius and those with him who make inferences from what they see:

Interveniens Apollonius in templum Dianae cum suis, rogat sibi aperiri sacrarium, ut in conspectu Dianae omnes casus suos exponeret. Nuntiat hoc illi maiori omnium sacerdotum, venisse nescio quem regem cum genero et filia cum magnis donis, talia volentem in conspectu Dianae recitare.

At illa audiens regem advenisse, induit se regium habitum, ornavit caput gemmis, et in veste purpurea venit, stipata catervis famularum. Templum ingreditur. Quam videns Apollonius cum filia sua corruerunt ante pedes. Tantus enim splendor pulchritudinis eius emanabat, ut ipsam esse putarent deam Dianam.

HA 48

Coming into the temple of Diana with his companions, Apollonius asked the sanctuary to be opened to him, so that he could recount all his experiences in the sight of Diana. This was announced to the senior priestess, that an unknown king had come with his daughter and son-in-law bearing great gifts, and that he wanted to recount certain things in the sight of Diana.

She, hearing that the king had arrived, put on her own royal garments, decorated her head with jewels and ventured forth in a purple cloak, accompanied by a throng of attendants. She entered the temple. Seeing her, Apollonius, along with his daughter and son-in-law, fell at her feet. Such was the brightness of the beauty that emanated from her, that they thought she was the goddess Diana herself.

But Apollonius is not definitely wrong in making this inference. It might only be that his inference is too rigid and not open-ended enough. The next sentence in 48 could implicitly support identification of the priestess with the goddess she serves:

interea aperto sacrario oblatisque muneribus coepit in conspectu Dianae
omnes haec effari...

HA 48

Meanwhile the sanctuary had been opened and after the gifts had been proffered, he began to say this in the sight of Diana...

In the places it appears in this episode, the expression *in conspectu Dianae* is trickily ambivalent: it could mean either ‘with a view of Diana’ or ‘under the gaze of Diana.’ Furthermore, the narrator earlier told us of the priestess’ resemblance to the goddess:

Erat enim effigie satis decora et omni castitatis amore assueta, ut nulla
tam grata esset Dianae nisi ipsa.

HA 48

She was of such a fine image and so utterly devoted to chastity that no one was as pleasing to Diana as she was herself.

The word *ipsa* (‘she herself’) could refer to Diana or to the priestess. This confusion conveyed by the narrator is certainly consonant with the supposition of Apollonius’ company which soon follows: *ut ipsam esse putarent deam Dianam* ‘that they thought she was the goddess Diana herself.’ Expressions like this are common in ekphrases of artworks in ancient literature. Phrases such as *ut crederes* (‘that you would believe’) invite readers – or at the least the viewers projected by an ekphrastic text – to confuse visual representations with the object represented.

None of these preoccupations are unique to the *Historia Apollonii*. The episode in Book 11 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in which Morpheus fashions a *false* dream to impart *true* information to Alcyone about the death of her husband in a sea voyage is an important precursor of Apollonius’ dream.¹⁶ But events here offer a fascinating inversion of what happens in Ovid. And

¹⁶ On the episode in Ovid *Met.* 11, see Laird 1999, 281–7.

the confusion here between a mortal heroine and the goddess of Ephesus has a precedent in Xenophon's novel in which Anthia is worshipped as Artemis. More specifically, the diction which presents the apparition of Apollonius' wife firmly recalls the comparison of Dido to Diana when she first appears to Aeneas with her throng of attendants in the temple to Juno:

haec dum Dardanio Aeneae miranda videntur,
 dum stupet obtutuque haeret defixus in uno,
 regina ad templum, forma pulcherrima Dido
 incessit magna iuvenum stipante caterva,
qualis in Eurotae ripis aut per iuga Cynthi
 exercet Diana choros...

Aeneid 1. 494–99

At illa audiens regem advenisse, induit se regium habitum, ornavit caput gemmis, et in veste purpurea venit, stipata catervis famularum. Templum ingreditur. Quam videns Apollonius cum filia sua corruerunt ante pedes eius. Tantus enim splendor pulchritudinis eius emanabat, ut ipsam esse putarent deam Dianam.

HA 48

Ovid echoes Virgil's phrasing in *Metamorphoses* 3.186, but there applies it to *Diana: comitum turba stipata suarum* ('surrounded by a throng of her companions'). That appropriation underlines the connection between the passages quoted above. Finally, Apuleius, in his own *Metamorphoses*, uses a carefully structured sequence of ekphrases to prompt reflection on the relationship between images of divinity and divine essence, which I have discussed elsewhere.¹⁷

But unlike the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, the *Historia Apollonii* tests the relation between representations and their objects without the use of ekphrasis. This romance contains nothing comparable to the luxurious descriptions which are generally so abundant in other works of ancient fiction. Instead techniques of *leitmotiv*, intertextuality, significant repetition of diction, and naming (or the lack of it) are what draw attention to the metaphors

¹⁷ Laird 1997.

of representation in this work.¹⁸ The fashionable problem of the absent presence, the irrecoverability of what is represented, is shown to be very much akin to the age-old riddle of the relationship between sacral images and the divinities they portray.¹⁹ Indeed historical conflicts – which still recur – about iconoclasm, illuminism, transubstantiation, and the like are really conflicts about the nature of representation.²⁰ The *Historia Apollonii* foregrounds the problem of representation and the problem of the relationship between an image and its object in some very specific ways.

For example Apollonius' wife, though she is identified with Diana, is never named. Her identity is a riddle which is never solved. When Apollonius recognised his daughter, he named her 'You are my daughter, Tarsia'. But when Apollonius' wife recognises *him*, she does not name herself, but says 'I am your wife, the daughter of King Archistratus'. This namelessness does not mean, as we might first assume, that she is an insignificant female cypher, defined only in terms of her husband and father. Instead that namelessness endows her with a mysterious and unquantifiable power. It is worth recalling what the goddess of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* says to Lucius after he appeared 'in *her* sight' and recounted all his misfortunes:

'En adsum tuis commota, Luci, precibus, rerum naturae parens,
elementorum omnium domina, saeculorum progenies initialis, summa
numinum, regina manium, prima caelitem, deorum dearumque facies
uniformis ... cuius numen unicum multiformi specie, ritu vario, nomine
multiugo totus veneratur orbis. inde primigenii Phryges Pessinuntiam
deum matrem, hinc autocthones Attici Cecropeiam Minervam, illinc
fluctuantes Cyprii Paphiam Venerem, Cretes sagittiferi Dictynnam
Dianam...

Apuleius *Met.* 11.5

Behold, Lucius, moved by your prayers I have come, the parent of the nature of things, mistress of all the elements, and first offspring of the ages, highest of deities, queen of the shades, foremost of the heavenly

¹⁸ Repetition and other aspects of style in the work are thoroughly discussed in Puche López 1999a.

¹⁹ On the relationship between gods and their images in antiquity, see Gordon 1979 and Vernant 1991; Clerc 1916 is an important but neglected study.

²⁰ Hyman 1989 is an account of the philosophical issues behind these problems.

beings, the uniform manifestation of gods and goddesses... my divinity is one, worshipped by all the world under different forms, with various rites and, and by manifold names. In one place the Phrygians, first-born of men call me Pessinuntine mother of the gods, in another the autochthonous people of Athens call me Cecropian Minerva, in another the sea-washed Cyprians call me Paphian Venus, to the arrow-bearing Cretans I am Dictynna Diana...

Finally Apuleius' goddess mentions the Egyptians who call her by the name of Queen Isis. She has every name and yet no name.

This suggests that the absence of a name for Antiochus' daughter, the victim of his incest, is positively significant. The fact that her namelessness is a kind of riddle is signalled by the daughter's complaint to her nurse, after her rape, that 'two noble *names* have fallen into ruin' (*duo nobilia perierunt nomina HA 2*). The second name could of course be that of Antiochia, the country which we are told took its name from the king. But again, whatever the resolution of this riddle, the girl's anonymity certainly need not imply insignificance or impotence either: her father's death by a thunderbolt for his incest shows God's direct interest in avenging the impiety. Like Psyche who is not initially named in Apuleius' story, Antiochus' beautiful daughter was confused with a goddess: nature had made no mistake except that it had rendered her mortal.

In considering the association of Apollonius' wife with the goddess Diana at the climax of the *Historia*, it is important to recall the situation in which Apollonius first meets her in the court of of King Archistratus. All those present confuse Apollonius with Apollo:

et <***> induit statum <lyricum>, et corona caput coronavit, et accipiens lyram introivit triclinium, et ita fecit, ut discumbentes non Apollonium sed Apollinem existimarent.

HA 16

He assumed the part, crowned his head with a crown, and taking up his lyre entered the dining room. And he did so in such a way that the reclining guests thought he was not Apollonius but Apollo.

It is worth recalling that Apollonius first introduced himself to Archistratus by applying some rejuvenating ointment to the king – a detail which could also prompt comparison with Apollo. The Tarsians also portray him in a chariot in the first statue erected in his honour. The likening of Apollonius to Apollo really serves to enhance the potency of the later identification of Apollonius' queen with Diana. Whatever, the case, these minor associations shows that the relation between image and divinity – a kind of representation which is metaphorical – is a fluid one. Different eyes draw different comparisons and make different inferences.

This is certainly the case with the physical artefacts mentioned in the *Historia*. Rather like the embedded narratives which, more or less reliably, present and re-present the events of the story, the statues set up as forms of commemoration also represent prior events, more or less reliably. The citizens of Tarsus first erect an inscribed statue of Apollonius in 10, in gratitude for his donation of grain. The emphatic wordplay *statuam statuere* ('they established a statue') prompts re-examination of a phrase used about Antiochus' daughter in the second sentence beginning of the work: *natura mortalem statuerat*: 'nature had rendered her mortal'. Is she, then, the mortal representation of something divine, or the divine representation of something immortal? A statue of Tarsia falsely commemorating her death is established in 32. The inscription, (which has mysteriously lengthened six chapters later) is read by Apollonius in 38. His own representation of this misleading presentation is ironically closer to the 'real' state of affairs in the story:

perlecto in titulo stupenti mente constitit. et dum miratur se lacrimas non posse fundere, maledixit oculos suos dicens: 'o crudeles oculi, titulum natae meae cernitis et lacrimas fundere non potestis! o me miserum! puto, filia mea vivit.'

HA 38

After reading this inscription he stood dumbfounded. He was amazed that he could not shed tears and cursed his eyes, saying 'Cruel eyes, you look on the inscription for my daughter and you cannot shed tears. How wretched I am: I still think my daughter is alive.'

Again, different eyes draw different inferences.

A further artefact relevant to the metaphor of representation in the *Historia Apollonii* is that of the text itself. Drawing an analogy between this and the sculptural representations is not so frivolous: in antiquity, both texts and works of visual art were difficult and expensive to reproduce, and both (like the Apolline statue of Apollonius) relied on the imitation of previous models to achieve representation. The renaissance paintings of Archimboldo offer a useful analogy: they used images of vegetables (the object of still life representation) to constitute a human portrait (another form of representation). The *Historia Apollonii* is even more akin to Archimboldo's works than most works of ancient literature. Of course classical authors constantly employ imitation of models in order to generate a new representation, accomplishing *mimesis* in the 'Aristotelian' sense, through *mimesis* (in the rhetorical sense) of imitating models. But this short romance is so perfused with *imitatio* – of Homer's *Odyssey*, Ovid, Virgil, Xenophon of Ephesus, not to mention Symphosius and Apuleius – that we can easily lose the plot.²¹

But the strongest metaphor of representation emerges if we consider another word beginning with 'r': *recension*. The B and C recensions contain an interesting ending to the narrative. This ending offers a climax to the argument of this paper:

omne ipse descripsit et duo volumina fecit: unum Dianae in templo Ephesiorum, aliud in bibliotheca sua exposuit.

HA (Redac. C) 51

Apollonius himself wrote everything down and made two copies: one he placed in the temple of Diana of Ephesus and the other he displayed in his library.

This idea that a copy was donated to Diana provides a new metaphor for the whole literary speech act of this representation. The text we have read becomes a votive offering, like Longus' ekphrastic novel, which was consecrated to Eros, Pan, and the Nymphs. The goddess Diana becomes addressee, reader, and recipient of the book, as well as an agent in the story: her agency in it is now of course strongly implied by this very consecration.

²¹ For influences on the *HA*, see (e.g.) Holzberg 1989 on the *Odyssey*; Konstan 1993 on influence of the Greek novel; Krappe 1924 on Euripides. Schmeling 1999 and Kortekaas 2004 have useful, though conflicting, observations on the text's literary origins.

The second copy in Apollonius' library hints at another dimension of this representation. We know what sort of books Apollonius kept in his library from *HA* 6: philosophy books and Chaldaean oracles which solve riddles, and which teach magic, divination, and theurgy. That suggests something about the book under discussion: it too is packed with riddles and could now have the function of a mystagogic text. And this passage also tells us that Apollonius the hero of the story wrote a book. But are we supposed to be reading the book he wrote? If that is what we are actually reading, Apollonius wrote it in the third person and his presence behind the representation is conspicuously absent. His presence can be deduced, but not directly heard or apprehended. How one answers *that* question and solves that riddle depends on the relationship one chooses to have with the narrator. The element of transcendence in this text ultimately depends on our conceptions of closure. Apollonius' final metaphor of representation could not be more appropriately enigmatic.

Afterword

The Latin *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri* probably dates from the fifth century AD. Kortekaas in the useful preface to his edition of the text follows previous scholars in arguing that it is a later version of a lost Greek original, composed in the late second or early third century AD.²² Gareth Schmeling in the *Praefatio* to his Teubner is more cautious, and, perhaps wisely, remains agnostic about whether this Latin narrative is the first form of the story, or an epitome of an earlier one.²³ The observations above are consistent with either of those positions.

The *Historia Apollonii* is famous because of its long afterlife in European literary history. The story was translated, summarised, rewritten, and reconceived in Latin and in vernacular languages, in prose and verse, from Eastern Europe to Iceland.²⁴ Examples include a summary of the plot in the *Gesta Romanorum*; an Anglo-Saxon version; Godfried of Viterbo cast it into Latin verse in the 12th century; the 13th century saw renderings in Castilian

²² Kortekaas 1984; see now Kortekaas 2004..

²³ Schmeling 1988.

²⁴ See (e.g.) Klebs 1899; Puche López 1997, 72–82; Mazza 1985 (on the Latin reception); Archibald 1991 (on medieval and renaissance *Nachleben*); Waiblinger 1994, 127–29 and 130–32 for bibliography on reception

verse and in Henry von der Neuenstadts' German epic. Most celebratedly, Shakespeare's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* and T.S. Eliot's *Marina* exhibit an obvious thematic debt to the *Historia Apollonii*.

That wide cultural circulation of this romance could explain why the tradition of the Latin text is so complex. From over a hundred manuscripts, there are three principal recensions: A, B, and C. The lion's share of secondary literature on the *Historia Apollonii* has been devoted either to textual problems or to broader issues of reception.²⁵ Whilst I have not directly addressed either of these concerns, the persistent presentations and representations of this story through history amplify the arguments of the paper above with an irony that may not be entirely accidental. Even if the Latin *Historia Apollonii* is not an epitome of a specific earlier work, it is certainly no less of an epitome than any other representational text might be.²⁶

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²⁵ Note 24 above. Puche López 1999b is an excellent account of the editions of HA and its textual history.

²⁶ I would like to thank the organisers of the 2003 conference. I am also deeply grateful to María del Carmen Puche López and Gareth Schmeling for comments, suggestions, and all sorts of bibliography.

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