

J.R. MORGAN, M. JONES (eds.), *Philosophical Presences in the Ancient Novel*

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This fine collection of essays originated from a conference panel organized by the KYKNOS Research Centre for Ancient Narrative Literature (Swansea, Lampeter, and Exeter Universities). It is devoted to an assessment of the presence of philosophy, in various forms, in the Greek novels.

First of all, for an investigation of this sort to be fruitful and methodologically careful, it is necessary to determine what exactly “philosophy” means in the cultural context in which the Greek novels arose. This clarification is duly provided by the first essay: Michael Trapp, “What is This *Philosophia* Anyway?” (pp. 1–22). He explains how philosophy was understood in the Hellenistic and Roman periods,¹ and includes in his discussion definitions of “philosophy” taken from Alcinoous’ *Didaskalikos*, Seneca, Lucian, Plutarch, and Maximus of Tyre, all belonging to the first two centuries of the Imperial era. In addition to these, however, texts such as the *Cebetis Tabula*, with its ethical allegories, are taken into consideration, and particular attention is paid to Plutarch’s essays on moral progress, a notion that was valorised – I should remark – in Roman Stoicism as well.² The theoretical side of philosophy was especially stressed by Platonism (at least in Middle-Platonism and in Neoplatonism); the practical side was privileged by Roman

¹ A good survey, not cited here, is J. Barnes, ‘Ancient Philosophers’, in *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World. Essays in honour of Miriam Griffin*, eds. G. Clark - T. Rajak, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 293-306.

² On this crucial philosophical notion I recommend the following works: G. Roskam, *On the Path to Virtue. The Stoic Doctrine of Moral Progress and its Reception in (Middle-) Platonism*, Leuven: University Press, 2005; *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought*, ed. J. Fitzgerald, Abingdon-New York: Routledge, 2008; I. Ramelli, ‘Ierocle Neostoico in Stobeo: i καθήκοντα e l’evoluzione dell’etica stoica,’ in *Stobaeus: The Implications of His Doxographical Method*, ed. G. Reydams-Schils, Turnhout: Brepols, 2009.

Stoicism, and strongly emphasised by Musonius Rufus.³ Philosophical sects, garments, and schools are briefly presented by Trapp, who contrasts philosophy and philosophers in public life with a critical attitude in the Roman world towards philosophy as something un-Roman, with Lucian's satire against modern philosophers, and with repeated accounts of banishments of philosophers from Rome. We should add to this condemnations of philosophers to death, especially in the ages of Nero and Domitian. The boastful declaration "He never went to a philosopher's lecture", which Trimalchio would like to be included in the inscription on his tomb (Petr. *Sat.* 71.12), demonstrates yet again, albeit in a comic fashion, the contemporary critical approach to philosophy. Trapp concludes that philosophy was both an insider and an outsider to conventional *paideia*. If *paideia* was "a means of articulating symbolic 'justification' for the economic and political domination of the traditional governing class, then the identity of *philosophia* as both a central element of the cultural packet and a source of criticism and resistance to that package, becomes a particularly delicate and sensitive one" (20). Trapp is right to suggest that philosophical opposition – very clear under Nero and Domitian – should be understood not only at a political level, but also "as holding much more general potential for opposition to conventional values and culture" (*ibidem*). This is an interesting indication, which deserves to be taken seriously.

J.R. Morgan, "The Representation of Philosophers in Greek Fiction" (pp. 23–52), investigates the way in which philosophers are described in the following Greek novels: that of Chariton (with Demetrius, an aged philosopher, "superior to the other Egyptians παιδείαι καὶ ἀρετῆ" (8.3.10), but also Dionysius, whose resistance to Eros is characterised as a form of philosophy), the fragments of *Metiochus and Parthenope* (with Anaximenes), Antonius Diogenes' *Wonders beyond Thule* (with Pythagoras, materials about whom are significantly included in this work, which explores the very boundaries of credibility), Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Story* (with Calasiris, who, although he is nowhere called φιλόσοφος, is portrayed more like a Greek philosopher than like an Egyptian priest of Isis), and the *Life of Aesop* (with Xanthus). In these works of fiction, the character of the philosopher – who, as Morgan rightly warns, cannot be adequately distinguished from the character of the θεῖος ἀνὴρ in late antiquity⁴ – does not generally convey philosophical

³ See my *Stoicismo romano minore*, Milan: Bompiani, 2008.

⁴ See wide-ranging documentation for this in I. Ramelli, 'Vir Dei,' in *Nuovo Dizionario Patristico e di Antichità Cristiane*, ed. A. Di Bernardino, vol. 3, Genoa: Marietti, 2008, 5632–5636.

thought. The philosopher is never presented as expressing the ideas of the author or the ultimate message of the novel, but he is always depicted in a complex and rather ambiguous way. Morgan argues that this reflects the ambivalent attitude of contemporary culture toward philosophers, who could be venerable persons or charlatans and deceivers. A very interesting point emerges, to my mind, on pp. 41–42: in Heliodorus' novel (5.12.1), Calasiris' statement that, in the case of the sage, his will (βούλησις) is existence (ὑπαρξις) and vice-versa, is compared by Morgan with a passage from Ps. Justin's *Quaestiones Christianorum ad Gentiles*, where God's will (βούλησθαι) and being (εἶναι) are equated in the words of the Greek interlocutor, but the Christian response is that the essence of God is aimed at existence (ὑπαρξις), while God's will (βούλησις) is directed to creation; therefore, a distinction must be drawn between God's essence and God's will. Now, I would like to add to all this that the conception of God's will as the main and even the sole agent of creation, and consequently of the existence of creatures, was a widespread notion in the Middle/Neoplatonic milieu in Alexandria, both pagan and Christian. For it is well attested in Pantaenus, the master of Clement of Alexandria, in frg. 2 Routh,⁵ where he says that the *logoi* in God's mind are called by Scripture "God's wills", because the Godhead created everything by its will and knows all beings as its own wills, for their own existence depends on God's will. Remarkably, here too, as in Ps. Justin, the context is a dispute with a Greek opponent. The same notion is also attested in Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of both Plotinus and Origen, and a contemporary of Pantaenus, who taught in Alexandria during the reign of Commodus and later, i.e. at the end of the second century A.D. (Eus. *HE* 5.10.1–4). Both Ammonius and Pantaenus taught in Alexandria at the same time. Ammonius, too, maintained that all beings were created and are kept in existence by God's will (ἀρκεῖν τὸ ἐκείνου βούλημα εἰς ὑπόστασιν τῶν ὄντων), as is reported by Hierocles of Alexandria *ap. Phot. Bibl. cod.* 251.461b and 462b. Heliodorus' Calasiris belongs to an Egyptian milieu as well, and the novel was probably composed shortly after Ps. Justin, Pantaenus, and Ammonius Saccas, and moreover displays a widely recognised interest in Platonism.

Ian Repath, "Emotional Conflict and Platonic Psychology in the Greek Novel" (pp. 53–84), shows how Plato's tripartite division of the soul into λογικόν, θυμικόν, and ἐπιθυμητικόν, and his description of the structure of the soul in *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, and *Timaeus* – which Plutarch and Lucian

⁵ = Clem. fr. 48 St. *ap. Max. Conf. De variis difficilibus locis Dionysii et Gregorii*, 60–61 Oehler (*PG* 91.1085).

echo and develop – is deployed in the Greek novels, especially those by Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus, and in part already in Chariton. This success is well explained by the fact that the model of a divided soul was particularly apt to account for psychological conflicts and turmoil. Furthermore, Plato was very popular during the ‘Second Sophistic’. All this suggests, according to Repath’s conclusion, that not only the novelists, but also their readers were philosophically literate. At least, they had a basic knowledge of Plato’s psychological theory.

Koen de Temmerman, “Where Philosophy and Rhetoric Meet: Character Typification in the Greek Novel” (pp. 85–110), deals with the eight character types that the Greek novels have in common with the Aristotelian ethical treatises, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Eudemian Ethics*, and *Magna Moralia*, and with Theophrastus’ *Characters*. These types are: the coward (δειλός), the flatterer (κόλαξ), the obsequious person (ἄρεσκος), the hypocrite (εἴρων), the boaster (ἀλαζών), the insensitive person (ἀναίσθητος), the rustic (ἄγροικος), and the shameless person (ἀναίσχυντος). Echoes from Aristotle and Theophrastus (sometimes only from the former, sometimes only from the latter, sometimes from both of them) are singled out in descriptions of such characters in the novels, especially in military, erotic, and social contexts. It is often the case, too, that traditional notions associated with a character type are displaced to a different level in the novels. Direct influence of Aristotle and Theophrastus on the novelists is cautiously ruled out as improbable, because de Temmerman argues that the aforementioned character types belonged to the general rhetorical education of that time.

Meriel Jones, “*Andreia* and Gender in the Greek Novels” (pp. 111–136), focuses on Chariton’s and Heliodorus’ novels, where the hero displays bravery in war or in athletic performances, and she tries to see how these instances represent the cardinal philosophical virtue of *andreia*. Jones’ analysis is introduced by a short investigation of this virtue in philosophy, including Solon, Plato’s *Laches*, and Aristotle, and in ancient culture in general, where a particular role was played by gender stereotypes. With reference to Aristotle’s differentiation between male and female virtues, I would like to remark that it was a general Stoic tenet that virtue is the same for both genders. This is particularly clear in Musonius, but it is a notion shared by all Stoics. This is why Lactantius, *Inst.* 3.25, ascribes the idea that women too should be taught philosophy to the Stoics in general. If Musonius in *Diatribes* 4 states that all virtues are equally good for both men and women and belong to both genders in the same way, this was already maintained by Antisthenes, as is attested by Diogenes Laertius 6.12. And it is telling that in

Laertius' list of the writings of Cleanthes there is a treatise entitled *Virtue is the same for men and women*. Aspasius, *In Arist. Eth. Nic.* 177, cites some "Socratics", who might be Stoics as well, on the absence of a difference between a man's and a woman's virtue: "Some deny that there is one virtue for a father and another for a son, or one for a husband and another for a wife. It suffices to test the argument in the case of husband and wife, for the same things are to be said about a father and a son. They, and above all the Socratics, question the view in the following way. – Is it, then, right that the husband be just, but the wife unjust? – No indeed. – What then? That the husband be temperate, and the wife be dissolute? – Not this, either. Proceeding thus by way of each virtue, and supposing that it is necessary for a husband and wife to have all the virtues, they conclude that there is the same virtue for a husband and a wife."⁶ Likewise, Musonius exemplifies his claim through the four cardinal virtues, going against traditional prejudice especially in the case of *andreia* itself: he asserts that it is not at all a prerogative of ἄνδρες, but it belongs to women as well. Here, too, as I have pointed out elsewhere,⁷ he alludes to Socrates' claim, in Xenophon *Symp.* 2.12, that *andreia* is present in women as well, because it can be taught, in sharp contrast to Ischomachus' assumption in *Oec.* 7.25, that the god has provided men with far more courage than women. Even ἀλκή, valor in arms, may be found among women, as the case of the Amazons shows: this is because virtue is simply a matter of training. Jones endeavours to assess the contribution of the Greek novels, especially the two mentioned above, to the development of the concept of *andreia*. On the basis of a careful analysis, she observes that Anthia's *andreia* is in the service of the preservation of her chastity, and that Charicleia's *andreia* is partly explained also by her regal birth (for *andreia* was a royal virtue). Theagenes' case is particularly significant: *andreia* is closely related to *sophrosyne* and emerges in the youth's overcoming his *epithymia*, which reminds us of both the Stoics and Plato's Socrates, who offered an example of *sophrosyne* and *andreia* precisely in resisting Alcibiades' attempts to seduce him. In this connection, it seems to me worth pointing out that Christian novels and especially the *Acts of Philip* show a reversal of the traditional concept of *andreia* that goes much in the same direction as Socrates, the Stoics, and Heliodorus with his Theagenes: in these

⁶ Tr. D. Konstan, *Aspasius On Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006, 177–178.

⁷ I. Ramelli, 'Transformations of The Household and Marriage Theory Between Neo-Stoicism, Middle-Platonism, and Early Christianity,' *Rivista di Filosofia Neoscolastica* 100 (2008) 369–396.

Acts, *andreia* is ascribed to Mary rather than to Philip, her brother and companion in apostleship, and it is defined as the ability of not returning evil after receiving it.⁸

Ken Dowden, “Novel Ways of Being Philosophical, Or A Tale of Two Dogs and a Phoenix” (pp. 137–150), asks the question whether the Greek novels are philosophical. His answer is based on the analysis of three case-studies. The first, Dictys of Crete’s *Diary*, is not philosophical, but it is not a novel either. It is rather an exercise in rationalisation, methodologically close to Thucydides’ *archaiologia*. This leads Dowden to claim, by contrast, that the Greek novels indeed are, to an extent, philosophical, essentially in that they represent lives, various kinds of βίαι. This was a major subject of philosophical discourse. In the case of Xenophon of Ephesus Dowden focuses on the episode of Anthia’s punishment in the pit with two dogs, an episode which denounces the distorted justice of those who do not recognize the good, such as the bandits. Parallels are found in *Onos* 25 and Apuleius *Met.* 6.31, but the response of Anthia’s supposed guardian, who pitied and saved her, is aimed at indicating a higher moral standard than that of the bandit who attempted to use violence against her and was killed by her with a sword. Heliodorus, on the basis of the opening events of Book 6, is argued to be even more philosophical than other novelists, not least for the mention of a flamingo (φοινικόπτερος), which recalls the phoenix, the symbol of life’s victory over death.

Konstantin Doulamis, “Stoic Echoes and Style in Xenophon of Ephesus” (pp. 151–176), collects from the *Ephesiaca* passages which echo Stoic ideas, especially from Epictetus, and he also examines the structure and style of these passages, which display a combination of simplicity and subtle rhetoric. Given that the Stoics usually recommended stylistic simplicity, Doulamis argues that the content and style of the passages under consideration might be closely interrelated. This entails the interesting conclusion that Xenophon may be more artful and sophisticated than he is usually considered to be, a conclusion which invites further research into the whole of this novel in relation to contemporary rhetorical theory.

⁸ On *andreia* in the Greek novels and in Philo, with a hint to the *Acts of Philip*, see D. Konstan, ‘Le courage dans le roman grec: une comparaison avec Philon d’Alexandrie,’ in *Roman IV: Vertus, passions et vices dans le Roman grec*, ed. B. Pouderon, Lyon: Maison de l’Orient e de la Méditerranée 2008; for the allegorical content of these *Acts* (wild beasts turned into meek creatures and even humanised) and the importance of meekness in them see I. Ramelli, ‘Mansuetudine, grazia e salvezza negli *Acta Philippi*,’ *Invigilata Lucernis* 29 (2007) 215–228.

Daniel Ogden's paper, "The Love of Wisdom and the Love of Lies: The Philosophers and Philosophical Voices of Lucian's *Philopseudes*" (pp. 177–204), is an extract from the introduction to his recent book on the Lucianic dialogue.⁹ Ogden takes into consideration Tychiades' monologue in Lucian's *Philopseudes*, whose voice has often been interpreted as that of Lucian himself. Ogden draws a comparison between the characters therein and the stock character-types found in Lucian's corpus. As for the philosophers in particular, the tales they tell are shown to be connected with their character-type or their school. Ogden describes thoroughly the character of, for instance, Ion the Platonist, Cleodemus the Peripatetic, Dinomachus the Stoic, and Arignotus the Pythagorean. He nicely points out that the Cynics and the Epicureans, who belonged to Lucian's favourite philosophical schools, are not represented in this symposium (in contrast to this, there is a Cynic, Alcidamas, in the gathering of the philosophers in Lucian's *Lapiths*), but Cynic and Epicurean traits emerge all the same, the latter in Tychiades' voice, the former here and there, through distinctive language and imagery.

Fritz-Gregor Herrmann, "Longus' Imitation: Mimesis in the Education of Daphnis and Chloe" (pp. 205–230), examines the use of the concept of mimesis in Longus' novel, also drawing upon Halliwell's investigation into this notion from Homer to today.¹⁰ Herrmann analyses three instances of interplay between mimesis and education in this novel, which is precisely devoted to the education of two young people: education by instruction, education by and through nature, and education through mimesis. A careful account of many literary reminiscences from Plato is also offered in the course of this analysis. In the context of "education through mimesis," a particularly close scrutiny of Longus' prologue and the meaning of εἰκόνας γραφήν (*praef.* 1) therein is provided. The work of Origen is mentioned together with those of Plutarch, Pausanias, and Alexander of Aphrodisias as evidence for the concept of εἰκόν as μίμημα, that is, of an image as an imitation. By Origen's time such a notion no longer belonged to a particular philosophical school. I would like to add that Origen made of εἰκόν the pivotal concept of his so-called "theology of the image", which draws consequences from the declaration in *Genesis* that the human being is "in the image (εἰκόν) and likeness (ὁμοίωσις)" of God. However, unlike other supporters

⁹ D. Ogden, *In Search of the Sorcerer's Apprentice. The Traditional Tales of Lucian's Lover of Lies*, Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2007; reviewed by William Hansen in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 28 April 2008.

¹⁰ S. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis. Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

of the “theology of the image” such as Gregory of Nyssa, Origen stresses that the εἰκών is something that was given at the beginning, when God created the human being as an imitation of divine intelligence and freewill, whereas the ὁμοίωσις is something that each rational creature must achieve in the *telos*, through a voluntary adhesion to the Good. Origen relates his notion of εἰκών as imitation to his twofold or threefold interpretation of the Bible, literal and allegorical (moral and spiritual). After all, the time of Longus was also that of Clement, Origen, Numenius, and pagan and Christian Platonic allegorical interpretation of myths or of Scripture. Moreover, an allegorical reading has famously been proposed for Longus’ novel, too. But to return to Herrmann’s essay, a good point he makes is that *sophrosyne* in Longus’ novel, in which it plays a central role and is displayed from the beginning, is itself a mimetic virtue, according to Plato’s discussion of the four cardinal virtues in his *Republic*. *Sophrosyne* is acquired in childhood through imitation of stories well told. This squares perfectly with Longus’ novel, too.

The preamble of Achilles Tatius’ novel is shown by Karen Ní Mheallaigh, “Philosophical Framing: The Phaedran Setting of *Leucippe and Cleitophon*” (pp. 231–244), to be framed by Plato’s *Phaedrus*, which functions as its philosophical and literary “intertext.” But this Platonic dialogue constitutes the background of the whole of this novel, whose affinity with the modern category of “metafiction” is demonstrated by Ní Mheallaigh in a very sophisticated manner. In this regard, she also highlights parallels between Achilles’ novel and those of Apuleius and Lucian.

Ahuvia Kahane, “Disjoining Meaning and Truth: History, Representation, Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* and Neoplatonist Aesthetics” (pp. 245–270), puts forward that he does not intend to prove that a certain Apuleian passage is ‘Neoplatonic’ in any positive sense; for it is neither possible nor desirable to offer a straightforward philosophical reading of such an elusive work as Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*. He also devotes a methodological section (pp. 246–248) to clarifying how it is that he uses Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus to read an earlier text like that of Apuleius. Even though he does not specifically explain the reason why he prefers to call Apuleius’ Middle-Platonism “Neoplatonism” (for instance on p. 255), which might puzzle the reader, this is scarcely important after all, as terminology and periodisation are debated and often more convenient than reflecting the complexity of reality. Moreover, the aspects in which Neoplatonism may be regarded as actually different from Middle Platonism are not that on which the present essay focuses, i.e. the problem of representation. In his refined essay Kahane argues that the

conception of truth that emerges in Apuleius' novel is similar to Neoplatonic notions of truth, especially as they result from an analysis of the relationship between meaning and truth in Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus. This is well argued and also understandable, as Middle Platonism was indeed the milieu from which Neoplatonism developed. Plotinus contemplates the possibility of representation as something other than Plato's εἰδῶλον εἰδῶλου. As for Porphyry, following Peter Struck, Kahane rightly assumes that he theorised a movement from a low, mimetic representation to a higher, symbolic one. Proclus also displays a twofold conception of representation, from mimetic *eikones* to *symbola*. For Apuleius, special attention is paid to the re-enactment of Paris' Judgment in *Met.* 10; the scene of Mount Ida is read along the lines of Proclus' theory: it is not simply an *eikōn*, a mimetic representation, but also a *symbolon* of a deeper truth. The paradox of the mute speaker, such as the Ass in Apuleius' novel, is read at first in the framework of Auerbach's theory of a rhetoric of delegitimation, demarcating those who have the right to speak and the "others". Like Tacitus' Percennius and Homer's Thersites, Apuleius' Ass, in this hypothesis, is an instance of the "other" who has no right to speak. Then Kahane considers Rancière's reading of Auerbach's interpretation, and concludes that in Tacitus—where Percennius' speeches are not reported mimetically as direct speeches, but in *oratio obliqua*—, Homer, and Apuleius "we find a cancellation of the opposition between legitimate and illegitimate speakers" (p. 266), as the illegitimate speakers too are given voice.

This stimulating volume, which is also carefully edited and beautifully produced, is a welcome and inspiring contribution to a field that definitely deserves further exploration. It opens up many paths of reflection and research, and shows that a lot can still emerge from an investigation into the relationship between the ancient novels and ancient and late antique philosophy.