

Abstracts

Growing Backwards:
The *Cena Trimalchionis* and Plato's Aesthetics of Mimesis
OURANIA MOLYVIATI

This article attempts an interpretation of the entire *Cena Trimalchionis*. First, it discusses the significance of the name *labyrinthus* in the context of Socrates' theory on the proper use of names, which Plato reports in the dialogue *Cratylus*. Second, it shows how the fictional author of the *Cena* exploits the sign of the labyrinth to explain by the analogy of Trimalchio that what contemporary teachers of rhetoric practice in schools is *psychagogia*. Simultaneously, the fictional author claims for his literary artifact the place of true rhetoric, because it makes knowledge of the truth possible by the stability and permanence of the written word.

Stoics in the ocean:
Iambulus' novel as philosophical fiction
PETER VON MÖLLENDORFF

Iambulus' description of customs and traditions on *the Islands of the Sun* mainly focusses on characteristics that eventually create the picture of an ideal Stoic community; this may be why the historian Diodorus, inclined to a Stoic worldview himself, takes such a great interest in this text.

In my paper I discuss some significant Stoic motifs. I try to show that the confrontation between the islanders and their Greek visitors puts on stage a central question of Stoic philosophy, the relation between determination, education and individual liberty. I further argue that the fictional setting is to be seen in the context of the debate on *exokeanismos*, which repeatedly occupied Stoic critics between the third and the first century B.C. Finally, I present arguments supporting the view that the oceanic setting may be interpreted as a signal for the reader to understand the plot as a kind of allegory.

The Caring Gods:
Daphnis and Chloe as *Pronoia* Literature
 URSULA BITTRICH

The aim of this article is to show the effect that the philosophical concept of divine *pronoia* has on Longus' novel *Daphnis and Chloe*. Various ways of handling the idea of *pronoia* will be introduced, with a special focus on Chrysippus and passages from Ps.-Plutarch's treatises *On Fate* and *On Isis and Osiris*. Read against the philosophical background of the concept of *pronoia*, the real function of numerous disturbing incidents of Longus' novel will turn out to be twofold: while serving as examples to show the transformative power of the gods' benevolence, they bring out to the full the overall design of Eros as a supreme coordinating principle of the plot.

Tales of Utopia:
 Alexander, Cynics and Christian Ascetics
 RICHARD STONEMAN

The paper traces tales of the blessed land visited by Alexander from an early Cynic diatribe and its successor, Palladius' *Life of the Brahmans*, through several early Christian narratives. I argue that the Cynic kernel in the earlier texts is the key to their adaptation by Christian authors. Several Christian writings utilise Cynic sayings and doctrines, for example John Chrysostom's comparison of monk and cynic in his *Against the Opponents of Monasticism*, Pseudo-Maximus Confessor's extensive citation of Diogenes in his *Loci Communes*, and Gregory of Nazianzus' account of his opponent Maximus the Cynic. The utopian project of some Cynics and some early Christian writers represented a criticism of the surrounding world. Diogenes, the 'world-citizen', can be contrasted not only with the fictional Alexander but with the monks who set out to be citizens of a heavenly city.

Targeting the 'intellectuals':
 Dio of Prusa and the *Vita Aesopi*
 STEFANO JEDRKIEWICZ

The fictitious, supposedly 'popular' biographical tale known as *Vita Aesopi* (II-IV centuries A.D.) turns the contemporary 'intellectual' into a laughing stock. A large part of this text describes how the apparently ignorant slave Aesop proves to be incomparably superior in wisdom to his master Professor Xanthos. Yet, at

the same time, the *Vita* implies that authentic ‘culture’ (*paideia*) is the fundamental institution in social life and the best support to political power. Such ideas may recall some of the views proper to one of the foremost representatives of the Second Sophistic, Dio of Prusa (Chrysostom). Thus, an intertextual reading may point to some strikingly similar concerns being shared simultaneously by ‘high’ and ‘low’ literary texts: in particular, about the function that effective ‘knowledge’ should play in society and about the kind of learning that a competent ‘intellectual’ should therefore detain and put into effect.

Only Halfway to Happiness:
A Platonic Reading of Apuleius’ *Golden Ass*
WALTER ENGLERT

This paper offers a philosophical reading of the *Golden Ass*. After reviewing several influential interpretations of the work, the paper argues that Apuleius depicts Lucius’ conversion to Isis in Book 11 as sincere but naively limited. Using evidence from Plutarch’s *On Isis and Osiris* to demonstrate Middle Platonic attitudes towards Isiac religion, the paper argues that in Book 11 Apuleius helps his readers see that Lucius’ understanding of Isis and Osiris is too literal and not philosophical enough, and encourages them to go beyond Lucius’ limited perspective to a full Platonic understanding of the deeper truths Isis and Osiris represent.

Ex alienis uocibus:
Platonic Demonology and Socratic Superstition
in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*
RICHARD FLETCHER

This paper explores how Apuleius’ lecture about Platonic demonology and Socrates’ *daimonion* (*De deo Socratis*) may be read both in terms of his methodologies of Platonism throughout his corpus (e.g. his ‘impersonation of philosophy’) and also with an eye to how it investigates key ideas at work in the *Metamorphoses* (e.g. superstition in the Aristomenes-Socrates episode of Book 1). Rather than seeing the philosophical work as a mere ‘source’ for his Platonism, to be summarized or paraphrased in philosophical readings of the *Metamorphoses*, this paper calls for a more nuanced approach to the relationship between Apuleius’ fiction and the rest of his Platonic corpus.

The Platonic Eros of Art in the Ancient Greek Novel
VERNON PROVENCAL

The ancient Greek novel marks the appearance of a new art form, originating in the unique culture of the educated Greek elite (*pepaideumenoi*) of the early imperial period of the Roman empire, the cultural period of the Second Sophistic (roughly 50-250 CE), deeply influenced by a renewed interest in Plato. From a Platonic perspective, the art of the ancient novel is a profound sublimation of the eros of the soul for the divine, realized in the artifice of idealized erotic fantasy, in which the pedagogical paradigm of *erastēs* and *erōmenos* provides a new model for an erotic relationship of author and audience. Art no longer performs the traditional mimetic function of representing reality, but the creative function of constructing fantasy; it no longer serves the didactic purpose of educating the ignorant, but the erotic aim of pleasuring the enlightened.

Platonic Perversions:
Horror and the Irrational in the Greek Novel
STEVEN D. SMITH

Episodes of horror and the grotesque in Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus operate against a background of Platonic philosophy, indicating that the ancient Greek novel offers opportunities for a literary and aesthetic challenge to rational accounts of the world. Rather than charting an uncomplicated ascent towards the true and beautiful, the novels stage opportunities to linger on the lower, corporeal rungs of Plato's philosophical ladder. Even within the idealistic framework of the symmetrical love story, a source of pleasure in these texts is indulging the darker side of human nature and experimenting with irrational, perverse uses of the body.

Apollonios of Tyana and the *Gymnoi* of Ethiopia
GARY REGER

In the *Life of Apollonios of Tyana* (217-238 CE), Philostratos narrates the travels and adventures of a wonder-working sage of the first century CE. His journeys take him to Ethiopia (the Sudan), where he defeats in philosophic conversation an exiled group of Indian "naked" (*gymnoi*) sages. Philostratos' account of the geography of Upper Egypt and Ethiopia in this episode is deeply flawed, and it is a problem that he claims to rely on the eye-witness account of Apollonios'

companion and first biographer Damis and that his readership had access to more accurate information. This paper argues that an explanation may be sought in the competition within which Apollonios frames his narrative, between Apollonios and Alexander the Great and between himself and Alexander's biographers.