

Anth. Pal. 14.34
and Achilles Tatius 2.14

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INCLUDED IN THE *Anthologia Palatina* is an oracle that is also found, with some textual variation, in the *Leucippe and Clitophon* of Achilles Tatius. The anthology lemma (14.34) is as follows:

- 1 Νῆσός τις πόλις ἐστὶ φυτάνυμον αἶμα λαχοῦσα,
- 2 ἰσθμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ πορθμὸν ἐπ' ἠπειρίοιο φέρουσα·
- 3 ἔνθ' ἀπ' ἐμῆς ἔσθ' αἶμα ὁμοῦ καὶ Κέκροπος αἶμα·
- 4 ἔνθ' Ἥφαιστος ἔχει χαίρει γλαυκῶπιν Ἀθήνην·
- 5 κεῖθι θυηπολίην πέμπειν κελόμην Ἡρακλεῖ.¹

The oracle in the second book of the novel (2.14.1) is almost identical to the lemma of the anthology:

- 1 Νῆσός τις (πόλις) ἐστὶ φυτάνυμον αἶμα λαχοῦσα,
- 2 ἰσθμὸν ὁμοῦ καὶ πορθμὸν ἐπ' ἠπειρίοιο φέρουσα,
- 3 ἔνθ' Ἥφαιστος ἔχων χαίρει γλαυκῶπιν Ἀθήνη·
- 4 κεῖθι θυηπολίην σε φέρειν κέλομαι Ἡρακλεῖ.²

The version in the novel, however, omits πόλις in the first line,³ does not include the third line of the anthology lemma, reads ἔχων instead of ἔχει in its third line, and in the fourth line has σε φέρειν κέλομαι instead of πέμπειν κελόμην. I shall argue here that the third line of the anthology lemma contributes something to the elaboration and understanding of the novel and should be restored to the corrupt text of the novel.

¹ Düber's text, *Epigrammatum Anthologia Palatina* (Paris 1872). I translate:

There is a city that has its blood named from a plant,
bearing both an isthmus and a strait to the mainland;
there together there is blood of mine and blood of Cecrops,
there Hephaestus rejoices as he holds grey-eyed Athena;
to that place I bid you send a sacrifice to Heracles.

² The text of the Budé edition, J.-P. Garnaud, ed., *Achille Tatius d'Alexandrie: Le Roman de Leucippé et Clitophon* (Paris 1991).

³ Garnaud's text includes πόλις based on Jacobs' emendation (cf. n.6 *infra*).

At 1.3.4f Clitophon, who is engaged to his half-sister Calligone, has a dream that causes him some anxiety:

ὄναρ ἐδόκουν συμφῶναι τῇ παρθένῳ τὰ κάτω μέρη μέχρις ὀμφαλοῦ, δύο δὲ ἐντεῦθεν τὰ ἄνω σώματα· ἐφίσταται δὴ μοι γυνὴ φοβερὰ καὶ μεγάλη, τὸ πρόσωπον ἀγρία· ὀφθαλμὸς ἐν αἵματι, βλοσυραὶ παρειαί, ὄφεις αἱ κόμαι. ἄρπην ἐκράτει τῇ δεξιᾷ, δᾶδα τῇ λαιᾷ. ἐπιπεσοῦσα οὖν μοι θυμῷ καὶ ἀνατείνασα τὴν ἄρπην, καταφέρει τῆς ἰξύος, ἔνθα τῶν δύο σωμάτων ἦσαν αἱ συμβολαί, καὶ ἀποκόπτει μου τὴν παρθένον. περιδεῆς οὖν ἀναθορῶν ἐκ τοῦ δείματος, φράζω μὲν πρὸς οὐδένα, κατ' ἑμαυτὸν δὲ πονηρὰ ἐσκεπτόμην.⁴

The first part of the dream is easily understood: Clitophon sees himself engaged in sex. The second part, in which the snake-haired woman forcefully divides the couple, is more difficult to interpret and raises several questions. Who is the woman? Why does she have snakey hair? Why has she stopped the young couple from having sex? Neither the hero nor any other character answers these questions, nor will they be answered until the reader decodes, examines, and interprets the oracle at 2.14.1 in view of *Anth. Pal.* 14.34.

Immediately after Clitophon's ominous dream, a letter arrives from his uncle Sostratus saying that because of an outbreak of war at Byzantium, he is sending his wife, Panthea, and daughter, Leucippe, to Sidon for safe-keeping. As expected, the two cousins fall in love, although Clitophon realizes that his love for Leucippe can never be fulfilled, because his father has already arranged his marriage to Calligone.

Hippias, Clitophon's father, also has a dream that compels him to hasten the wedding plans; but as he prepares to initiate the ceremony, an eagle swoops down and carries off the pre-nuptial sacrifice. This foreboding omen forces Hippias to postpone the wedding and to call in soothsayers to advise him; he then agrees with the seers, who recommend that Zeus must be appeased by the sacrifice of a bull at midnight by the sea.

⁴ "In a dream I saw my sister's body and mine grown together into a single body from the navel down and separating into two above. Over me there hovered a huge, fearsome woman who glowered at me savagely: eyes shot with blood, rough cheeks, snakes for hair, a sickle in her right hand, a torch in her left. In a wild attack she aimed her sickle at our groin where the two bodies joined, and severed the girl from me.

"Waking up from sheer fright, I decided to tell no one but brooded over my troubles privately" (tr. J. J. Winkler, in B. P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* [Berkeley 1989] 178).

While Hippias is distracted by these dreams and harbingers of doom, a certain Byzantine named Callisthenes takes it upon himself to kidnap the daughter of Sostratus. He has never seen Leucippe but has heard that she is very beautiful. This rumored beauty has so inflamed Callisthenes that he has asked Sostratus for Leucippe's hand in marriage. But the character of Callisthenes (much like that of the legendary Hippocleides: Hdt. 6.129f) causes Sostratus to refuse the proposed marriage; Callisthenes therefore decides to kidnap Leucippe and make her his wife by force.

The legal basis for this kidnaping-turned-marriage is a Byzantine law (cited at 2.13.3) providing that if a man marries a woman he has kidnaped before they are apprehended, his only punishment is to stay married: νόμου γὰρ ὄντος Βυζαντίους, εἴ τις ἀρπάσας παρθένον φθάσας ποιήσει γυναῖκα, γάμον ἔχειν τὴν ζημίαν. Because the law allows Callisthenes to do what he intends, he follows Leucippe to Sidon, having contrived to get himself appointed as one of the officials sent to offer the sacrifice to Herakles that the oracle of 2.14.1 is thought to demand. But while the women of Sidon, including Calligone, are observing the Byzantines' sacrifice, Callisthenes mistakes Calligone for Leucippe and arranges for her subsequent abduction.

This theft seems to have been foreshadowed by the painting of Europa mentioned at the beginning of the novel (1.1.2f). Calligone, whose abduction occurs during Hippias' seaside sacrifice, parallels Europa, who was kidnaped at the shore by Zeus in the form of a bull. Scholars have long recognized that the theft and rape of Europa depicted in the painting foreshadow the elopement of Leucippe and Clitophon and more importantly the abduction of Clitophon's sister Calligone.⁵ What has not been observed, however, is the importance of the foreshadowing supplied by the oracle as found in *Anth. Pal.* 14.34.

⁵ E. C. Harlan, *The Description of Paintings as a Literary Device and Its Application in Achilles Tatius* (diss. Columbia University 1965) 94f, sees the description of Europa and the bull as only having "symbolic significance"; S. Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel* (Princeton 1989), notes that the garden in the painting of Europa and the garden of Clitophon help to equate Europa with Leucippe (50) and goes so far as to make Europa synonymous with Calligone (63).

The third line from the anthology (quoted *supra* 283), not included in our text of the oracle in Tattius, discusses the types of residents at Tyre: Athenians (Κέκροπος αἶμα) and Tyrians (ἀπ' ἐμῆς ἔσθ' αἶμα). It is suitable that sacrifice should be made to Heracles at Tyre, for he is the patron deity of the Tyrians. The absence of the third line of the oracle of the novel, however, has never been adequately examined or explained. Jacobs was able to restore the corrupt first line of the oracle in the novel from the version preserved in the anthology, but does not comment on the discrepancy.⁶ Gaselee, in a footnote, writes that the third line of the riddle is of "doubtful meaning." Vilborg, in his commentary on Tattius, observes that "In the anthology, there is one more line ... omitted by A.T., probably because he did not need it for his aims." Even the most recent critical edition of this romance merely notes that the oracle is included in the *Anth. Pal.*⁷

Both the oracle and the riddle are a bit strange in that they have Hephaestus embracing or holding "grey-eyed Athena." Hephaestus, the "violent obstetrician"⁸ of the androgenetic goddess, attempted to force himself upon Athena on the Athenian acropolis, but he ejaculated prematurely, and from his semen Erichthonius was born.

According to Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 3.14.6), some say that Erichthonius was the son of Hephaestus and Atthis, although others claim that he was the son of Hephaestus and Athena.⁹ The latter genealogy is related as follows: Hephaestus, forsaken by Aphrodite, falls in love with Athena, whom he then pursues for sexual purposes. He attempts to rape her, but she resists. Hephaestus then ejaculates upon her, and Athena in disgust proceeds to wipe away the semen with wool, which she throws to the ground. From this semen-permeated wool springs Erichthonius, half serpent, half man. Pausanias (1.24.7) also associates Athena with the serpent Erichthonius in his description of the statue of Athena in the Parthenon: πλησίον

⁶ F. Jacobs, *Achillis Tatii Alexandrini de Leucippes et Clitophontis amoribus libri octo* (Leipzig 1821) 530f.

⁷ S. Gaselee, *Achilles Tattius* (London 1969) 82 n.1; E. Vilborg, *Leucippe and Clitophon* (Stockholm 1955) 51; Garnaud (*supra* n.1) 45 n.1.

⁸ W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, tr. J. Raffan (Cambridge [Mass.] 1985) 143.

⁹ For a listing of ancient authors who have written on this myth see the Loeb edition of *Apollodorus, The Library* (London 1921) II 89 n.1.

τοῦ δόρατος δράκων ἐστίν· εἴη δ' ἄν Ἐριχθόνιος οὗτος ὁ δράκων.

The versions of the birth of Erichthonius that have Hephaestus as the father of the snake divinity seem to be later accounts.¹⁰ Robertson speculates that in an earlier version Prometheus may have lusted after Athena and thus may have been the father of Erichthonius.¹¹ For our purposes it does not matter who was the father of the child, or even who the child was. The essential elements of the myth are what is important: a male attempts to rape a virgin, intercourse is prohibited, and snakes are mentioned in one way or another.

The bizarre aspects of the oracle need to be decoded in terms of just these elements. Sostratus, Leucippe's father, supplies an interpretation of the oracle at 2.14.5. He claims that the description of Hephaestus embracing Athena is a reference to a "holy precinct where olive trees grow with gleaming branches, accompanied by fire that ignites spontaneously and plays abundantly along the boughs. The smoky vapors from the fire husband the plant. This is the friendly affection of fire and tree: Athena welcomes the attentions of Hephaistos" (tr. Winkler 196). A non-agricultural decoding, however, must take into account that in the original oracle (with the line not included in the text of the novel) the snake-formed Cecrops is mentioned and that there is an allusion to the attempted rape of Athena by Hephaestus.

Throughout the novel, Tattius presents his characters attempting to 'read' oracles, omens, and paintings for their relevance to the action. In so doing he implies a challenge to the reader—often misleading, as Bartsch has shown—to do the same. So here, it seems likely that Tattius intended his readers to recall the mythological references contained in the epigram, including the line now missing in the present text of the novel, and then to fit them into the narrative flow. At 2.23 Satyrus, a household slave, has arranged for Leucippe and Clitophon to bring their love to fruition. Clitophon is to slip into Leucippe's room after Satyrus has drugged Conops, a slave in Leucippe's entourage; but all does not go as planned, for when Clitophon is

¹⁰ See e.g. *Danais* fr. 2, in M. Davies, ed., *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Göttingen 1988) 141.

¹¹ N. Robertson, "The Origin of the Panathenaea," *RhM* 127 (1985) 231–95, esp. 258–69. On the sexual nature of Hephaestus see R. Caldwell, "Hephaestus: A Psychological Study," *Helios* 6 (1978) 43–59.

about to make love to Leucippe, her mother, Panthea, is awakened by a dream in which she sees her daughter being split in two by a robber, beginning at her private part (2.23.5): ἐδόκει τινὰ ληστήν μάχαιραν ἔχοντα γυμνὴν ἄγειν ἀρπασάμενον αὐτῆς τὴν θυγατέρα καὶ καταθέμενον ὑπτίαν, μέσσην ἀνατεμεῖν τῇ μαχαίρᾳ τὴν γαστέρα, κάτωθεν ἀρξάμενον ἀπὸ τῆς αἰδοῦς. When Panthea rushes to Leucippe's room, Clitophon is forced to flee. This episode recalls the dream (1.3.4) in which Clitophon sees himself grown, from the waist down, into one body with Calligone, when a woman appears who cuts the two apart. But the metaphorical rape of Panthea's dream also parallels the myth of Hephaestus and Athena in the oracle, where reference to Cecrops also anticipates the snake-haired woman of Clitophon's dream. Thus the decoded oracle fits perfectly into the plot: Clitophon will attempt to consummate illegally his love for Leucippe just as Hephaestus had tried to have illicit sex with Athena; and the snake-haired woman who will prevent any coital activity recalls the complete original epigram.

Thus the oracle is to be linked with other foreshadowing devices in the novel, such as the painting of Europa and the kidnaping of Calligone. Similarly, the oracle, as originally preserved in the *Anth. Pal.* also supplies the foreshadowing of Clitophon's failed attempt at intercourse with Leucippe. The present text of *Leucippe and Clitophon*, however, has the oracle but omits the third line of the original that foreshadows the scene involving Panthea. As readers could not have been expected to be familiar with the complete text of such an obscure oracle, it seems clear that the omission of the third line is not Achilles Tatius' doing, but rather a loss in textual transmission like πόλις in the first line, or is another of example of the apparent scribal abridgements or omissions found elsewhere in the narrative.¹²

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¹² Other instances are suggested by Satyrus' rather sudden appearance at 1.16.1, and 2.14.1, where Sostratus' generalship is mentioned for the first time. See also W. H. Willis, "The Robinson-Cologne Papyrus of Achilles Tatius," *GRBS* 31 (1990) 73-102.