

On *Digenes Akrites*, Grottaferrata Version, Book 6

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IN THE OVERALL plot of the epic *Digenes Akrites*, Books 5 and 6 of the Grottaferrata version comprise the *Ich-Erzählung*,¹ i.e., Digenes' first-person account of his adventures narrated respectively to a passing Cappadocian (G 2062–64) and a group of friends (2334–36). Book 6 in particular presents the reader with a number of puzzles. The first of these is its disproportionate length: apart from Book 4, which actually comprises two books of the original epic,² the other books of the Grottaferrata version average 297 verses each; G-6 comprises 805, more than double the average.³ Likewise puzzling is the setting, its relation to the incidents, and their relation to one another. Book 6 comprises the hero's last adventures before he settles down in a palace on the Euphrates—a series of incidents in which various interlopers attempt to part Digenes and his wife.⁴ Action is set in a meadow (G 2348) where the couple encamp en route to a new home after Digenes' adultery and consequent desire for a change of scene (2325ff, 2345f).⁵ Moreover, the meadow is said to contain a spring, which figures in the adventure of the dragon (2378). In the subsequent encounter with Maximo, however, the body of water where the action is set is called at first a river (2877) and later

¹ E. TRAPP, ed., *Digenes Akrites. Synoptische Ausgabe der ältesten Versionen* (Vienna 1971 [hereafter 'Trapp']) 62. Citations are to the line-numbers of this edition.

² Cf. S. MacAlister, "Digenes Akritas: the First Scene with the Apelatai," *Byzantion* 54 (1984) 569f.

³ Might the summary of the action of G-6 at G 1916–18 (G-4) have been intended for a performance of the poem in which G-6 was to be omitted?

⁴ Awkwardly, in our version she is called, in folktale fashion, merely *ἡ κόρη* or is referred to by some such formula as "my beauty, the fair daughter of the general Ducas" (G 2346f); although, in the overall epic plot, the two are already married, this fact is stressed only at G 3106 (note that this point is omitted in the corresponding passage of E [1558ff]); Mavrogordato (n.18 *infra*) ad 2474 suggests, implausibly, that *ἡ καλή μου* may connote 'wife'. The name Eudocia, given to her in the Z manuscripts, is likely to be the invention of the Z compiler: cf. MacAlister (*supra* n.2) 572 n.56.

⁵ The cause-and-effect relationship is not made in any way psychologically plausible, however: cf. A. R. Dyck, "On *Digenis Akritas* Grottaferrata Version Book 5," *GRBS* 24 (1983) 191; Digenes calls the place Blattolivaldi at G 3448 (his resumé of his deeds).

specifically the Euphrates (3060);⁶ and before the battle with the ἀπελάται and Maximo the terrain becomes, as one would expect, mountainous (G 2859ff); for mountainous regions are the venue for banditry as early as that notorious highwayman of ancient saga, Sciron.⁷ Moreover, G-6 includes similarly structured incidents in which Digenes' wife is threatened by a dragon and a lion; on both occasions she has to rouse the sleeping Digenes to dispatch the interloper. The book likewise includes two encounters of Digenes with the ἀπελάται led by Philopappos and two duels between Digenes and the Amazon Maximo; the book concludes with Digenes' killing of Maximo after twice sparing her life. The reader has every right to wonder why the landscape shifts in this fashion, why this doubling of plot-elements was necessary, and why the encounter with Maximo should have concluded as it does.

This paper will approach these problems on the basis of two assumptions: (1) that underlying extant versions of *Digenes Akrites* is an Ur-epic that can, by use of the stemmatic method, be reconstructed in its main outlines with reasonable certainty; (2) that this Ur-epic was in its turn based on folksong material.⁸ If these assumptions are correct, they will have important consequences: the original folksong material will have undergone interference in two stages, first when reduced to epic form and second when modified by the redactors of the individual versions. The main witnesses for the reconstruction of the archetype are the two oldest, the Grottaferrata version (*Crypt. Za* 44, s. XIII ex./XIV in.=G) and the Escorial version (*Scor. Ψ IV* 22, s. XV ex.=E).⁹ A third witness, Z, compiled from E and a sister-manu-

⁶ The Euphrates is perhaps meant to be the body of water alluded to in the context of Digenes' first encounter with the leaders of the ἀπελάται (G 2507). Note that none of these references to water is found in E or, presumably, the archetype.

⁷ That the encounters with the ἀπελάται were originally set in the mountains is shown by E 1141.

⁸ Cf. C. A. Trypanis, *Gnomon* 45 (1973) 615; *Greek Poetry from Homer to Seferis* (London/Boston 1981) 491ff. Cf. also the argument for folksong material underlying the epic by E. Trapp, "Digenes Akrites—Epos oder Roman?" *Studi classici in onore di Q. Cataudella* II (Catania 1972) 637f. This remains the prevailing view, although R. Beaton, "'Digenes Akrites' and Modern Greek Folk Song: a Reassessment," *Byzantion* 51 (1981) 22–43, and *Folk Poetry of Modern Greece* (Cambridge/London/New York 1980) 78–82, has pleaded the case for regarding the poem as originally a literary composition influenced by folksong only at a late stage of transmission and even then only superficially.

⁹ St. Alexiou, Ἀκριτικά. Τό πρόβλημα τῆς ἐγκυρότητος τοῦ κειμένου E (Iraklio 1979), and Παρατηρήσεις στόν Ἀκρίτη, Ἀριάδνη 1 (1983) 41–57, has argued that E stands closer to the original than G; cf., however, E. Trapp, *BZ* 75 (1982) 350–53, and MacAlister (*supra* n.2: 551ff), who argues that Digenes' first encounter with the ἀπελάται as narrated in E is a secondary insertion from a folksong (it is omitted by G). That said, my impression is that in general the *plot* of E is closer to the original

script of G (=g), is reconstructed from three seventeenth-century codices;¹⁰ γ is the postulated common source of G and g; it is useful for our purposes, however, only where G has suffered damage.¹¹ Comparison of G and E, then, should enable us to isolate the additions made by the G-redactor¹² and to study his literary technique. On the other hand, the contributions of the epic redactor can only be isolated *ex hypothesi*; hence caution is required. In any case, this paper will test the proposition that, as in the case of G-5,¹³ the puzzles posed by G-6 can be illuminated by analysis of its compositional features.

The basic idea that unites the incidents of G-6 is that of a couple striving to remain coupled—that is, to ward off external interference of various sorts. The similarity to the plot of ancient and Byzantine romances has been remarked.¹⁴ It was therefore to romance that the G-redactor turned for the elements of the *πρόσωπον . . . τηλαυγές* (Pind. *Ol.* 6.4) that he wished to affix to the beginning of this book. In contrast to this ambitious exercise in scene-setting,¹⁵ E sketches the *locus* of action austerely (E 1083–85):

ἐξέβηκεν ὁ Διγενὴς μετὰ τῆς ποθητῆς του
εἰς τόπους ὑπολιβάδους κ' ὅπου κατάσκια δένδρη
καὶ ὕδατα ψυχρότατα, μόνος μὲ τὴν καλήν του.

For the archetype itself we need assume nothing more.

In spite of moral qualms voiced by Photius and echoed by Psellus himself, Achilles Tatius had been licensed for imitation since Psellus' essay comparing him to Heliodorus.¹⁶ The poet responsible for G

than that of G, as much of the material gathered here will tend to show; at the same time, for the very reason that it has been complicated by an intermediary stage, G makes a more rewarding object for literary analysis.

¹⁰ T(rebizond) 56 (*olim* 50), A(ndros): Bibl. Nat. 1074 (Athens), P(rose version): today in the University of Thessaloniki; cf. M. Jeffreys, "Digenis Akritas Manuscript Z," *Dodoni* 4 (1975) 161–201.

¹¹ Cf. the stemma printed by Trapp 46. None of Trapp's examples (37) of passages in which G presents a shortened version vis-à-vis γ is from our book.

¹² I do not ordinarily distinguish him from the γ -redactor (see previous note); but cf. 362f, 365, and n.63 *infra*.

¹³ Cf. Dyck (*supra* n.5) 185ff.

¹⁴ Cf. H. Grégoire, "Notes on the Byzantine Epic," *Byzantion* 15 (1940–41) 92f.

¹⁵ Cf. V. Tiftixoglu, "Digenis, das 'Sophrosyne'-Gedicht des Meliteniotes und der byzantinische Fünzfzehnsilber," *BZ* 67 (1974) 11f n.49; regarding its literary ambitions he notes, for instance, the presence here of the only two examples in the poem of *σχήματα ἀπτικά*; the corresponding passages of Theodore Meliteniotes' *Sophrosyne* depend on our poem (version T), not vice-versa, as Tiftixoglu (10ff) demonstrates against Trapp 35f. One looks forward to the much-needed new edition of the *Sophrosyne* being prepared by A. Kambylis (Hamburg).

¹⁶ Cf. Michael Psellus, *The Essays on Euripides and George of Pisidia and on*

2337–42 (the beginning of G-6) thought it possible to transfer with only trifling changes¹⁷ the encomium of the rose contained in Leucippe's song to the month of May:¹⁸

εἰ τοῖς ἀνθεσιν ἤθελεν ὁ Ζεὺς ἐπιθεῖναι βασιλέα, τὸ ῥόδον ἂν τῶν
ἀνθέων ἐβασίλευε. γῆς ἐστὶ κόσμος, φυτῶν ἀγλαΐσμα, ὀφθαλμὸς
ἀνθέων, λειμῶνος ἐρύθημα, κάλλος ἀστράπτου· ἔρωτος πνέει,
᾿Αφροδίτην προξενεῖ (Ach. Tat. 2.1.2f)

εἰ βασιλέα τῶν μηνῶν θεῖναι τις ἐβουλήθη,
Μάιος ἐβασίλευσεν εἰς ἅπαντας τοὺς μῆνας·
κόσμος οὗτος τερπνότατος γῆς ἀπάσης τυγχάνει,
ὀφθαλμὸς πάντων τῶν φυτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνθῶν λαμπρότης,
τῶν λειμώνων ἐρύθημα καὶ κάλλος ἀπαστράπτων,
ἔρωτας πνέει θαυμαστῶς, ᾿Αφροδίτην ἐπάγει (G 2337–42).

Here, of course, the G-redactor grossly miscalculated, for only the last two or at most three clauses of the encomium apply equally to both subjects (*κάλλος ἀπαστράπτων* ~ *κάλλος ἀστράπτου*; *ἔρωτας πνέει* ~ *ἔρωτος πνέει*; *᾿Αφροδίτην ἐπάγει* ~ *᾿Αφροδίτην προξενεῖ*), whereas it is nonsensical to call a span of time, rather than a flower, an adornment of the earth, the eye and brilliance of flowers, or the purple decoration of meadows. Such changes as are observable were surely introduced *metri causa*: the introduction of modifiers for *κόσμος* and *γῆς* in G 2339 as well as the addition of *θαυμαστῶς* in G 2342 help their respective lines achieve the requisite fifteen syllables; and the substitution of *λαμπρότης* for *ἀγλαΐσμα* in G 2340 and *ἐπάγει* for *προξενεῖ* (G 2342) was surely for the sake of the paroxytone line-end, as Tiftixoglu has pointed out.¹⁹ Thus the very beginning of G-6 illustrates both the literary ambitions of the G-redactor and his unwillingness or inability, beyond the most rudimentary metrical first-aid, to take the necessary care to adapt his borrowings to their new environment. This is not the last example we shall see of his mechanical approach to composition.

At the outset of the narrative of G-6 we find Digenes and his wife in a meadow (2348), where Digenes sets up his bed and tent (2349).

Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius, ed. A. R. Dyck (= *Byzantina Vindobonensia* 16 [Vienna 1986]) 80ff.

¹⁷ As Tiftixoglu (*supra* n.15) 12 notes, the change of *ἀγλαΐσμα* to *λαμπρότης* and of *προξενεῖ* to *ἐπάγει* are determined by the exigencies of paroxytone ending in the political verse. The allusion to Zeus at the beginning of Leucippe's song had, of course, to be removed for theological reasons (though Aphrodite can still stand metonymically for love at G 2342).

¹⁸ J. Mavrogordato, ed., *Digenes Akrites* (Oxford 1956) *ad* 2465, noted the borrowing.

¹⁹ Tiftixoglu (*supra* n.15) 12.

Around him are various plants and rushes, and a spring is nearby (2350–53). The birds present include peacocks, parrots, and swans (2354f). This description of nature is largely borrowed from the ἔκφρασις of the walled park where Clitophon and Leucippe stroll at Achilles Tatius 1.15.1–8²⁰ and to which it is better suited (the odds are, of course, heavily against encountering such a collection of exotic birds in the wild). The peacocks receive greatest attention; they are said to reflect the color of the flowers with their wings (G 2358f). This imitation of the flowers leads to a eulogy of Digenes' wife's beauty, which itself imitates and competes with the colors of the meadow (2362–70). Juxtaposition of this description with Achilles Tatius' ἔκφρασις of Leucippe discloses a number of similarities.²¹

τὸ δὲ κάλλος ἀστράπτου τοῦ ταῶ ἦττον ἐδόκει μοι τοῦ Λευκίππης εἶναι προσώπου. τὸ γὰρ τοῦ σώματος κάλλος αὐτῆς πρὸς τὰ τοῦ λειμῶνος ἤριζεν ἄνθη· ναρκίσσου μὲν τὸ πρόσωπον ἔστιλβε χροιάν, ῥόδον δὲ ἀνέτελλεν ἐκ τῆς παρειᾶς, ἴον δὲ ἢ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐμάρμαιρεν αὐγῇ, αἱ δὲ κόμαι βοστρυχούμεναι μᾶλλον εἰλίττοντο κιττοῦ· τοιοῦτος ἦν Λευκίππης ἐπὶ τῶν προσώπων ὁ λειμῶν (Ach. Tat. 1.19.1f).

καὶ τὸ κάλλος τῆς εὐγενοῦς κόρης ὑπεραστράπτου κρείττον ταῶνος ἔλαμπε καὶ τῶν φυτῶν ἀπάντων· ναρκίσσου γὰρ τὸ πρόσωπον τὴν χροίαν ἐμιμείτο αἱ παρειαὶ ὡς εὐθαλον ἐξαντέλλον ῥόδον· ἄνθος ῥόδον ἀρτιφυῆς ὑπέφηνε τὰ χεῖλη, ὀπηνίκα ταῖς κάλυξιν ἄρχεται ἀνατέλλειν (G 2362–67).

Leucippe is compared to the gleaming beauty of the peacock, the image that introduced the *ecphrasis* of the beauty of Digenes' wife. Participial forms of ἀστράπτω (Leucippe) and ὑπεραστράπτω (Digenes' wife) are used of the beauty of the two women; both imitate the hues of the narcissus and rose; forms of ἀνατέλλω (Leucippe) and ἐξαντέλλω (Digenes' wife) are used to describe their cheeks. At G 2365 the echoes of Ach. Tat. 1.19 give way to those of the first description of Leucippe at Ach. Tat. 1.4.3 (τὸ στόμα ῥόδων ἄνθος ἦν, ὅταν ἄρχηται τὸ ῥόδον ἀνοίγειν τῶν φύλλων τὰ χεῖλη), combined with

²⁰ Similar material reappears in a metrically inferior version in G-7 (3153ff) as a description of the park surrounding Digenes' palace on the Euphrates (where it likewise has no counterpart in E); cf. Tiftixoglu (*supra* n.15) 11 n.49, who, however, makes G-6 dependent on G-7 (he seems unaware of the connection of both passages with Ach. Tat. 1.15.1–8 pointed out by Trapp *ad locc.* and in *Digenis Akritis: the Two-Blood Border Lord*, tr. D. B. Hull [Athens (Ohio) 1972] *ad* G-6 15–41).

²¹ The parallel is noted by Trapp *ad loc.*

Ach. Tat. 2.1.3 (ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδόκουν τὸ ρόδον ἐπὶ τῶν χειλέων αὐτῆς <ὄρᾶν>, ὡς εἴ τις κάλυκος τὸ περιφερὲς εἰς τὴν τοῦ στόματος ἐκκλῖσει μορφήν).²²

Moreover, the description of Digenes' wife in our passage differs from previous ones in G. The first reference to her comes in G-4:

πάγκαλος ἢ διάφημος ἢ ἀκουστὴ ἐκείνη,
ἦς τὸ κάλλος ἀμήχανον, παράδοξον τὸ γένος.
οὐσίαν τε καὶ κτήματα καὶ ἐτέραν πλουσίαν
ἀδύνατον ἀπαριθμεῖν ἢ ἀπεικάζειν ὄλως (G 1214–17).

At this point in the narrative Digenes, his father, uncle, and companions ride past her father's house (G 1197ff). She is praised for her beauty, descent, and wealth—all qualities that will make her a good match, for the narrator is preparing the way for Digenes' decision to marry her, which follows soon afterward (G 1255f). Later in the same scene when Digenes gets his first glimpse of her, she receives this description:

τὰ κάλλη τοῦ προσώπου της κωλυοῦν τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς του
κ' οὐ δύναται καλῶς ἰδεῖν τὴν ἡλιογεννημένην
ὡς γὰρ ἀκτίς ἀνέτειλεν ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ προσώπου,
ἦν γὰρ ἡ κόρη ἀληθῶς ὡσπερ ἱστορισμένη·
ὄμμα γοργόν ἐνῆδονον, κόμην ξανθὴν καὶ σγοῦρον,
ὄφρυν εἶχε κατάμαυρον, ἄκρατον δὲ τὸ μέλαν,
ὡς χιόνα τὸ πρόσωπον, μέσον δὲ βεβαμμένον (G 1300–06).

As in G-6, her brightness (ἡλιογεννημένη, ἀκτίς, ὄμμα γοργόν) is mentioned, a common attribute of youthful beauty from Homer on.²³ What dominates this passage, however, is the contrast between light and dark (ξανθὴν, κατάμαυρον, μέλαν, ὡς χιόνα); in this it is wholly different from the *ecphrasis* of G-6.²⁴ Thus G-6 borrows its description of Digenes' wife from Achilles Tatius not for the sake of, but in defiance of, the exigencies of consistency with G-4.²⁵

Another reflection of Achilles Tatius has not been noticed. After Digenes has killed the dragon and the lion that threatened her, his beloved asks him to play his cithara to soothe her fears. His playing is to be the accompaniment of a song, but one sung not by him (as the situation might have suggested) but by his wife:

“Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ ἔρωτι γλυκὺν δόντι μοι κύρκαν
καὶ χαίρω βασιλεύουσα, μηδένα φοβουμένη·

²² Cf. Tiftixoglu (*supra* n.15) 17.

²³ Cf. e.g. ἀγλαΐη at *Od.* 18.180 and 19.82.

²⁴ Note that later in G-6 (2467) she is referred to as ἡλιογέννητος, an evident echo of 1301.

²⁵ On the autonomy of many of the individual books cf. Dyck (*supra* n.5) 191f.

κρίνον ὑπάρχει εὐθαλές, μήλον μεμυρισμένον,
καὶ ὡς ῥόδον πανεύοσμον θέλγει μου τὴν καρδίαν.”
ὡς δὲ τὸ ῥόδον ἔλεγεν ἡ κόρη μελωδοῦσα,
ἐνόμιζον ὅτι κρατεῖ ῥόδον ἐπὶ τὰ χεῖλη·
εἰκόασι γὰρ ἀληθῶς ἄρτι ἀνθοῦντι ῥόδῳ (G 2438–44).

Here opportunity has been found to insert the second half of Achilles Tatius' encomium of Leucippe: both girls have just sung of the rose's beauty, and both are admired by their lovers as though they actually held a rose on their lips: ἐνόμιζον ὅτι κρατεῖ ῥόδον ἐπὶ τὰ χεῖλη (G 2443); ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδόκουν τὸ ῥόδον ἐπὶ τῶν χειλέων αὐτῆς <ὄρᾶν> (Ach. Tat. 2.1.3).²⁶ This recollection of Achilles Tatius is likewise an addition of the G-redactor; in E the wife's song merely comprises her thanks to the Cupids for giving her a man like Digenes:

Εὐχαριστῶ τοὺς Ἐρωτας, καλὸν ἄνδρα μ' ἐδῶκαν,
νὰ τὸν θωρῶ, νὰ χαίρωμαι τὰ ἔτη τῆς ζωῆς μου (E 1138f).

She does not mention the apple or the rose, nor does he compliment her.²⁷

G-6, then, begins with the most elaborate exercise in scene-setting we have in *Digenes Akrites*. While these descriptive elements in their original setting in Achilles Tatius' narrative help to build atmosphere for the gradually unfolding romance of Leucippe and Clitophon, in G-6 of *Digenes Akrites* they create an idyllic atmosphere that will be disrupted repeatedly in the ensuing action. The descriptions of the garden and of the woman singing her song frame two incidents, in which Digenes' wife is assailed first by a δράκων and then by a lion. Each time, in G, the sleeping Digenes has to be roused to repel the assault. Not so in E, where Digenes is awake and hears the sound of the approaching δράκων (1087). Furthermore Digenes' summary of his deeds (G 3444ff) mentions that he was asleep when the lion, but not the δράκων, approached his wife; the garbled verse G 2384 (ὁ φιλῶν με ἠγγρύπησε καὶ ἀρτίως καθεύδει, addressed by the wife to the δράκων) raises the possibility of a failed αὐτοσχεδίασμα of the G-redactor. Accordingly Trapp has argued (63) that Digenes' sleep when his wife encounters the δράκων may be the result of contamination with another

²⁶ Another imitation of this passage of Achilles Tatius will be found at Eustathius Macrembolites 3.6: εἴποις ἂν ἰδὼν ῥόδον ἐκθλίψαι τὴν κόρην τοῖς χεῖλεσι; cf. also George Tornices' encomium of Anna Comnena: χεῖλη καθάπερ ῥόδου κάλυκες συμπτυσσόμενα: *Lettres et Discours*, ed. J. Darrouzès (Paris 1970) 247.19f. This was, in other words, a literary flourish characteristic of twelfth-century authors.

²⁷ Cf. also O. Schissel, "Digenis Akritis und Achilleus Tatios," *Neophilologus* 27 (1942) 143ff, for a discussion of the influence of *Leucippe and Clitophon* on the sixteenth-century Trebizond version (Trapp's T).

er version. This provides us with the efficient cause but not yet the formal cause, which involves the plan of the G-redactor to refashion the δράκων incident after the pattern of Eve's temptation. For the setting in the meadow conjures not merely the general motif of the romantic paradise, as A. R. Littlewood has observed:²⁸ it evokes specifically the Garden of Eden.²⁹ Hence Digenes should be absent when the δράκων appears; his wife, like Eve, must be put to the test alone. However, the G-redactor could think of no other means of getting Digenes out of the way than by having him sleep, as in the lion incident. Once again a good idea is spoiled by the G-redactor's poverty of invention.

The song of Digenes' wife serves as a transition from the moment of rest after the encounter with the lion and δράκων to the next danger, posed by forty-five soldiers, members of the ἀπελάται (*cf.* G 2515ff). The transition appears in rudimentary form in E (1140f) but is more developed in G, where it is her song that first attracts their attention (G 2456). Drawn by her beauty, they attempt to part Digenes from his beloved, first by threats and then by assault. This and the following incidents have nothing to do with the paradisiacal setting so elaborately sketched. Rather, we are now told that the soldiers are marching on a road called Trosis (G 2450; *cf.* 2739).³⁰ Much is made of this name in G (though not in E, where it is not mentioned). The G-redactor puns on this name first in connection with the literal wounds received there (ἐν ἧ πολλοὺς συμβέβηκε πολλὰ τραυματισθῆναι: G 2451), then the Love-inflicted wounds (ὡς ὑπὸ βέλους τὰς ψυχὰς ἐτρώθησαν τῷ κάλλει: G 2460), and finally the threats by which they seek to wound Digenes (ἐμὲ δὲ μόνον βλέποντες λόγοις ἤλπιζον τρῶσαι: G 2463). In both G and E Digenes' wife is terrified by the soldiers' threats, but her terror takes different forms in the two versions. Though in E (and doubtless the archetype) she is voluble enough, in G she covers her face with a linen cloth and says nothing; this is for the sake of including Leucippe's *mot* after she and Clitophon have been captured by pirates: ὅτι . . . πρὸ τῆς ψυχῆς τέθνηκεν ἡ φωνή μου (G 2473~Ach. Tat. 3.11.2, noted by Trapp *ad loc.*). This process of overlaying the straightforward plot with pun, paradox, and allusion that we have traced in these early incidents of G-6 is what gives the

²⁸ "Romantic Paradises: The Rôle of the Garden in the Byzantine Romance," *ByzModGrkStud* 5 (1979) 97ff.

²⁹ So previously J. Mavrogordato (*supra* n.18) xlvi.

³⁰ H. Grégoire, "Le tombeau et la date de Digenis Akritas," *Byzantion* 6 (1931) 499-501, identifies this site with the modern Trough.

Grottaferrata version its special flavor, which has been described as that of an “epic clothed as a romance.”³¹

Philopappos and his sons Kinnamos and Ioannakes³² fight their first battle in G³³ with Digenes, not for his wife, but mainly to “put him to the test” (G 2524, E 1208) and secondarily in revenge for his killing of their soldiers the previous day. Single combat with three individuals in succession seems anti-climactic after Digenes has already routed forty-five of their soldiers. One wonders whether this sequence is modelled on Digenes’ encounter with the emperor, an incident preceded by his killing of some of the emperor’s soldiers.³⁴ It is, curiously, only after this first confrontation that Philopappos hatches the plan of detaching his wife from Digenes and marrying her to Ioannakes (G 2684, not paralleled in E). Note also their offer of submission to Digenes (G 2608ff, E 1280ff) and his refusal to be their leader (G2616ff, E 1289ff): like the ‘holy man’ of late antiquity,³⁵ Digenes insists on his status as an outsider, independent of any hierarchy. Here, too, there is a parallel to the encounter with the emperor. I suspect that the encounters with both the ἀπελάται and the emperor originally had similar functions in demonstrating Digenes’ independence of and superiority to established hierarchies. The encounter with Philopappos and his sons was assimilated to the other incidents involving the separation of Digenes and his wife; but this motive was tacked on as an afterthought. It does, however, provide the motor that drives the subsequent action in G-6.

When the leaders of the ἀπελάται have once been defeated by Digenes, a reprise makes sense only if their prospects improve. It is to their kinsmen that Philopappos proposes to appeal for additional forces (G 2678), possibly a reflection of the vendetta-style justice characteristic of a frontier.³⁶ Now Maximo, though descended from

³¹ Trapp’s phrase (*supra* n.8: 643, “ein Epos im Gewand eines Romans”); *cf.* however 367 *infra*.

³² Trapp (65) notes that the mention of the names of the three leaders at G 2453–55 is inappropriate and that these verses have no counterpart in E; Hull (*supra* n.20) transposes them after 2513.

³³ *Cf.* MacAlister (*supra* n.2) 551ff.

³⁴ In the Russian version P there is even clearer evidence of a remodelling of the encounter with the ἀπελάται after that with the emperor: *cf.* Schmaus (n.39 *infra*) 505; on mutual influences of the encounter with the emperor and the Philopappos–Maximo episode in the Russian version *cf.* E. Trapp, “Hatte das Digenisepos ursprünglich eine antikaiserliche Tendenz?” *Byzantina* 3 (1971) 204–06.

³⁵ *Cf.* Peter Brown, “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity,” *JRS* 61 (1971) 92f (= *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* [London/New York 1982] 132–35).

³⁶ In general, the ἀπελάται of *Digenes Akrites* can be best understood in light of similar groups in modern times: *cf.* E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester 1959), especially chapters 2–3.

Amazons brought by Alexander from the Brahmans (G 2719f),³⁷ turns out, surprisingly, to be the kinswoman of Philopappos (G 2786). Now in P of the Russian version Maksimiana is the daughter of Filippapa,³⁸ but there is no reason to assume that this was so even in the original Russian version,³⁹ let alone the Ur-epic. G never explains the nature of the connection. On the other hand, E (and presumably the archetype) has not a word about Maximo's descent or her kinship with Philopappos. Of these features the former is a typical literary flourish of the G-redactor, the latter a transparent pretext for bringing Maximo into a context to which she is otherwise alien. That the two contradict each other evidently did not concern the redactor of G.

Yet the solution to the problem of how to introduce Maximo proves in turn to be a stumbling-block. On the one hand, she must now appear within the framework of a general battle fought to remove the daughter of Ducas from Digenes and give her to Ioannakes (G 2747f).⁴⁰ On the other hand, the epic redactor wants to include a tale in which Digenes' victory over Maximo results in him winning her love; and this can occur only if their encounter is private, not public. Hence the doubling of encounters, the first public, the second private—even though, in this case, the second encounter is truly nonsensical, for there is no reason to believe that Maximo's chances are improved the second time.⁴¹

³⁷ This statement betrays some confusion; cf. Hull (*supra* n.20) *ad* G-7 85, who observes that the Brahmans and Amazons are known to our author via the Alexander romance but fails to give a precise reference or other clarification. In fact, Alexander encounters the Amazons immediately after the Brahmans; the Amazons undertake to pay him a yearly tribute (one hundred gold talents) and to send as hostages five hundred of their number, as well as a gift of one hundred horses; after one year these hostages are to be returned and replaced by others (though any who have meanwhile allied themselves with a man must remain); cf. Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Historia Alexandri Magni* I: *recensio vetusta* [A], ed. W. Kroll (Berlin 1926) 126.15ff; *Leben und Taten Alexanders von Makedonien. Der griechische Alexanderroman nach der Handschrift L*, ed. H. van Thiel (Darmstadt 1983²) 152.5–7 (=3.26); *Der griechische Alexanderroman. Rezension β*, ed. L. Bergson (Stockholm 1965) 172.7 (=3.26); more vague is *Der griechische Alexanderroman. Rezension Γ, Buch III*, ed. F. Parthe, *Beitr.kl.Phil.* 33 (Meisenheim am Glan 1969) 394.4f (=3.26).

³⁸ Cf. M. Speranskij, "Devgenievo dejanie," *Sbornik Otdelenie russkogo iazyka i slovestnosti* 99.7 (1922) 160 (=P. Pascal, "Le 'Digenis' slave," *Byzantion* 10 [1935] 318).

³⁹ Cf. A. Schmaus, "Philopappos-Maximo-Szene und Kaiserepisode im altrussischen Digenis," *BZ* 44 (1951) 500f.

⁴⁰ Trapp 64 cites folksongs ια' 10f and ιβ' 19f as evidence for a plan—never carried out—to marry her to Giannes/Giannikos. (The folksongs relevant to the epic are printed at P. P. Kalonaros, ed., *Βασίλειος Διγενής Ἀκρίτας. Τὰ ἔμμετρα κείμενα* [Athens 1941] II 207ff.)

⁴¹ Not surprisingly, Digenes ignores the private encounter when he recapitulates his deeds for his wife's benefit at G 3485–87.

Not only the plot itself but also the characterization of Maximo suffers from the way she is introduced into this bride-theft narrative. She is presented as the true daughter of Eve in being easily duped by Philopappos (G 2756–58, without counterpart in E). On several other occasions it is emphasized that she should not be or is not being told the true state of affairs, *i.e.*, that Digenes has defeated the ἀπελάται (G 2711f, unparalleled in E; G 2728~E 1356). In defeat Maximo acknowledges her mistake in believing Philopappos when she appeals to Digenes for mercy: πεπλάνημαι γὰρ ὡς γυνὴ Φιλοπαπποῦ πεισθεῖσα (G 2925, without counterpart in E). However, the narrative still contains traces of another Maximo, not so much a victim of Philopappos as a vain boaster, like the ἀπελάται.⁴² Compare her furious response when Philopappos admits that their target is a single man:

ἡ δὲ “ ὦ τρισκατάρατε γέρον,” ἀνταπεκρίθη,
 “καὶ διὰ ἕνα κόπους μοι καὶ τῷ λαῷ παρείχες
 πρὸς ὃν μόνη περάσασα, σὺν Θεῷ καυχωμένη,
 ἀρῶ αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑμῶν μὴ δεηθεῖσα.”
 (G 2897–2900; *cf.* E 1510ff).

Hence Digenes is warranted in addressing her as ἡ καυχωμένη ἄμετρα καὶ ἰσχυὶ θαρροῦσα (G 2978, unparalleled in E).

After the recruitment of Maximo and her one hundred noble retainers, Philopappos and Kinnamos, together with her lieutenant⁴³ Melimitzes, undertake a scouting mission. When he understands that their adversary is a single man, in spite of Philopappos' warning (G 2813–21), Melimitzes goes forth alone to attack him. In G Melimitzes' decision to fight provokes an (uncharacteristic)⁴⁴ anti-barbarian thrust: ἔστι γὰρ καὶ τὸ βάρβαρον δύσπιστον ἔθνος ἅπαν (G 2832);⁴⁵ on the other hand, E 1434 (ἀπρεπεστάτους λόγους) argues that the narrator of the original epic scorned the tactic of avoiding combat suggested by Philopappos. Her lieutenant's reaction anticipates that of Maximo, who likewise scorns the idea that an entire army should be needed to fight a single man (G 2897ff) and meets Digenes in single combat. While Digenes is looking the other way, Philopappos approaches, disables his horse, and beats a hasty retreat. In the Russian

⁴² *Cf.* MacAlister (*supra* n.2) 555, where Maximo should be added to the category “vain boasters” along with Philopappos and his sons.

⁴³ *Cf.* G 2760f.

⁴⁴ *Cf.* E. M. Jeffreys, “Arabs in Byzantine Literature,” *The 17th International Byzantine Congress: Major Papers* (Rochelle, N.Y., 1986) 319; *cf.* also Trapp 66 on the intrusive character of this sentence.

⁴⁵ On Melimitzes' nationality (presumably Armenian) *cf.* Kalonaros (*supra* n.40) I 189 (*ad* A 3400).

version the scene in which Maksima attacks Devgenij from behind while he is occupied with Filippapa may have been modelled on this action. Digenes then takes his beloved to a mountain hideout and returns on a fresh mount and under arms. It is at this point that Digenes and Maximo meet for the first time.

Before the armed encounter the curious incident occurs in which Maximo either says she is going to cross (E 1518) or begins to cross (G 2901) the Euphrates to meet Digenes; but he forbids her to do so and himself crosses instead. Hull compares this action to a scene in the tale of King Omar Ben Ennuman and his sons Sherkan and Zoulmekan in the *Thousand and One Nights*. Here Sherkan enters Greek territory alone and spies ten fair damsels in a monastery through the middle of which a river flows. He observes there a wrestling match in which a young woman (Abrizeh) defeats an old hag (her grandmother Dhat ed-Dewahi). At this point Sherkan approaches to take the damsels as his booty. Abrizeh, however, challenges him to a wrestling match, to which he agrees. She makes him swear an oath to use neither arms nor treachery; since they are separated by the river, she agrees that, if he swears, she will cross over to him. He does swear as required and calls upon her to cross the stream as promised, to which she replies: "It is not for me to come to thee: if thou wilt, do thou cross over to me." Sherkan, however, refuses and insists that Abrizeh cross. Hull comments that "the Greek poet . . . gives a lesson in manners to his Arabian counterpart."⁴⁶ But note that Sherkan was merely insisting that Abrizeh keep her part of the bargain, whereas Digenes and Maximo have reached no such agreement. The scene in *Digenes Akrites* may, however, betray the influence of notions of chivalry and knightly duties toward women, which enter Byzantium in the twelfth century from the West. If so, it might help to date the archetype to a period after the onset of Western influence in Byzantium, associated especially with the reign of Manuel I Comnenus (1143–80). In any event, Digenes' chivalrous gesture reminds the reader that Maximo is not merely another warrior but also a woman; and to this extent it helps prepare for the intrigue that follows.

While crossing the Euphrates to meet Maximo, Digenes in G suffers the embarrassment of losing the ford, so that his horse has to swim across (G 2906f); in E, however, his predicament is still worse, and but for divine protection the hero would have drowned:

⁴⁶ Hull (*supra* n.20) on G-6, 569–71; he refers to *The Portable Arabian Nights*, ed. J. Campbell (New York 1952) 162 (= *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night*, tr. John Payne, II [London 1901] 13, Night 47).

κ' εἶχεν νερὸν ὁ ποταμὸς πολὺν καὶ βουρκωμένον
 κ' ἐξέπεσεν ὁ γρίβας μου κ' ἐχώθη ἕως τραχήλου
 καὶ δένδρον ἔπεψεν ὁ Θεὸς ἀπέσω εἰς τὸ ποτάμιν,
 κ' ἂν εἶχεν λείπειν τὸ δενδρόν, ἐπνίγετο ὁ Ἀκρίτης.
 (E 1525–28)

Surely the archetype was not dissimilar to E in this: the mishap during crossing will have served the function of placing Digenes at a disadvantage at the outset of his encounter with Maximo, so that the outcome would have the character of a *περιπέτεια*, rather than a foregone conclusion. G, while to some extent saving the Borderer's dignity, obscures the function of the incident in the plot. The Russian version carries the tendency observable in G much further by making Devgenij vault over the river on his staff in the manner of folktale heroes.⁴⁷

Although the encounter of Digenes and Maximo has been compared in general terms to that of Achilles and Penthesilea,⁴⁸ it seems, surprisingly, to have escaped notice that both battles between Digenes and Maximo are modelled specifically on the encounter of Achilles and Penthesilea in Quintus of Smyrna. In their first battle Maximo, like Penthesilea, strikes the first blow, but without success: Maximo's lance glances off Digenes' breastplate and is broken (G 2918f), just as Penthesilea's spear shatters on Achilles' divinely-wrought shield (Quint. Smyrn. 1.547ff). But whereas Achilles slew both the warrior maiden and her charger with one thrust (Quint. Smyrn. 1.612ff), Digenes in both instances kills the horse but spares the rider. Like Achilles, Digenes warns his adversary of the pitfalls of *hybris* (Quint. Smyrn. 1.575ff; G 2982f).⁴⁹ Again like Achilles, he takes pity on her; but whereas Achilles' pity (and love) for Penthesilea are aroused too late, when she is already dead (Quint. Smyrn. 1.666ff), Digenes notices Maximo's beauty and pities her after she pleads for mercy (G 2927, the first encounter)⁵⁰ or exhibits fear (G 3088–90, the second encounter).

⁴⁷ This motif also occurs in the encounter with the emperor in the same version: cf. Trapp (*supra* n.34) 204f. For a collection of folktale materials in which a hero jumps across a river cf. Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*³ (Bloomington 1956) F611.3.2.4 and 614.11, H1149.10. (Students of Byzantine literature will think of Callimachus vaulting on his lance over the rampart of the ogre's palace: cf. *Le roman de Callimaque et de Chrysorrhoe*, ed. M. Pichard [Paris 1956] vv.271–77.)

⁴⁸ Trapp (*supra* n.8) 640 in a list of similarities of motif in *Digenes* and other epics.

⁴⁹ Cf. *supra* 356.

⁵⁰ In making this plea Maximo carries out a plan contemplated by Penthesilea (Quint. Smyrn. 1.603ff).

Immediately after Maximo's plea for her life one expects a narration of Digenes' reply. But instead Digenes, as narrator, comments:

καὶ ταύτης <μὲν>⁵¹ εὐλαβηθείς, εἰσακούων τοῖς λόγοις
 κάλλος τε τὸ θανμάσιον, ὃ εἶχεν ἐλεήσας
 ἐκεῖ ταύτην ἀφέμενος πρὸς τοὺς λοιποὺς ἐξῆλθον (G 2926–28).

Here Digenes oddly alludes to Maximo's beauty, even though this had not been previously mentioned. In fact, Digenes' response to Maximo's plea and the following verses down to G 2999, which have no counterpart in E, are very likely to have been added by the γ -redactor. They comprise a statement that Digenes as narrator is reluctant to dilate upon his exploits, an expression of self-condemnation for his second act of adultery⁵² (which in G, however, does not take place until the following day), and a narrative of the battle subsequent to Maximo's defeat that contradicts both itself and the narrative at 3018ff:

καὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ἐκδραμῶν τὸν πόλεμον συνῆψα,
 καὶ πρὶν λάβωσι πείραν μου, εἰσήγοντο μὲν πρὸς με·
 ὡς δὲ πάντας τοὺς μετ' ἐμοῦ συμβεβληκότας εἶδον
 κατερραγμένους ἐπὶ γῆν, ἀφ' ἵππων ἀπωσμένους,
 καὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐγνώρισαν τῶν ἔργων, ὅστις ἤμην (G 2944–48).

In fact, however, at this point in the narrative he has not slain anyone since his encounter with the forty-five soldiers.⁵³ I suspect that the γ -redactor here offers an adaptation of G 2222ff, where a similar ἀναγνώρισις ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων occurs and is developed in a manner consistent with the context.⁵⁴ Immediately after the passage just quoted we read:

φυγῆ μόνῃ ἐπίστευον ἰδεῖν τὴν σωτηρίαν
 καὶ ἐκ πάντων ὀλιγοστοὶ ἴσχυσαν ἀποδρᾶσαι (G 2949f),

i.e., Digenes killed most of his adversaries as they attempted to flee. Ruthless, but perhaps not unrealistic. But a few lines later, in the narrative of Digenes' encounter with Philopappos, Kinnamos, and Ioannakes reinforced by Leander, the policy is different:

καὶ οὐκ ἐδίωξα αὐτοὺς τῆς συμφορᾶς οἰκτεῖρας
 (ἐλεος καὶ γὰρ πάντοτε πρὸς τοὺς φεύγοντας εἶχον
 νικᾶν καὶ μὴ ὑπερνικᾶν, φιλεῖν τοὺς ἐναντίους) (G 2973–75).

⁵¹ Suppl. Legrand.

⁵² Note the verbal echo of his self-condemnation for adultery in the previous book: G 2939 δι' . . . ψυχῆς ἀμελείαν ~ G 2292 ψυχῆς ἀμελεία.

⁵³ Even Melimitzes is not said to have died, but mysteriously disappears: *cf.* Trapp 66.

⁵⁴ *Cf.* Dyck (*supra* n.5) 188.

This is a particularly striking example of how, in H.-G. Beck's phrase, the moralizing elements in the poem "give the impression of having been pasted on."⁵⁵ Another oddity of this encounter is that Philopappos and Kinnamos are prepared to face Digenes in such circumstances, given their very different attitude shortly before this during the spying expedition, when Philopappos tried to convince Melimitzes of the futility of facing the Borderer without a large number of troops (G 2816ff). Note, too, that though Digenes crushes Ioannakes' entire right arm in their first fight (G 2582ff), he is back in action again in the second episode, with no reference made to any impairment (G 2953, 2964ff). This encounter with the leaders of the ἀπελάται, then, has evidently been added by the γ-redactor as part of his effort to integrate the battle between Maximo and Digenes into the overall bride-theft plot, but without being sufficiently adjusted to context. After this incident the interrupted dialogue of Digenes and Maximo resumes: *πλησίον δὲ τῆς Μαξιμοῦς ἐλθῶν τοιάδε ἔφη* (G 2977); the γ-redactor seems to assume Maximo to have remained in the place where she was defeated, improbable as this is. In E, on the other hand, where the intrusive material is absent, Maximo's pleas for her life and for a rematch are encompassed, as one would have expected, in a single conversation.

The upshot of this conversation is, as already noted, the agreement to duel again the following morning (in G; at once in E), even though Maximo's request for a rematch is framed in terms suitable to adversaries who have not yet engaged:

*ὅπως μονομαχήσωμεν μηδενὸς συμπαρόντος
καὶ νὰ νοήσης, πάγκαλε, καὶ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνδρείαν* (G 3009f).

Then Digenes, at her request, gives her a horse to ride back on (in E, and doubtless in the archetype, the horse was to be used by Maximo at once in the second round of their trial by arms). At this point in the narrative a digression is inserted to explain how it was that a horse was readily available: after unhorsing Maximo Digenes was surrounded by her troops and had a difficult struggle in which he was protected by God and his strong armor; he killed as many adversaries as he caught; others fled, leaving behind their horses (3018ff). We thus have two totally different versions of the sequel to Digenes' first victory over Maximo: a fight with the leaders of the ἀπελάται and a fight with her followers. This is yet another indication that the Maximo-

⁵⁵ H.-G. Beck, "Formprobleme des Akritas-Epos," *Beiträge zur Südosteuropa Forschung* (Munich 1966 [=Ideen und Realitäten in Byzanz. Gesammelte Aufsätze XVIII (London 1972)]) 141 n.16.

episode was originally independent of the fight with the ἀπελάται and that the epic-redactor, in integrating it into its new context, has not obliterated all traces of its original autonomy. A final peculiarity in the events of this day is Digenes' hesitation to approach his wife after the first encounter with Maximo, though he has (as yet) done nothing wrong (G 3054). Here, as in the premature allusion to his adultery, there is a failure to adjust to a plot in which Digenes' amour with Maximo occurs, not immediately, but on the following day.

The two battle-scenes between Digenes and Maximo involve various inconcinnities. Digenes as narrator inserts into the account of his second armed encounter with Maximo the following defense of his conduct in fighting with a woman:

ἐφειδόμην γάρ, βέλτιστε, τοῦ ἀδικῆσαι ταύτην
 ἀνδρῶν γάρ ἐστι μωμητὸν οὐ μόνον τοῦ φονεῦσαι,
 ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὄλως πόλεμον στήσαι μετὰ γυναῖκας.
 Αὕτη δὲ ἦν ὀνομαστή τῶν τότε ἐν ἀνδρεία
 τούτου χάριν τὸν πόλεμον οὐδαμῶς ἐπησχύνθην (G 3081–85).

These remarks belonged, if anywhere, in the description of their first encounter. On the other hand, we have seen that after their first battle Digenes made an allusion to Maximo's beauty for which the reader was unprepared (G 2927). There are, in all, three descriptions of Maximo in G. The first, G 2885ff~E 1477ff, concentrates on her horse and its trappings; for the archetype we need assume nothing more. The second, G 3078ff (unparalleled in E), prior to their second encounter, an evident doublet of the first, likewise tells more about her gear than about the woman herself. It is only after their second battle and just prior to their amour that a description of Maximo strikes an erotic note:

καὶ ὁ χιτῶν τῆς Μαξιμοῦς ὑπῆρχεν ἀραχνώδης,
 πάντα καθάπερ ἔσοπτρον ἐνέφαινε τὰ μέλη
 καὶ τοὺς μαστοὺς προκύπτοντας μικρὸν ἄρτι τῶν στέρνων.
 (G 3115–17 [sim. Z 3695; no counterpart in E]).

Here we have yet another reminiscence of Achilles Tatius, in particular the *ecphrasis* of a painting of Europa at 1.1.10f:

. . . χιτῶν ἀμφὶ τὰ στέρνα τῆς παρθένου μέχρις αἰδοῦς· τοῦντεῦθεν ἐπεκάλυπτε χλαῖνα τὰ κάτω τοῦ σώματος. . . τὸ δὲ σῶμα διὰ τῆς ἐσθῆτος ὑπεφαίνετο. . . μαζοὶ τῶν στέρνων ἡρέμα προκύπτουτες· ἡ συνάγουσα ζώνη τὸν χιτῶνα καὶ τοὺς μαζοὺς ἔκειλε, καὶ ἐγίνετο τοῦ σώματος κάτοπτρον ὁ χιτῶν.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Cf. Mavrogordato (*supra* n.18) ad 3245 of his edition.

This example shows yet again how dependent the G-redactor was on Achilles Tatius when he wanted to create an erotic atmosphere.

The interpretation of the dénouement is complicated by the loss of a page after G fol.62 at the point where the amour of Maximo and Digenes is set to begin (apparently an instance of [monkish?] censorship).⁵⁷ Nevertheless there can be no doubt that the amour was recounted in G (*cf.* especially 3131, where Maximo is called an adultress). Maximo clearly states what she has in view:

ἐλέησόν με, κύριε, τὴν κακῶς πλανηθεῖσαν
 μᾶλλον, εἰ οὐκ ἀπαξιοῖς, ποιήσωμεν φιλίαν,⁵⁸
 ἔτι παρθένος γάρ εἰμι ὑπ' οὐδενὸς φθαρεῖσα·
 σὺ μόνος με ἐνίκησας, σὺ με ἀποκερδίσεις,
 ἔξεις δέ με καὶ συννεργὸν εἰς τοὺς ὑπεναντίους (G 3099–3103).

If Maximo's action in calling the departing Digenes back after the amour in Z (3720, ἐμὴν τὴν ὑποχώρησιν ἠνάγκαζε βαρέως) may be admitted as evidence, she was sincere and not merely trying to save her life. Digenes' initial response to her suggestion is to point out that he is already married (G 3105f; *cf.* E 1558f). But as in the story of the abandoned bride in G-5, Digenes makes love to the woman in spite of resulting awkwardness in the overall epic plot—the fact that Digenes is already married and therefore must, in first-person narrative, condemn his own misdeed (G 2938ff). Perhaps the γ-redactor included the consummation of their relationship at such cost as a concession to a tradition in which, in fact, Digenes married the Amazon and made her a partner in his activities, as she had suggested (*cf.* Hdt. 4.110ff, which embodies this 'happy ending' to the encounter of [male] warriors and Amazons).⁵⁹

In view of the wide divergence of G and E, there is little certainty of reconstructing the conclusion of the Maximo-episode as it appeared in the archetype.⁶⁰ In E Digenes confesses to his wife his affair with the Amazon (E 1587–89) but does not kill her. In G, on the other hand, he does kill Maximo (G 3130f) after telling his wife that he had spared her life and merely dallied with her to cleanse her wound (3122f). The shocking murder of the Amazon was not demanded by the plot. Indeed, it contradicts not only the story Digenes has told his

⁵⁷ *Cf.* the app. crit. of Mavrogordato (*supra* n.18) *ad* G-6 785.

⁵⁸ The English translators tend to be rather prudish in their rendering of this phrase ("let us make friends" [Mavrogordato]; "let's be friends" [Hull]), although the context makes her meaning sufficiently clear.

⁵⁹ *Cf.* Dyck (*supra* n.5) 189 n.14.

⁶⁰ *Cf.* Trapp 66.

wife⁶¹ but also Digenes' policy, twice affirmed, of not killing women (3082f, 3124).⁶² The murder of Maximo, in spite of the fact that Digenes had twice spared her life, is evidently the G-redactor's clumsy method of disposing of an inconvenient character no longer needed.⁶³ Moral considerations were surely involved as well, since sinful characters tend either to be repentant (Digenes) or to suffer punishment (*cf.* the phrasing at G 3130f, ἀνηλεῶς ἀνεῖλον μοιχείαν).⁶⁴ In any case, with Maximo's death the Penthesilea-plot reaches in G its interrupted conclusion. In the Russian version the plot is rearranged so that the encounter with Maksima and Filippapa occurs before the marriage of Devgenij; he repulses Maksima's advances on grounds that an oracle gives him sixteen years to live in the event of a liaison with her, but otherwise thirty-six years. The Russian version thus carries still further the moralizing tendency observable in G (Trapp 65).

Like Digenes' meeting with the Arab princess at the oasis in G-5, the encounter with Maximo in G-6 is a typical frontier-tale in that it takes as its theme the adventures and dangers involved in confronting the unknown 'other'. It would hardly be surprising if similar tales existed on both sides of the Arab-Byzantine border and influenced one another. In fact, the tale of Sherkan and Abrizeh from the *Arabian Nights* parallels the encounter of Digenes and Maximo in various ways.⁶⁵ When Sherkan insists that Abrizeh cross the river to meet him, she gathers her skirts and leaps across. They wrestle three times, but each time Sherkan is thrown, distracted by desire. Then he begs for and receives Abrizeh's hospitality. After several days, knights sent by Abrizeh's father, Herdoub, king of Roum, enter the palace, demanding the surrender of Sherkan, whose presence has been betrayed by Abrizeh's grandmother, Dhat ed-Dewahi. Abrizeh, refusing to surrender Sherkan, arms him to encounter the knights, whom he defeats. Now Abrizeh realizes that she can no longer remain in Byzantine territory, for she has estranged her father. After rejoining his own men, Sherkan, on his way home, is already in Muslim territory when a

⁶¹ In fact, in G his wife does not learn of Maximo's murder until Digenes' retrospective survey of his deeds in G-8, τὴν Μαξιμοῦν ἐπέξευσα, τοὺς μετ' αὐτῆς ἀνεῖλον, εἶτα πεισθεῖς τοῖς λόγοις σου, πάλιν ὀπίσω τρέχων ἔσφαξα <τότε> (suppl. Trapp.) καὶ αὐτὴν λάθρα σοῦ μὴ εἰδυίας (3485–87).

⁶² *Cf.* Trapp 66.

⁶³ Note that Z does not include the murder of Maximo; therefore the question must remain open whether this event occurred in γ.

⁶⁴ Trapp 66; *cf.* the abandoned bride of G-5, who attempted to repulse the Borderer's assault (G 2293ff) and whose life was spared.

⁶⁵ See *supra* n.46.

Frankish force attacks. After a general *mêlée* lasting for a day, it is agreed that the two commanders should meet in single combat. Sherkan and the Frankish leader fight for two and a half days until the Frank's horse stumbles, and he is thrown. As Sherkan is about to kill his opponent, the Frank cries out that she is a woman (Abrizeh); her troops, too, are women. Sherkan then takes Abrizeh to meet his father Omar. The tale of Abrizeh concludes with her rape by Omar, her resulting pregnancy, her decision to have her baby in her own country, and her death en route by the hand of the servant Ghezban when she refuses him her favors.

This story shares a number of plot-elements with the encounters of Digenes and Maximo: the battle between a champion man and a champion woman; the river-vaulting incident, paralleled by Digenes' leap over the Euphrates in the Russian version; the request for and consent to a rematch or rematches; the unhorsed woman begging for mercy from her victorious adversary; the victor's magnanimous treatment of the vanquished (at least initially in *Digenes Akrites*). The battles of Abrizeh and Sherkan pit a Greek woman against an Arab man; though Maximo is never called an Arab, she is given an exotic Eastern background⁶⁶ and described as wearing a turban (G 3070), so that there is at least a hint of intercommunal adventure in her encounter with Digenes. Abrizeh's adventures do not, however, conclude with her marriage to Sherkan; rather, his father Omar, as king and master of the harem, functions as a surrogate. On the other hand, the amour of Digenes and Maximo caused considerable difficulties for the author of the *Digenes* epic, as we have seen. The basic plot in both cases is the same and corresponds with the Achilles-Penthesilea plot as well: the hero encounters a foreign woman of wondrous strength and defeats her in battle, with a resulting romantic entanglement. In the Arabian tale the plot is complicated by Abrizeh's initial victories in wrestling and by the substitution of rape by Omar for the expected amour with Sherkan. In the Greek version the outlines of the tale have been overlaid—and to some extent obscured—by the exigencies of the larger plot into which it has been inserted, as well as by the introduction of moralizing and allusive elements at several stages of redaction.

Digenes Akrites falls into two halves, a "Song of the Emir" and a "Romance of Digenes," neither of which can be properly termed an epic, since the characters' motives lack a suprapersonal or national

⁶⁶ See *supra* 357 and n.37.

dimension. Both belong rather to the genre of romance.⁶⁷ The quality of the poem is modest. This study has focussed on a single book, the sixth of the Grottaferrata version. By a comparison of versions it is possible, in most cases, to arrive at a clear picture of the poetic aims and methods of the G-redactor: he wants to make the simple saga material of his source appealing to the sophisticated reader by tricking it out in rhetorical finery. In view of the subject-matter of G-6—Digenes and his wife encamped in a meadow and subject to the attempts of various interlopers to abduct the woman—it was natural that many of the learned borrowings should come from ancient romance in general, Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* in particular. Thus, the meadow itself is modelled on the walled park where Leucippe and Clitophon stroll; the description of Digenes' wife is borrowed from that of Leucippe; she is made to behave and speak like Leucippe as well.

All these borrowings are introduced, however, without being modified to suit the different plot and characters of *Digenes Akrites*. The G-redactor's poverty of invention appears in such ways as his failure to modify Achilles Tatius' encomium of the rose when applied instead to the month of May, or to find any other means of removing Digenes from the scene in which a δράκων tempts his wife than by having him sleep, as in the preceding scene, when a lion attacks her. Digenes' encounters with the ἀπελάται and with the Amazon Maximo were surely originally independent of the idyll in the meadow: it is only an afterthought of Philopappos, conceived after he and his sons have already fought Digenes once, that they should attempt to detach his wife from him and marry her to Ioannakes instead; on the other hand, the proposal of the defeated Maximo that she and Digenes become lovers and henceforth collaborate (G 3099–3103) makes no sense in a context in which she knows that he is already in possession of a woman whom she is supposed to help detach from him (cf. G 2991f [Maximo to Digenes], ὁ κύριος φυλάξοι σε, γενναῖε στρατιῶτα, ἀθύντα μου πανθαύμαστε μετὰ τῆς ποθητῆς σου).

The problems in adding Maximo and the ἀπελάται to the bride-theft plot are, however, faults of the archetype rather than the G-redactor. What can be laid to the G-redactor's charge is that he made Digenes and Maximo fight twice, on successive days, but failed not only to provide a plausible motive for the rematch but also to adjust various details accordingly: thus Digenes defends his conduct in fighting a woman on the second day, not the first, but condemns his

⁶⁷ Cf. Trypanis, *Greek Poetry* (supra n.8) 501.

adultery on the first day, not the second, when it actually occurs; and he is ashamed to face his wife when he arrives home from battle on the *first* day. The G-redactor likewise adds battle-descriptions in an effort to integrate the first duel with Maximo into a larger conflict involving the ἀπελάται, but the result is that he presents two contradictory accounts of Digenes' action immediately after Maximo's defeat. Likewise it was the G-redactor who introduced a moralizing strain which results *inter alia* in Digenes' murder of the Amazon in punishment for her adultery, in spite of his twice-stated policy of sparing the lives of women. The G-redactor has also contributed a stereotype of women (Maximo presented as the dupe of Philopappos) and of barbarians. He had literary ambitions and was interested in moral questions but paid too little attention to coherence of plot. Nevertheless, even as we have it, the Grottaferrata version of *Digenes Akrites* still charms modern readers; beneath the carelessness with which the literary veneer was added and the plot cobbled together one can still sense the vigor of the frontier life in which the poem is rooted.⁶⁸

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⁶⁸ I should like to thank D. L. Blank and the anonymous readers of *GRBS* for useful advice regarding this paper, and M. J. Depew for permission to use her observations on G 1214–17, 1300–06, and 2438–44.