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1998

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ZALMOXIS IN ANTONIUS DIOGENES' *WONDERS BEYOND THULE*

The intent of the present study¹ points in discussing the role of a representative Pythagorean, namely Zalmoxis, in the strange novel of Antonius Diogenes, "The Wonders Beyond Thule"². It is well-known the nowadays vogue of Greek novel studies, especially in the USA; the development of such an interest for the ancient novel-genre betrays much about the present times, but also the curiosity for this phenomenon and its milieu. Besides the general discussion on the *Wonders* (which displayed by now a considerable literature), I will primarily take into considerations some of its issues (Pythagoreanism, aretalogy, the figures of divine men, oracles, alterity), in their connection with Zalmoxis; there is some literature on this subject, as we will further see.

The Ἰστορία ὑπὲρ Θούλην (which comprised no less than 24 books) came to us throughout a manifold and strange transmission. Most of what we know about it comes not from the few papyri surely identified, but from the comments, quotations,

¹ This paper would not be achieved without a three-months sojourn in Messina, Italy. I am deeply indebted and grateful, for their help, to Lietta De Salvo and Lucia Di Paola (*Università degli Studi di Messina*). I have also to record my obligation to Várhelyi Zsuzsanna (New York, who kindly sent me some material).

Abbreviations:

CAGN = Ed. B. P Reardon, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, Berkeley, 1989.

Fusillo, *AntDiog* = Massimo Fusillo, *Antonio Diogene. Le incredibili avventure al di là di Thule*, Palermo, 1990.

Henry, *Bibliothèque I-II* = René Henry, *Photius. Bibliothèque [Tome I ("codices" 1-84), Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1959; Tome II ("codices" 84-185), 1960]*.

Reyhl, *Antonios* = Klaus Reyhl, *Antonios Diogenes. Untersuchungen zu den Romanfragmenten der "Wunder jenseits von Thule" und zu den "Wahren Geschichte" des Lukian* (Diss.), Tübingen, 1969.

Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments* = Susan A. Stephens – John J. Winkler, *Ancient Greek Novels. The Fragments*, Princeton (New Jersey), 1995.

Treadgold, *Photius* = Warren T. Treadgold, *The Nature of the 'Bibliotheca' of Photius*, Washington, 1980 (Dumbarton Oaks Papers, XVIII).

² As is the title ordinarily translated, even if a more appropriate translation is "The Incredible Things Beyond Thule" (as Stephens-Winkler and Fusillo; Henry, Reyhl, CAGN and the majority preferred the common translation – as *wonders, marvels, merveilles, meraviglie, Wunder*). In citations, I will use, for Greek, Henry's edition, and, for the English translation, Gerald Sandy's version from CAGN, 777-782. Other versions of Photius' epitome: Henry (1960, French), Stephens-Winkler (1995, English), Fusillo (1990, Italian).

and paraphrases of later readers. Indeed, it is far and away the most cited of the ancient novels (which, worthy to say, is not the same as being the most read)³.

First, stands the epitome of the Byzantine patriarch Photios (*Bibl.*, cod. 166, 109 a–112 a), in the IXth century, the base of the reconstruction, and on whose summary we rely almost entirely for the knowledge of *Apista*. We have also quite long, although we are not sure about their extent, extracts in Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras*, *De mensibus* of John Lydus (3.5 and 4.42), and most likely in Hippolytus of Rome's *Refutatio*⁴. Certainly we may ascribe two or three papyri, as: *PSI* 1177 (= Pack² 95), where is told about an encounter between Dercyllis and her nurse Myrto, possibly to Hades; *POxy* 3012 (which comes from the beginning of a roll book, either 4, 14 or 24), with a scene between Dercyllis and Deinias in which she appears to be relating to him⁵; and *P. Dubl.* inv. C 3 (= P² 2621), the so-called "Herpyllis fragment", more likely the name being Derkyllis⁶. Other papyri, instead, seem doubtful: *P. Mich.* 5, with an elaborate magician's speech⁷; and *P. Gen.* inv. 187, where Kussl thought to have identified the katabasis⁸. Diogenes is also recalled by many writers (more than any other Greek novelist), as Eusebius, *C. Hier.* 17 (early fourth century); Epiphanius (ca. 315–403), *Adv. haer.* 1.33.8; Servius (fl. 400) in his *Commentary* on Vergil's *Georgica* 1.30 (the famed *tibi seruiat ultima Thule*); Synesius (370–413), *Ep.* 148 (allusion); they all treat the novel as a benchmark of the unbelievable; and the Scholiast to Lucian's *True*

³ Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 101.

⁴ M. Marcovich (*Pythagorica*, "Philologus", 108, 1964, especially 29–32), put in relation Porphyry (*VP* 44), John Lydus (*De mens.* 4.42), and Hippolytus (*Ref.* 1.2.14–15), concerning the bean taboo; the common *Urquelle* would be Antonius Diogenes, expressly cited by Lydus, who indicates the text as belonging to the thirteenth book; the same in W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1972, 184 n. 133.

⁵ L. Di Gregorio, *Sugli 'ΑΠΙΣΤΑ ΥΠΕΡ ΘΟΥΛΗΝ* di Antonio Diogene, "Aevum", 42, 1968, 199; Reyhl, *Antonios*, 11–14; A. Borgogno, *Sulla struttura degli Apista di Antonio Diogene*, "Prometheus", 1, 1979, 49; Idem, *Antonio Diogene e le trame dei romanzi greci*, "Prometheus", 5, 1979, 137; Fusillo, *AntDiog.*, 68–71; N. Holzberg, *The Ancient Novel. An Introduction*, London–New York, 1995, 58; Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 148–153; S. Stephens, *Fragments of Lost Novels*, in ed. G. Schmeling, *The Novel in the Ancient World* (Mnemosyne, Suppl. 159), 1996, 678.

⁶ In the papyrus we may read, from the name, only $\nu\lambda\lambda\acute{\iota}\delta$. Against the identification L. Di Gregorio, *op. cit.*, 208 n. 45. But it may well belong, see Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 101, 158–172.

⁷ As believe Reyhl, *Antonios*, 14–20, and S. Stephens, *op. cit.*, 679; this speech would be uttered by the villainous Paapis in the early books. This is a very attractive conjecture, but Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 101, hesitate; N. Holzberg, *op. cit.*, 58, thinks the identification as probable, while Borgogno rejects it from discussion (*Antonio Diogene*..., 140 n. 9).

⁸ R. Kussl, *Papyrusfragmente griechischer Romane. Ausgewählte Untersuchungen*, Tübingen, 1991, 173–175; M. Fusillo (*Letteratura di consumo e romanzesca*, in *I Greci e Roma*, vol. 1, tomo III, Rome, 1992, 269 n. 14) and N. Holzberg (*op. cit.*, 58) agree also. But is not to be accepted, as sustain on good reasons Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 471. Neither Porphyry's citation nor the few papyrus fragments that may tentatively be assigned to the *Wonders* add anything of substance to Photius' summary (G. N. Sandv, *CAGN*, 775).

History 2.12 (an allusion, tracing an episode of that fantasy back to the bizarre reports, *teratologoumena*, of Diogenes: εἰς τὰ ὑπὲρ Θούλην τερατολογούμεν ἐπισκώπτει – ed. Rabe, 21, 23)⁹.

We do not know too much about the life and activity of Photius¹⁰. He was born to 820–827 and died in 891 or 897 (or, according to Treadgold, ca. 810–893). Twice appointed patriarch of Constantinople (858–867, and 877–886), Photius is one of the outstanding erudites of the so-called "Byzantine Renaissance" from the IXth century. Designed for an embassy in Orient (to 855, after Arabian sources), Photius, at his brother's request, Tarasius, who was desolating for their separation, compelled, with the help of a secretary, some notices on the books read in the time of the separation (as it is said in the Prefatory-Letter, p. 1, 1–22). The title *Bibliotheca* is not Photius', since it appears only in two MSS (of XVIth century); it is instead the formula extracted from the dedication: "Inventory and Enumeration of the Books That We Have Read, of Which Our Beloved Brother Tarasius Requested a General Analysis". In his preface and afterword, Photius explains the important principles of his compilation of summaries, for he has intentionally excluded books that Tarasius himself has read and books that are commonly included in the curriculum of the liberal arts and sciences¹¹.

In his *Bibliotheca*, Photius amassed 280 notices or "codices" of authors who, in time, are from Herodotus to patriarch Nicephorus, and belong to any genre of prose of the ancients, profane and Christian literature alike. The date of composition is assigned by Henry to ca. 855, and by Treadgold to 845¹². According to Treadgold, Photius' method in codices 1–233 was to dictate his summary to a secretary with the book in front of him, working quite rapidly (less than three weeks for *codd.* 1–233)¹³. In his special survey of Photius' manner of

⁹ *Testimonia* in Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 120–121 (then follows Photius' epitome). This relative wealth of secondary tradition, unlike that of any other novel, is due to three unusual features: a) its unique character as a fictionalization of geographical facts (or what could pass for such); b) its downplaying of the erotic (or at least its marginalization in Photius' summary); and c) its superficial coating of uplifting wisdom, specifically Pythagorean (Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 101; S. Stephens, *op. cit.*, 674–675).

¹⁰ I am following Henry's *Introduction* to his edition of the *Bibliotheca* (Henry, *Bibliothèque* I, IX–XLVII), and Treadgold, *Photius*.

¹¹ Thus, almost by definition the works summarized by Photius did not occupy the top ring of books held to be worthy of reading in Byzantine intellectual circles near the middle of the IXth century.

¹² Treadgold, *Photius*, 16–36. See also in Henry, *Bibliothèque* I, LI–LII, his *Note complémentaire pour la composition de la "Bibliothèque"*.

¹³ Treadgold, *Photius*, 51. Albeit the *Bibliotheca* reviews more theological works than secular ones (7–8, 99), for Th. Hägg "in Zentrum steht die Profanliteratur der Kaiserzeit" (*Photios als Vermittler antiker Literatur. Untersuchungen zur Technik des Referierens und Exzerpieren in der Bibliothek*, Uppsala, 1975, 195). The clarity of the style is one of his recurrent canons (Treadgold, *Photius*, 109–110). From the techniques of Photius' transmission of his lectures of the ancient texts,

transmitting the lost ancient writings, Hägg alludes to the negative side of the transmission, emphasising that he made the summaries for his own purposes (obviously, not ours). Hence, every attempt of reconstruction must be accomplished with a critical use. But, on the other side, Photius, who read himself the writings, has transmitted scrupulously and without intentional distortion of the information, the texts of the excerpted authors which appeared to him as new and valuable, and with more remarkable philological acribia¹⁴.

In his monographical dissertation, Reyhl paid a great attention to Lucian's *True Histories*, whom he considers as parodying primarily Diogenes' work. Moreover, he tried to reconstruct its content on the basis of the presumed parody¹⁵. His thesis became thereafter a *communis opinio*¹⁶ till J. R. Morgan's accurate analysis of the characters and relationships between the *Wonders* and the *True Histories* from 1985; he proved the inconsistency of the Photian reconstruction, and that Diogenes' novel seems therefore more an experiment independently of the *True History* and the erotic novel, datable in the second century AD¹⁷.

in the typology exposed in Hägg's last chapter, Antonius' codex enters in the *analytische Referat*, more credible because it is elaborate following the development of the work, and non from memory as the brief résumé (*Kurzreferat*); the novel ranged by Treadgold (*Photius*, 182) in the category of "Precise Summaries".

¹⁴ Th. Hägg, *op. cit.*, 203–204.

¹⁵ Reyhl, *Antonios*, 32–77. This position is very questionable today.

¹⁶ As appears in L. Di Gregorio, *op. cit.*, 200; W. Burkert, *op. cit.*, 346 n. 49; A. Borgogno, *Antonio Diogene...*, 138; W. Fauth, *Astraios und Zalmoxis. Über Spuren pythagoreischer Aretalogie im Thule-Roman des Antonios Diogenes*, "Hermes", 106, 1978, 222. For G. Anderson (*Studies in Lucian's Comic Fiction*, Leiden, 1976, X, 1–2) Lucian is indispensable to the study of Antonius Diogenes; nevertheless, he considers that we cannot even attempt to use Lucian to reconstruct Antonius' work, and clearly rejects the single source theory, especially when the source in question has left so few other traces (6–7). Therefore, Lucian's techniques in *Verae Historiae* make it extremely difficult to disentangle any of Diogenes with confidence, and he serves as a reminder of how rhetorical all fiction now is, and how easily the simplest materials of story-telling can pass from one milieu to another (115). The suggestion that the *Wonders* was a principal target of the parody of the *True Histories* goes back to Photius 111 b 35–37 ("In fact this romance seems to be the font and the root. πηγή καὶ ρίζα, of Lucian's *True Story* and Lucian's *Metamorphoses*, and so on"); and to the above mentioned Byzantine *scholium* at *True Histories* 2.12: "He is mocking the bizarre tales told of the regions beyond Thule". As points Romm, the purpose of this final, otherworld voyage (of Deinias) has been one of the main cruxes in modern interpretations of the *Wonders*, particularly because the episode had accidentally got tangled with the similar voyage depicted by Lucian. It has retained a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* in the work of K. Reyhl, who attempts to reconstruct much of the lost novel based on supposed Lucianic parodies of its episodes (J. S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1992, 208 and n. 79); Idem, *Novels Beyond Thule: Antonius Diogenes, Rabelais, Cervantes*, in ed. J. Tatum, *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, Baltimore–London, 1994, 114 n. 25 (he retains in support the works of Morgan, and J. Hall's *Lucian's Satire*).

¹⁷ J. R. Morgan, *Lucian's True Histories and The Wonders Beyond Thule of Antonius Diogenes*, CQ, 35, 1985, 475–490. If the *True Histories* are intended to parody those writers who

Diogenes' novel is particularly interesting, for its distinctive structure and elements. Since his work was a main target in various discussions about the very origins of the novel-genre¹⁸, its readership and intent, it is appropriate to point out the principal thesis (especially those tangential to or regarding our subject).

As for the origin of the novel-genre, Erwin Rohde asserted a combination of the Alexandrian love-elegy with stories of ethnographic and utopian travels, and considered Diogenes' writing, datable in I AD by him (for the importance of oracles, for instance), as among the first ones, in the pattern of the erotic novel¹⁹.

pass off tall tales as true, then more appropriate targets for Lucian's humour would be "serious" writers like Ctesias, Iamboulos, and even Herodotus (named by Lucian itself), instead of the work of a writer who declares himself "a poet of Old Comedy" (λέγει δὲ ἑαυτὸν ποιητῆς ἔστι κωμῳδίας παλαιᾶς, 111 a 34–35). His conclusions are thereafter accepted by all scholars, as Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 15, 37 n. 9; Idem, *Literatura di consummo...*, 270; G. N. Sandy, *CAGN*, 775; S. Swain, *Dio and Lucian*, in edd. J. R. Morgan - R. Stoneman, *Greek Fiction. The Greek Novel in Context*, London–New York, 1994, 178 (Lucian's *True History* parodies the travel literature; the two novels known from summaries in Photius' *Library*, the *Babylonian History* of Lucian's contemporary and fellow Syrian, Iamblichus, and the *Incredible Things Beyond Thule*, probably also of the second century AD, are comparable for the fantasy travel and magic elements in their plots; Antonius' work in particular probably had a scene on the Moon, but his relationship to Lucian is most likely one of being a fellow-parodist rather than a "source", as was once thought); Stephens-Winkler, *Fragment*, 108 n. 14. Only J. Bompaire (*Lucien. Œuvres. Tome II. Opuscules 11–20*, Paris, 1998, 41–42) still maintained the old assumption. If Diogenes was not a suitable target, his work could easily have preceded Lucian without necessarily being mentioned by him. *Apista's* redaction is surely datable to the second century (see also *infra*). The notion that there must have been a linear progression in "complexity" (for the novel-genre) is difficult to maintain today (Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 119).

¹⁸ The ancient labels of the novels were *drama* (*syntagma*), *dramatikon* ("dramatic narrative") or *komodia*. "By ancient novel we mean an entirely fictitious story narrated in prose and ruled in its course by erotic and motifs and a series of adventures which mostly take place during a journey which can be differentiated into a number of specific, fixed patterns" (N. Holzberg, *op. cit.*, 26). Anderson depicted the complete recipe for Ideal Romance as involving voyage, erotic intrigue, sentimental love and exotic religion (G. Anderson, *op. cit.*, 117). For Hägg, the ancient novel fits well into this Hellenistic-milieu: travel by land and sea; pirates and brigands; kidnapping and slavery; the ravages of chance; religious syncretism. The so-called *Reisefabulistik*, fantastic tales of travel and adventure, are related to the adjacent countries of the Mediterranean Sea (Th. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity*, Oxford, 1983, 87, 117). For the structure and features of the love-romance, see G. Anderson, *Ancient Fiction...*, 1–2 (the novel enters in the category of *le nouveau*, part of the creative effort of the Hellenistic Age); Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 14; and G. N. Sandy, *Apuleius' 'Metamorphoses' and the Ancient Novel*, ANRW, II.34.2, 1540–1543. Whatever the name we choose to give to Greek and Latin fictional prose narratives, their popularity and influence down through the ages has been well established (Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 3).

¹⁹ As last component recalled Rohde the rhetoric art of the so-called Second Sophistic. Among the first ones rejecting Rohde's position, Kerényi invokes the papyri-finds (the Greek love-novel – after the classical tendency – is to be comprised not in the *Reisefabulistik*, but in another γένος) (K. Kerényi, *Die griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung*, Tübingen, 1927, VI). See also L. Di Gregorio 1968, *op. cit.*, 200–201 (the discover of papyri fragments show the novel constituted as basic type already as first century BC). Confuting Rohde's

The quest for origins implied, generally, 3 principal forms: a) for some scholars (now probably the majority), the novels are essentially the progeny of common or garden-variety Greek ancestors (for example, the erotic element has been traced to Alexandrian poetry and New Comedy; the historical to Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon; and the overall style to the prevalence of Greek rhetorical education); b) in the last half-century, another thesis was that the novels were written and intended to be read as religious documents, deriving their basic structure and many details from the myths and cults of popular religion; c) foreign sources (specifically Oriental)²⁰.

There are many similarities between Antonius' book and the novels: those parts of the travelling pattern that are restricted to the Mediterranean regions; the role played by surprising incidents, oracles, and cruel pursuers (as in Iamblichus' *Babyloniaka*) is determining these travels; some of the acts of violence; the motifs of apparent death and resurrection and of separation and reunion²¹ (although here applied to brother and sisters, Dercyllis and Mantinias, and not to a pair of lovers). But the differences carry greater weight, continues Hägg: the erotic motif seems to have been of secondary importance in Diogenes (love-affairs are mentioned two or three times, in passing, in Photius' summary); since in the novels the tone is mostly serious and idealistic, in the *Apista* it was in all probability light²². In contrast the "big five"²³, *The Incredible Things Beyond Thule* is not a love story,

thesis (also overturned by papyrology), Sandy reminded that "one can still, even in the most authoritative surveys, encount generalizations that will lead the unwary to suppose that all ancient Greek novels were written by unsophisticated novelists for unsophisticated readers who craved sentimental stories of love and adventure. One must recognize that the phrase «ancient Greek fiction» encompasses great thematic diversity as well as chronological span of some five or six centuries" (G. Sandy, *New Pages of Greek Fiction*, in *Greek Fiction. The Greek Fiction in Context*, 132–133); J. Romm, *Novels Beyond Thule*..., 102. Fusillo (*AntDiog*, 28–29) refers to Rohde's position as a positivistic setting (treating the novel as a biologic species), but embraces the motifs and the *topoi* traced by Rohde. Sandy attempted to dispel the notion that Greek prose fiction adhered to an idealized norm, because the papyrological publications that have appeared since 1893 have annihilated almost every stereotype and systematized scheme of progressive development (as formulated by Rohde). Thereafter, it is time to appreciate, after such a period of blinkered stereotypy, the diversity of plot, tone and form achieved by Greek writers of prose fiction (G. Sandy, *op. cit.*, 142).

²⁰ Of course, implicit in the statement "un-Greek" is the restriction of what is Greek to fifth and fourth century BC canons and genres, and that based on what has been abstracted and selected over centuries (Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 11–12).

²¹ See in general F. Létoublon, *Les lieux communs du roman. Stéréotypes grecs d'aventure et d'amour*, Leiden–New York–Köln, 1993.

²² Th. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity*, 120. Also for Fauth, the love-element is episodic; he considers the eros as one of the three levels (together with utopia and philosophy) (W. Fauth, *Zur kompositorischen Anlage und zur Typik der Apista des Antonius Diogenes*, WJA, 4, 1978, 6).

²³ Only 5 complete texts survived: Chariton's *Chaereas and Kallirhoe*, Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesiaka*, Achilles Tatius' *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*, Longos' *Daphnis and Chloe*. Their actions tend to be located in the heyday of Greek culture – the sixth or fifth century BC –

but a narratological tour-de-force: for 24 books the hero and the heroine do not have adventures together, they do not indulge in courtship – they primarily narrate. Fragmentary novels may well reveal that the so-called ideal romantic is no more than a sub-class of the whole, which may be called "ancient prose fiction". This opinion is becoming nowadays firmly established. The old comfortable paradigm for stylistic development, from Chariton to Heliodorus, is not easily reconciled with the variety found in the fragments, nor in the view that the "ideal romantic" represents the generic norm. Reading the fragments allows the suspicion that the boundary separating novels from other kinds of ancient writing and performance (as text-romantic history, travel literature, utopian tales, fictional letters, or biography) may be an imposition of modern scholarship. An appreciation of the fragmentary texts is therefore indispensable as the study of the ancient novel grows in importance, an area that, far from being minor, repetitive, and crude (as was often alleged), is emerging as a repository of fine intelligence, style, and diversity²⁴.

As says Susan Stephens, travel and adventure occur in all of the examples we have of ancient fiction, but Antonius' *Unbelievable Things Beyond Thule* appears to have been unique. The *Liebespaar* – if that is what one should call them – of Antonius' novel are well past their teen years and spent their time engaging in narrative flashbacks littered with geographical and philosophical lore, like the waxing and waning of Astraeus' eyes. Further its narrative agenda appears to be too complex for it to be understood simply as a type of ideal-romantic, fiction, or even a parody of that type²⁵.

James Romm calls the *Wonders* one of the most daring and inventive literary efforts of all Greco-Roman antiquity. He emphasises the two features revealed by the strange title: first, the novel was defined not by its central pair of lovers, as are most of the erotic romances, but instead by the teratological "wonders" or *apista* that dangled like exotic from every thread of its plot line; in fact this unique title brings the work more into the traditions of paradoxography, the genre which specialized in collecting pseudoscientific *exotica*, than that of the novel²⁶. The

and center on an erotic pair of high situation, scarcely post-pubescent, who fall in love at first sight, may or may not be immediately married (as are Chariton's Chaereas and Kallirhoe), undergo a series of harrowing adventures and testings of their faithfulness (kidnapping, shipwreck, slavery, even marriage to another party) before being reunited, presumably to live happily ever after; the type is usually called "ideal romantic" (Anderson and Hägg, among others).

²⁴ Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 6, 18–19.

²⁵ Diogenes' sophisticated and intricate style put him in a pair with Heliodorus and Iamblichus for self-conscious manipulation of the narrative material. The loss of the novel is perhaps the most seriously felt, because what we know of it suggest that if we could read it whole, it might well require us to reevaluate the trajectory as well as the boundaries of Greek narrative fictions (S. Stephens, *op. cit.*, 674–675).

²⁶ There was one literary setting in which *apista* were not only acceptable but desirable: in collections of natural wonders or *paradoxa*; one such paradoxographical work actually carried the word

second element of Diogenes' title, "beyond Thule"²⁷, involves a place that stood poised between truth and fiction in the ancient scientific record; by evoking this elusive and unverifiable island in his title therefore, Diogenes seems to situate his entire narrative in an intermediate zone between truth and invention. In some cases, in fact, the adventures of Dercyllis and Mantinias and their travelling companions, always pursued by the evil Paapis, and always encountering *apista*, seem to have been built out of the material quarried from the paradoxographical tracts. But adventures of a more mythic cast, such as an *Odyssey*-style descent to the underworld, were also included in Dercyllis' itinerary²⁸.

Holzberg saw it as an attempt to diversify: in the *Wonders* the conventional pattern of action found in the idealistic novel was diversified with elements taken from the fictional lives of philosophers. The section of the novel which followed roughly the pattern traditionally used in the idealistic novel appears in a fourfold framework and covered the books 2–23²⁹.

apista as its title (attributed to Isigonos of Nicaea, 1 BC), implying a meaning closer to "strange but true" than to "obviously false". Thus Diogenes, by using the same word in his title, seems to be applying to narrative fiction the credibility standards appropriate to descriptive or pseudoscientific literature, in which it is taken of granted that *paradoxa*, things contrary to expectation, will turn out to be true.

²⁷ Generally about Thule: G. Aujac, *L'île de Thulé, mythe ou réalité (Étude de géographie grecque)*, "Athenaeum", NS, 66, 1988, 329–343; in Latin literature, it was often identified with Britain: see recently H. J. W. Wijsman, *Thule Applied to Britain*, "Latomus", 57, 1998, 318–323.

²⁸ J. Romm, *The Edges*..., 202–206; Idem, *Novels Beyond Thule*..., 103–105. Diogenes seems to have promised his readers the ultimate *exokeanismo*s, a journey into as-yet uncharted realms of fictional invention. For Romm, it was no coincidence, for example, that several of the most innovative works of prose fictions in the second century AD took the form of explorer's logs (as Pytheas' and Eudoxus' voyages long before): Lucian's *True Histories*, and Antonius' *Wonders*, both of which consist of long "voyages" into a realm which has been variously designated as Menippean satire, comic fiction, or even science fiction. For Fusillo also, this novel must have been a true and proper fantastic one, not hidden beside the repressive instance of satire as is the *True History*. To entitle a work *The Incredible Adventures (ἐκπιστα) Beyond Thule* meant therefore (the last Thule was a proverbial expression for indicating a boundary already by itself fictitious of the inhabited world) to express a precise poetical program, already in this liminal zone which is not yet text and which may be called "paratext": the program to narrate a story surpassing every realistic limit. The metaphorical title would indicate the aspiration to go beyond the limits, already fantastic, of the extant world, and to transcend the limit of the real, with a declared Neopythagorean inspiration (Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 11; Idem, *Letteratura di consumo*..., 269, 271). As we will further see, this Neopythagorean side is highly debatable.

²⁹ A comparison between the surviving text of Heliodorus' *Aithiopica* and the summary of its contents given by the same patriarch (*cod.* 73; *cod.* 166) shows that, if we were dependent solely on Photius for our knowledge of the plot, our picture of it would differ widely from the real thing. The *Wonders* had an unmistakable influence on the later ancient novels. However, the attempt made by Diogenes to expand the stereotype adventures described in idealistic by sending his characters off to fantastic regions and confronting them with philosophy and religion was, in itself, to remain an isolated venture (N. Holzberg, *op. cit.*, 57–60).

Contrary to the first attempts, which thought the work to have belonged to 1 AD, the *Wonders* were composed more likely in the second century, in the *Blütezeit* of the prose fiction of classical antiquity³⁰. Diogenes seems to have taken his "events" (places, peoples, natural history) from preexisting accounts, some of them intrinsically doubtful (like that of Antiphanes of Berga), and to have invented the characters necessary to convert those "events" into a narrative. This would suggest that Diogenes should be placed in the second century AD, the time of Lucian and Ptolemy Chennus³¹. The combination of an interest in Neopythagoreanism (however serious it would have been) and what Kerényi describes as an anti-Egyptian *Tendenz* is more likely to have occurred in the first century AD or after (though the depth of Antonius' commitment to Pythagoreanism is debatable, he is unlikely to have devoted such a substantial part of his narrative to it if it were not a relatively popular topic). Moreover, the names Faustinus and Antonius infer a Roman context³².

As for the readership, the fact that in a preface Antonius dedicated the work to his sister Isidora (111 a 41–111 b 1) was invoked to prove one widespread theory, that of the low-intellectual level of targeted-public, as the female audience, the newly literate or even a bourgeois class that supposedly flourished in the imperial period in the eastern Mediterranean. But generally the ideal image of the woman in the novel is the product of male imagination and all novels multiply the literary allusions which request a lettered public³³. Furthermore, in their physical appearance, novel fragments are indistinguishable from the rolls or codices of classical Greece writers or high culture, like Sappho, Demosthenes or Plato. The relatively small number of copies of novels (compared to the number of copies of other texts of the high culture) indicates that the novels were not much in demand in Greco-Roman Egypt, and attracted very little attention. As a relatively late arrival on the Greek literary scene displaying considerable flexibility in its forms and lacking a critical literature to validate its existence, the novel has been the most suspect of all categories of Greek literature³⁴.

³⁰ G. N. Sandy, *Apuleius' 'Metamorphoses'*..., 1514.

³¹ Also summarized in Photius, see *cod.* 190, 146 a–153 b (with strange mythical accounts).

³² Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 118 and n. 25. The references to Diogenes' novel begin certainly as early as Porphyry (234c.–304), and the papyri provide a *terminus ante quem* of the end of II AD (as PSI 1177).

³³ The majority of critics asserted that the novels' readership did not belong to the world of *παιδεία* (B. Perry ascribed a low level of literature). But for antiquity, the *testimonia* denote that the novels were known by intellectuals (E. L. Bowie, *Les lecteurs du roman grec*, in edd. M.-F. Baslez–Ph. Hoffmann–M. Tredé, *Le monde du roman grec*, Paris, 1992, 55–58). Referring right the dedication to Isidora, Holzberg indicated the female audience (N. Holzberg, *op. cit.*, 35).

³⁴ Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 10–11. While Bowie's theory allows for a very limited group of readers, Várhelyi reminds that the novels make use of formulae from a wide range of narratives, among which numerous could have belonged to the common knowledge of the ancient

Borgogno established the major body of this *dramaticon* as the adventures of the brothers Dercyllis and Mantinias; it would be the fifth circle, the innermost, the true nucleus of the *dramaticon*: the novel of Dercyllis and Mantinias (even if they are not lovers or married); the literary genre in question is no other, in his view, that the so-called love romance in prose (and the above mentioned central nucleus fits in the pattern of the ancient erotic writers)³⁵.

But, as the majority of the scholars believes now, the *Wonders* are definitely not a love story. As has often been observed, the *Apista* does not begin with two teenagers falling in love and following the course of their adventures over land and sea (though, to judge from the papyrus fragments, it certainly included falling in love, adventures and land and sea). Besides, there is no reason why it should have. Though several authors found it useful and attractive, the teen romance framework was not an essential feature of long prose-fiction in the ancient world. The mistake of regarding it as such seems from the fact that many ancient novels employed it; but many is not all, and the consequences of that stereotyping are serious. If teen romance is regarded as the core of the novel writing project, then Diogenes' work is by definition a marginal work, not a central masterpiece. This assumption about romance led many scholars to see Diogenes as an early work, the "root and source" and "paradigm" both of fantasy-fiction and of romantic dramas (following Photius 111b 32–42), before the two categories diverged. The significance of the marginal role of eros in Diogenes' work is that it allowed the novel to be read and cited with approval by "serious" scholars such as Eusebius, Epiphanius, Porphyry, and Servius³⁶. Fusillo reserves to Antonius a position absolutely peculiar in the Greek narrative panorama: the extended work (24 books), just as the *Odyssey*, his basic

public and thus have facilitated understanding. As a general pattern, with a small number of various novel fragments, one can hypothesize, that less novels reached a great public, but that there were a number of such stories in written or oral circulation in a limited geographical area. Greek as the original language of the novels suggests that the very public that the authors had in mind most likely accepted those Hellenized views that are essential to most Greek works of literature (Zs. Várhelyi, *Representation of the 'Other': The Religion of the Egyptians in the Greek Novel*, "Történeli Tanulmányok", 6, 1997 [Heorte. *Studia in honorem Johannis Sarkady septuagenarii*, edd. Z. Nemes – Gy. Németh], 92–93). The targeted audience for ancient Greek novels appears thus to have been no less sophisticated or more popular than the readership envisaged by the writers of other Greek literary forms (G. N. Sandy, *Apuleius' 'Metamorphoses'....*, 134–135).

³⁵ The Neopythagoreanism (represented by Astraeus and Zalmoxis) and the *incredibilia* would not be out of this structure (A. Borgogno, *Sulla struttura...*, 52–56; Idem, *Antonio Diogene...*, 137, 156 n. 40). The erotic-novel thesis is rejected already by Di Gregorio: the erotic element is not central; it is the content regarding the wanderings of Deinias and, especially, the adventures of Dercyllis and Mantinias, always pursued by the wicked Paapis (L. Di Gregorio, *op. cit.*, 202–204; *Apista* is a literary genre somehow particular). Against Borgogno pronounces also Fusillo (the two main characters are brothers, and the eros is missing properly); inside the vast novelistic genre, the love-novel is a sub-genre (Fusillo, *AntiDiog.*, 28; 40 n. 31).

³⁶ Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 109–110.

model, from which are started off several narrative and thematic elements (the I-narration, the descent into underworld, the prophecy). The *Wonders* are not an erotic novel in the proper sense; its core is not the love-story of a couple, but various nuclei experimentally intersected, making use of the ethnographic and utopian narratives³⁷.

Photius' epitome leaves the impression of a bewildering complexity; Antonius' narrative technique implied: (1) Deinias' reports to Cymbas for transmission (2) to the Arcadian League his mistress Dercyllis' report (3), which includes what her dead maidservant has told her (4); her reported account also includes that of Astraeus about Pythagoras(5), who got his version from Philotis (6); and some of Deinias' account to Cymbas includes what Azoulis has told him(7). Although it may not be the first work of prose fiction, in its narrative complexity, its elaborate claim to being historical facts, its endorsement of conventional morality, and its use of cliff hanging suspense, the *Wonders* nonetheless crystallises the essential qualities of the genre³⁸.

One of the most striking features of Diogenes' novel is the fact that are so many narrators re-telling each others' stories; furthermore, he describes his own novel both as a fictional composition and as a true story. No other ancient novel, for which we have evidence, so deliberately constructs a self-presentation which is both serious and undercutting of its own seriousness, like this novel. He does this, according to Photius, in the form of two letters: first, one addressed to Faustinus, which describes Diogenes' library of historians' and travelers' accounts that he used for the world travels of Deinias and Dercyllis; second, a letter addressed to his learned sister Isidora, dedicating the work to her and relating how the cypress tablets on which the novel text was written were found in a crypt along with six mysteriously inscribed coffins. The crypt was discovered by Alexander the Great after the siege of Tyre, and the text on the tablets was copied by his general Balagrus, who sent it to his wife, Phila, daughter of Antipater, with a cover letter that is in turn quoted in Diogenes' letter to Isidora. The two accounts, side by side, not only are contradictory versions of who authored the narrative and how it came into circulation but also give diametrically opposed assessments of its veracity.

To Faustinus, Diogenes describes the book sources, the difficult enterprise of compilation, and the verification of its assembled parts³⁹. To Isidora, he tells a tale

³⁷ Fusillo, *AntiDiog.*, 15.

³⁸ G. Sandy, *CAGN*, 775–777.

³⁹ *POxy* 3012, which contains the beginning of a book, indicates that Photius' words [πρωτάττει δὲ καὶ ἐκάστου βιβλίου τοὺς ἀνδρας οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα προαπεφώναντο, ὥς μὴ δοκεῖν μαρτυρίας χρεῖσθαι τὰ ἀπίστα – "he cites at the beginning of each book the names of the persons who treated its subject previously so that the incredible events would not seem to lack authority" (111a 38–40)], must be understood to mean not that a list of authorities stood at the head of each book, but that the letter to Faustinus contained a complete description of his authorities broken down by book (Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 102 n. 2).

justifying the literal truth of the texts and in effect denying all the work of authorship so carefully communicated to Faustinus. Each is an independent strategy for asserting the truthfulness and believability of the novel, one by shifting the authority to the shoulders of more ancient scholars, the other by historicizing the fictional narrator and scribe and tracing the physical tradition of the text. But together they contradict each other – a contradiction that must be resolved in favour of the Faustinus' version, that Diogenes is an author who has fictionalised earlier travellers' and historians' accounts of far-off peoples and places. The letters offer mutually exclusive accounts of the production of the text and hence set up competing frames of reference for its truthfulness⁴⁰. The fantastic story had to give a strong effect of authenticity from this complex introductory device (a true *Beglaubigungsapparat*) like in the mythological novels on the Trojan War in the Latin version of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian (derived from a lost Greek original)⁴¹. Since in negative Photius inclines towards omitting the erotic elements

⁴⁰ Diogenes thereby constructs a self-presentation that is both serious and facetious; serious in that he has organized the scattered traditions of paradoxography into a single encyclopedia, citations and all; facetious in that he puts forward two verification procedures that contradict each other (Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 102–103). A better solution to the small anomaly of two prefatory epistles is to suppose that, just as the narratives of Dercyllis and others are embedded in the narrative of Deinias, and the narrative of Deinias is framed by the letter of Balagrus to Phila, and that the letter is quoted in Diogenes' letter to Isidora, so his letter to Isidora is contained within his letter to Faustinus. This accords better with Photius' words at 111 a 32–34 and 111 a 41–111 b 2, and matches the complexity of Chinese boxes that he attests for the rest of the novel. Just as the two contradictory letters are juxtaposed (or embedded one in the other), so the dual nature of Diogenes' composition is variously proclaimed to the two addressees (S. Stephens, *op. cit.*, 675–676). The narratological sophistication of this structure must have forced the reader – at least it did Photius – continuously to be aware of the presence of a narrating "I". The boxed structure of Diogenes' novel brings this common sense about the nature of narratives to the foreground. Deinias' narrative scrupulously segregates his personal experiences from the reports given to him by others (Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 116–117).

⁴¹ M. Fusillo, *Letteratura di consumo...*, 269. See also N. Holzberg, *op. cit.*, 58, for the complicate structural technique of the whole "story within a story within a story"; and G. Anderson, *Ancient Fiction. The Novel in the Greco-Roman World*, London–Sidney–Totowa (New Jersey), 1984, 134 n. 30. Bowie pointed in Philostratus what he calls *the combination of a claim to a reliable channel of information, and framing implausible materials* (showing that he had some interest in presenting his fiction as truth). This technique is used in various forms to achieve a similar end by some of the romantic novelists (Iamblichus' claim to have derived the story of his *Babylonian Tale* from a "Babylonian" captured in Trajan's Parthian wars, Longus' presentation of the story of Daphnis and Chloe, Achilles Tatius). Antonius' *Wonders* form a variant of these techniques of authentication, as well as the wooden tablets of Dictys's Trojan narrative (E. Bowie, *Philostratus. Writer or Fiction*, in *Greek Fiction. The Greek Novel in Context*, 185; Idem, *Apollonius of Tyana: Tradition and Reality*, ANRW, II.16.2, 1978, 1663). Fusillo reminds the concept of "paratext", which includes titles, sub-titles, prefaces, dedications, epigraphs, and all which is between the external comment and the text (Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 35 n. 2). We are faced with the paradox of an author who cites real sources for made-up information, who casts himself both as a comic poet and as a compiler of scientific art (J. Romm, *Novels Beyond Thule...*, 108).

and the strictly pagan religious material, in positive he emphasises the extraordinary facts, and this by following a moralistic development of the plot⁴². Fusillo calls this principal narrative peculiarity of Antonius – the use of narrative within narrative – *metadiegesis* (as narratology designates it)⁴³.

The *Wonders* (comprised by Sandy in the category of the historical novels) are a vivid example of a sober historiographical prose maintained in the face of fantastic adventures. The author employs Alexander the Great, the historically attested Phila, a list of "authorities" prefixed to each of the twenty-four volumes, dramatized eye-witness sources, his learned sister Isidora, a representative of the Arcadian League, hidden official documents and other authenticating devices to put the reassuring stamp of *True History* on his collection of fantastic tales, and his ruse was successful: Photius, seemingly oblivious of the implications of his conclusions that Antonius Diogenes was "the father of fictional stories" (ὁ τῶν τηλικούτων πλασμάτων πατήρ), infers that "he belongs to a time not far removed that of king Alexander" (112 a). It also fooled Porphyry, who near the middle of the third century used the novel as an "authority" for his account of the childhood of the philosopher Pythagoras⁴⁴.

Stephens and Winkler conjectured the description of the *Wonders* as an *encyclopedia* on two grounds. First, to consider by Photius' summary, its twenty-four books were almost entirely taken up with accounts of several heroes' adventures among strange peoples. These could have been concentrated just in certain parts of the known world, but (and this is the second point) the framework drew by Photius contains both an extended journey across Europe and a circumnavigation of the outer Ocean⁴⁵. Balancing, and in a certain tension with the

⁴² Photius emphasizes the moral tone of the novel, in which the evildoers pay the penalty for their crimes and the innocent are spared, and brings out clearly the high degree of suspense that Antonius generated by frequently portraying blameless characters on the edge of disaster, and their unexpected rescue ("In this story in particular, as in fictional works of this kind, there are two especially useful things to observe: first, that he presents a wrongdoer, even if he appears to escape countless times, paying the penalty just the same; second, that he shows many guiltless people, though on the brink of great danger, being saved many times in defiance of expectations", 112a, 6–12).

⁴³ Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 25–26.

⁴⁴ Therefore, it is unlikely to suppose that ancient Greek fiction developed from a fusion of gradually diminishing doses of love until at some measurable point the erotic novel was synthesized. The various components among them love and "history" remained in a state of flux over a period of at least five centuries and were combined in varying proportions according to the taste and genius of individual author (G. Sandy, *New Pages...*, 138–139).

⁴⁵ As a popularly conceived by such writers as Pomponius Mela, the world's peoples are distributed in two concentric rings accessible by water – the circum-Mediterranean lands and the countries that lie on the surrounding Ocean. Deinias and Dercyllis, the two principal narrators, divide the known world of the northern temperate zone in just this fashion. Deinias travels from his native Arcadia up through the Bosphorus and along the Tanais River. He then turns east and travels around the outer coast of Asia, India, Africa, Spain, Gaul, and Britain until he reaches Thule. On his way, he picks up other travellers – Carmanes, Meniscus, and Azoulis – from whom he presumably learns their

"serious" encyclopedic range was Diogenes' facetiousness. Diogenes' program seems rather to have been the construction of a continuous narrative set among strange peoples and places that had been described by earlier authors⁴⁶. One such authority cited, apparently prominently, since he is the only one recorded by Photius, was Antiphanes⁴⁷.

After these introductory remarks, we will examine the targets of this study. The stratification of the novel was not limited to this fourfold packaging of Dercyllis' adventure story and to Azoulis' account in book 24. In addition to all this, Dercyllis – after the separation from her brother, Mantinias –, met the Pythagorean Astraeus, who told her about his childhood, about that of Zalmoxis, and about the life of the philosopher himself (in the Porphyrian extracts). The third feature that definitely gave a measure of respectability among "serious" readers and writers was this patina of Pythagorean lore. Undoubtedly the fact that Diogenes included material from Pythagoras' life contributed to his relatively higher esteem in antiquity than other novels seem to have enjoyed. The entire description of the Pythagorean life-style in Porphyry (VP 32–45) (and Lydus' passage about the bean taboo), in all probability also came from book 13, like Astraeus' account of his own life with Pythagoras' life (10–17); the Pythagorean episode is therefore centrally placed. Since Diogenes seems to be remarkably careful about structure, this central position may be significant.

This Pythagorean element of the *Wonders* has been often overemphasized by many critics, especially H. Bürger⁴⁸, Richard Reitzenstein⁴⁹, and Reinhold Merkelbach. The last one employed the summary of Photius as further proof of his theory of the religious origins of the novel; Antonius accordingly became a mystery text like the rest (for him, *Babyloniaka* was a Mithraic text)⁵⁰. Like him,

separate adventures and reports about out-of-the-way tribes. Dercyllis travels from his native Tyre to Crete, Etruria, north-western Spain, then back to Italy and Sicily and on to Thrace (and finally in Thule, where she meets Deinias). Her path comes close to that of Deinias at two points, the easternmost and westernmost regions of Europe, but does not overlap it. She in turn hears reports from other wanderers, Mantinias, Astraeus, and probably Ceryllus; also, Myrto brings her news about the Underworld.

⁴⁶ This is very similar to the plan of Lucian's *True Histories*, except that Lucian freely invents and exaggerates in order to parody his exemplars (Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 103–104, 108). The *Wonders* fit nicely with Photius' interest in the *outré*, whether in far-off lands (Ctesias: *cod.* 72) or nearer to home (hermaphrodites in Diodorus *cod.* 244) (Treadgold, *Photius*, 101).

⁴⁷ Photius *Bibl.*, *cod.* 166, 112 a. 4–6. In the geographical tradition, Antiphanes of Berga was a byword for fabulous lying about faraway places: see Strabo 2.3.5; Polybius 34.6.5; Stephanus Byzantius s. v. Βέρυνη; Ps.-Skymnos 650–655 (cf. Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 473).

⁴⁸ His extreme thesis of Antonius as a Neopythagorean was rejected, among many others, by A. Borgogno, *Antonio Diogene*..., 144 n. 17.

⁴⁹ R. Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, Leipzig, 1906, 17–18, 31.

⁵⁰ R. Merkelbach, *Roman and Mysterium in der Antike*, Munich-Berlin, 1962, 225–232. His main thesis was "daß die Romane wirklich Mysterientexte sind" (*Vorwort*, p. V). For, by their very nature as novels, they present ordered and integrated sequences of events. Therefore, if they are

modern scholars have sometimes implied that Diogenes was a committed Pythagorean and that his book promoted the truth of the Pythagoreanism. A related opinion, even if not so radical, was expressed by Reyhl, for whom the novel's unity stood basically in the philosophical world-view of his author. Consequently, the Pythagorean Antonius intended to give a world image of this philosophical-religious movement of a widely science. He thought, asserts further Reyhl, his *Apista* to depict a work of philosophical value, with his *Idealgestalt* Pythagoras. This collection of a comprehensive science was better possible throughout travels. This would be the explanation of the visits Pythagoras made himself (to acquire the wisdom of Orient and Italy – see Porphyry, VP 11–12), and also of his youths Astraeus and Zalmoxis in the West and the North-East; as for Deinias, he explored finally the rest of the world and even the Moon⁵¹.

The latest who considers Antonius as a Neopythagorean is Fusillo. Though he rejects the exaggerations of Bürger (as a systematic philosophical novel) and Merkelbach, by asserting instead a wider part to ethnographic and utopian stories, and to biographical and paradoxographical digressions, for him also the Pythagorean vision of Antonius evolves in a comprehensive narrative (which goes from nether world to the earth, from sun to the Moon, and which assumes various experiences, like the magic and love). An example is the sorcerer Paapis, who represents the negative pole of the novel, the black magic opposed to the wisdom of the Pythagorean Astraeus, in an anti-Egyptian tendency unknown to the Greek novel (but see infra Várhelyi, for the Egyptian topic)⁵².

allegories, it is plausible to suppose that their narrative should reflect the matter of the mysteries, in a systematic way. The ancient novels are tales of adventure, and they would be allegories of a *via salutis* (R. Beck, *Soteriology, the Mysteries, and the Ancient Novel as a Text Case*, in edd. U. Bianchi – J. Vermaseren, *La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'impero romano*, Leiden, 1982, 526–527; Beck tried to interpret in this way the *Babyloniaka* of Iamblichus). But Romm refers the Pythagoreanism from this novel as better seen as a single theme among many, rather than as the *raison d'être* of the novel, and following the special study of W. Fauth (J. Romm, *The Edges*..., 207–208 n. 78); this is the most appropriate position, surely. Moreover, whatever view one takes of Merkelbach's theory as a whole, such an interpretation cannot rest on so cursory a report by Photius. The fact that Antonius included a passage on Pythagoreanism, does not imply that the whole was in any sense "Pythagorean" any more than Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 15.75f (G. Anderson, *Studies in Lucian's*..., 7). The Pythagorean elements are more likely intended to represent just another strange topic in the *apista*-narratives, and not a conscious program or ideology.

⁵¹ The *Vorbild* would be that of the *Odyssey*; Reyhl pointed three moments of Diogenes as imprinted upon our memory – the pious, missionary-travels of the Pythagoreans, his polyhistorical-philosophical formation, and the pleasure of telling. The Thule-novel, therefore, would be a fantastic-adventurous, uplifting-Pythagorean travel and love romance, a "bourgeois-Pythagorean *Odyssey* in prose" (Reyhl, *Antonios*, 131). For Di Gregorio, the *Apista*, although a novel, are the work of a Neopythagorean, in the service of a religious-moralistic idea, and where the paradoxography, aretalogy, travel-fables and the true and proper erotic *dramatikon* are combined (L. Di Gregorio, *op. cit.*, 211). Both the "bourgeois" and Pythagorean topics are not to be accepted.

⁵² Further, the rich inventions of the our "Neopythagorean" would be born from a refusal of the real (Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 28–32).

The best discussion of the Pythagorean elements remains the accurate analysis of Fauth and Stephens-Winkler. Since modern scholars frequently experienced the same anxieties about popular or entertaining or romantic literature that ancient scholars did, they have sometimes suggested that Diogenes was a committed Pythagorean and his book promoted the truth of that philosophy. There are some certainly strings of Pythagorean images that occur in Photius' summary, in particular the image of things waxing and waning in phase with the moon (Astraeus' eyes are the chief instance used to reconcile funding kings and regulate their phases of alternate ruling). But Astraeus, surely a Pythagorean in Diogenes' novel, is nowhere else mentioned in Pythagorean traditions, and his eyes seem to be a sign of his wondrous birth and nature (see Porphyry, *VP* 10), not of any Pythagorean principle. Celtic and Thracian beliefs about reincarnation or immortality were sometimes interpreted as "Pythagorean" (Diodorus 5.28.6 for the Celts; Herodotus 4.94–96 for the Thracians, namely Zalmoxis: he is in fact discussed as a digression for *Γέται οἱ ἀθανάτιζοντες*), and Diogenes may have done this too, though there is no trace of it in Photius' summary (see *infra* for both Thracians and Celts). Readers determined to find a *Tendenz* in Diogenes' novel can of course make a case, but not a compelling one, since counterindications to a committed and consistent Pythagorean are obvious. First, it is difficult to reconcile Diogenes' overriding facetiousness with Pythagorean morality. For one thing, the Pythagorean injunction to truth-telling was absolute. Further, Pythagoras is praised for his stability⁵³. There is no denying that Pythagorean elements of some sort were present in the *Wonders*, and they were probably important enough to assist the difficult transition of his novel, unlike any other, to an honoured status. But it is an elementary confusion of modern criticism to leap from the mere mention or use of a philosophical belief to an assertion that the work was formed and ruled by adherence to that belief. For the works now called ancient novels, this has been an especially strong temptation. There is no enhancement of the appreciation of Diogenes' work as an encyclopedic, serious-facetious novel to force it to pledge allegiance to a philosophical or religious system⁵⁴.

⁵³ "His bodily condition was invariant, as if measured by a carpenter's rule: it was not at one time healthy, at another time sick, nor some times waxing fat, other times waning thin. His soul, too, always displayed the same disposition through his face: it was not more relaxed in pleasure nor contracted in pain, and never showed him possessed by joy or sorrow—in fact, no one ever saw him laughing or crying" (Porphyry, *VP* 35). Instead, Astraeus' eyes are in accordance with the moon phases, in a transitory way.

⁵⁴ Because to worry about philosophical or religious schools, heresies, and commitments distracts from the really interesting and significant achievements of ancient fiction in general, and of Diogenes in particular (Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 112–114; S. Stephens, *op. cit.*, 677–678). Surely, the Pythagorean element was enough convincing that it found its way into subsequent and seriously intended discussion like Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras*. Reyhl is surely correct about the central position that Pythagorean material occupies in the novel (could be the books 12–14) (Reyhl,

These elements have been constructed as grounds for the assumption that the novel-like parts of the work merely provided the skeleton plot for a tendentious, Neopythagorean treatise. However, this theory has quite rightly been rejected, another argument being that the patriarch Photius, who was particularly interested in philosophical and religious themes⁵⁵, devotes much less space to Astraeus section than to the mixed bag of adventures undergone by the siblings and to the fantastic experiences had by Deinias and Mantinias as their respective travels. Whether there was in addition a serious Pythagorean tendency, as has been asserted, cannot be deduced from the summary, reasons judiciously Hägg⁵⁶.

Reyhl has established a classification of these sources used in this Chinese-boxes structure by giving the following image:

1. An Egyptian tomb-story;
2. *Paapisaretalogie*;
3. *Liebesromane*;
4. *Pythagorika*: a) more Pythagoras' biographies;
b) the aretalogy of Astraeus;
c) the story of Zalmoxis;
5. The travel of Deinias;
6. The stories of Antiphanes;
7. The story beyond Thule, finally⁵⁷.

So, proceeds Reyhl, in this *Liebesroman* Diogenes has inserted so many *Pythagorika* (a *Pythagorasvita*, the Astraeus' aretalogy, the episode of Zalmoxis),

Antonios, 12). But while it may be central, it is difficult to reconcile Pythagoras' injunction to truth-telling with Diogenes' rather more casual if not downright arbitrary attitude about fact and fiction. Moreover, the Pythagorean material is the most deeply embedded of the interlocked accounts, and perhaps it was placed at the core of the novel as a hard-won kernel of truth for the serious reader who has finally succeeded in peeling off so many layers of tales. Some made the observation that in *PSI* 1177 the slave Myrto is strangely silent, and tried to connect it with the famed Pythagorean silence precept. Also the discovery of coffins and encased texts together was supposed to have been modelled on the presumed discovery of Numa's Pythagorean writings in 181 BC (Cassius Hermina *apud* Pliny *Nat.* 13.84; Livy 40.29) (for the presumed finding of books, see now A. Willi, *Numa's Dangerous Books. The Exegetic History of a Roman Forgery*, MH, 55, 1998, pp. 139–172). Even the novel's close connection with Pythagoras, moreover, can be seen as a way of detaching it from history, thinks Romm. Pythagoras himself was a transhistorical personage, a multiplay reincarnated time-traveller whose past lives were said to extend all the way back to the Trojan War (J. Romm, *Novels Beyond Thule*..., 113 n. 16).

⁵⁵ Photius displayed in his *Library* a further interest in Pythagoreanism and religious-theological topics (even pagan): see *cod.* 249, 438b–441b, with an anonymous *Πυθαγόρου βίος*, and the *Arithmetical Theology* of Nicomachus of Gerasa. *cod.* 187, 142b–145b. This Nicomachus wrote also a *Life of Pythagoras*.

⁵⁶ Th. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity*, 120.

⁵⁷ Reyhl, *Antonios*, 110.

that almost the second part of the novel was filled up with it. Further, he gave the next graphic representation of the novel's plan and partition (according to the number of books)⁵⁸:

Thule	Love-romance adventures	Pythagorika	Sicily	Zalmoxis	Thule	Tyre
1	2-13	13	-	20	22	24

The assured number of books is certain only in three places: a) Lydis' mention of the bean taboo, excerpted from the thirteenth book (Διογένης δὲ ἐν τοῖς τρικαίδεκάτῃ ἀντίστων, *De mens.* 4.42), implying that also Porphyry's extracts are from this book⁵⁹; b) in 110 b 16-19, Phoius says: "And the twenty-third book of Antonius Diogenes' *The Wonders Beyond Thule* comes to an end, without hinting at anything concerning Thule except for the short notice at the beginning"⁶⁰; c) then follows the narration of the last book: "The twenty-fourth book presents Azoulis as a narrator and then Deinias adding Azoulis' stories to the tales he has already told Cymbas". As for Reyhl's suppositions concerning the position of the Zalmoxis-section, we may be sure only for not going any longer than the book 23.

In 109 b, after Dercyllis returns from Hades with Ceryllus and Astraeus, we are told about "how she listened to Astraeus discoursing about Pythagoras and Mnesarchus" (preserved in Porphyry's extracts). Then, in 110 a, come next Dercyllis' adventures as she wandered through Italy and Sicily and how in the Sicilian city of Eryx she was arrested and brought to Aensidemus, the tyrant of Leontini (another historically attested figure, said to have ruled about 490 BC). This is very consistent with a more general historical setting for the novel (see above), in the first generation of Pythagorean disciples, and the conquest of Egypt (or the failed rebellion of Egypt in 484 BC), which forced Paapis to expatriation. In Leontini, Dercyllis encountered her brother Mantinias, who reports her about his wanderings where he "had seen many wondrous sights concerning men and other creatures and concerning the sun itself and the moon and plants and especially islands"; but here appears also the "thrice-accursed enemy" Paapis, nearby the tyrant. The pursuer's name, Paapis, was that of a famous prophet in Egyptian history, the father of Amenophis (Manetho, *FGH Hist.* 609 F 10). Antonius, thought Reyhl, has very probably put Pythagoras die in the temple of Musae at Metapontum, since the brothers happened to meet in Metapontum the Pythagorean Astraeus, maybe to visit his master's grave.⁶²

⁵⁸ Reyhl, *Antonios*, 120-121.

⁵⁹ Astraeus' lecture, therefore, was centrally placed in the twenty-four books.

⁶⁰ This was caused by Phoius' wonder: till the final book, almost nothing is relating with the strange title.

⁶¹ Stephens-Winkler, *Fragmens*, 123 n. 40, and 124 n. 49.

⁶² Reyhl, *Antonios*, 25 and n. 1 - Pythagoras was certainly dead, contrary Astraeus would not have met Zalmoxis, but his master instead.

From Phoius' epitome, the section where appears Zalmoxis is the following, regarding the brothers' further adventures⁶³:

110a 17-38:

"Ἐπειτα ὡς λαβόντες Μαντινίας καὶ Δερκυλλίης ἐκ Λεωνείων τὸ Πλατίνδος πηλιδιον μετὰ τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ βιβλίων καὶ τῶν βοτανῶν τὸ κιβώριον, ἀπαίρουσι εἰς Πήγιον κάκειθεν εἰς Μεταπόντιον, ἐν ᾧ αὐτοὺς Ἀσπραῖος ἐπικραταλαβὼν μὴνυει κατὰ πόδας διώκειν Πλάτιν. Καὶ ὡς συναπαίρουσιν αὐτῷ ἐπὶ Θράκας καὶ Μασσαρέας, πρὸς Ζαμόξιον τὸν ἑταῖρον αὐτοῦ ἀνίοντι, ὅσα τε κατὰ ταύτην τὴν ὁδοπορίαν ἴδωσιν, καὶ ὅπως ἐντεύχου Ἀσπραῖος Ζαμόξιῳ παρὰ Γέταις ἦδη θεῶ νομιζομένῳ καὶ ὅσα αὐτῶ καὶ δεηθῆναι Δερκυλλίης τε καὶ Μαντινίας Ἀσπραῖον ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἠξίωσαν. Καὶ ὡς χρημὸς αὐτοῖς ἐκείθεν ἐξέτερεν ἐπὶ Θούλῃν εἶναι περπαμένον ἐλθεῖν, καὶ ὡς ἐξ ὕστερον καὶ παρὶδα ὄψοντα, πρῶτερον ἄλλὰ τε ἐνταλαπαροῦντες, καὶ δίκτην τῆς ἐς τοὺς τοκέας ἀνοσιότητος (εἰ καὶ ἄκοντες ἦσαν) τινύντες τῷ τὸν βίον αὐτοῖς εἰς ζωὴν καὶ θάνατον διαμεριθῆναι, καὶ ζῆν μὲν ἐν νυκτὶ, νεκροὺς δὲ ἐν ἑκάστῃ εἶναι ἡμέρα. Εἶτα ὡς τοιοῦτους χρημοὺς λαβόντες ἀπαίρουσιν ἐκείθεν τὸν Ἀσπραῖον σὺν Ζαμόξιῳ λείποντες ὑπὸ Γετῶν δοξαζόμενοι. Καὶ ὅσα περὶ Βορρᾶν αὐτοῖς τεράστια ἰδεῖν καὶ ἀκοῦσαι συνηνέχθε.

"Then, as they left Leontini, Mantinias and Dercyllis took Paapis's bag, the books in it, and a small wooden box of plants. They sailed to Rhegium and from there to Metapontum, where Astraeus overtook them and warned them that Paapis was hard on their heels. They sailed away to Thrace and the Massagetae, together with Astraeus, who was going to visit his friend Zalmoxis. There is an account of what they saw during these travels, of how Astraeus met Zalmoxis, who was already regarded as a god among the Getae, and of what Dercyllis and Mantinias asked Astraeus to say to him and ask him on their behalf. There, an oracle declared that they would go to Thule and that they would see their homeland later but that first they would undergo trials and make atonement for their, albeit unintentional, irreverence towards their parents by dividing their time between life and death, by living at night but being corpses each day. After hearing such predictions, they set sail from there, leaving Astraeus, who was revered by the Getae, with Zalmoxis. There is an account of all the marvelous sights and tales that they encountered in the north".

We may be sure that ἔδε, "already", regarding to Zalmoxis' godly- veneration, testifies assuredly Diogenes' version. It points the preceding mention of Zalmoxis (maybe next to Astraeus' report on Pythagoras - in the book 13), and the fact that, after his returning to the Getae, he was considered as a god and worshipped. All this betrays the Herodotean tradition:

⁶³ Translation from *CAGN*, 779-780 (Gerald Sandy).

Zalmoxis, slave of Pythagoras on Samos, came back into his country, with the doctrine of immortality. Zalmoxis was in all epochs an example of deified man, already in his lifetime. But in the novel, the Thracian personage had to have been Pythagoras' slave in southern Italy, and a companion of Astraeus (who will visit him thereafter); thus he had to left this society after Pythagoras' death, and the disaster of the Pythagoreans⁶⁴.

The oracle concerning the death-like trance will be soon accomplished; Paapis overtook the two brothers on the Thule-island (110 b), and, spitting openly in their faces, "imposed on them that affliction of being dead during the day and coming back to life at nightfall"⁶⁵.

Astraeus and Zalmoxis are in the novel examples of outstanding Pythagorean pupils, and strange enough. Astraeus' name (*Astraios*) may have been fashioned from that of Pythagoras' star pupil and successor Aristaios (this assertion of Reyhl and Stephens-Winkler is more pertinent than the others). Aristaios is present in Iamblichus' first list of the Pythagorean prominent followers (*VP* XXIII,104, alongside with Lysis, Empedocles, Zalmoxis, Epimenides, etc.), even if he lacks in the final, larger list. And in XXXVI,265 we may read: "Pythagoras' successor, as all accounts agree, was Aristaios son of Damophon of Kroton, who lived in the time of Pythagoras, at least seven generations before Plato. He was judged worthy not only of membership in Pythagoras' school but also of being raised as his child (ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς παιδοτροφίας) and marrying Theano, because of his prominent mastery of the doctrines. Pythagoras himself is said to have been the school's leader for thirty-nine years and to have lived for nearly a hundred, so that Aristaios, when Pythagoras handed over the school to him, was already an old man". Reyhl, following Rohde, presumed furthermore a correlation with a mythical consort of dawn (*Hes., Th.* 378) and father of the stars (*Arat., Phaen.* 98). The astral ring of the name undoubtedly should be connected with the lunar and calendrical lore that features so prominently in the novel, but a specific allusion seems far-fetched. The adoption (*paidotrophia*), common to Diogenes (in

⁶⁴ We possess some information related to this matter in Hippolytus (see below) and in Dionysopanes (in Porphyry, *VP* 15). The later could not have been among Antonius' sources, since in his novel he may not made direct quotations; thus, he was found by Porphyry in some another source (the supposed Alexandrian manual?). Very mysterious are Porphyry's sources for Zalmoxis; except Diogenes (used in the first part of the chapter 14), in the next phrases there is a melange of bizarre and unusually data (nowhere to be found in the other literary texts). More strange is the fact that generally, in *Pythagoras' Life*, Porphyry follows few sources for the same article; but in this case, there is a mixture of distinct elements. The question of their origin remains open.

⁶⁵ Further, Paapis is killed by Thruscanus (a man of Thule, ardently in love with Dercyllis), who, believing her dead, commits suicide. The two brothers are released from Paapis' magic by Azoulis, using Paapis' bag. Also Azoulis discovered how the brothers can free their parents from the magic of Paapis (they had lay like corpses for all this time).

Porphyry, *VP* 10 and 13) and to Iamblichus' source strongly sustains the close relation of Astraeus and Aristaios⁶⁶.

We do not know how much space was devoted within the novel to the Astraeus-Zalmoxis sections, remarks Holzberg, but Photius' summary suggest that they were spread over the narrative units grouped around the core of Dercyllis' account. They therefore quite probably formed the innermost ring of the entire plot. In addition to numerous miraculous tales, which were in part similar to those found in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, these two sections contained a great deal of philosophical and religious instruction (as the tripe to the underworld before the brothers were parted)⁶⁷.

Since the Pythagorean material from Antonius was amply used by Porphyry, an analysis of his writing is necessarily. In his *Philosophos Historia*, composed probably to 268–270, Porphyry provided for every philosopher a biography and a doxographic notice; Pythagoras' life was placed in the first book, and it is the only preserved long fragment of the considerable work⁶⁸. Porphyry's immense learning and indefatigable curiosity have ensured that his lifework was deeply influenced in many different ways by other thinkers and traditions. He would have himself, of course, primarily as a Platonist. Porphyry does not seem to have incorporated Pythagoreanism into a formal course, but the prominence of the *Life of Pythagoras* in the *Philosophos Historia* (the only preserved life of a philosopher, and soon separated from the rest of the work) and the many Pythagorean echoes in *De abstinentia* and particularly in the *Letter to Marcella*, show clearly the important role which Porphyry attached to Pythagoreanism in moral and spiritual formation⁶⁹.

⁶⁶ Reyhl, *Antonios*, 92. Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 133–134 n. 69. But nowhere else we can find similar stories about Astraios or Aristaios, like in Diogenes.

⁶⁷ Nowhere, furthermore, can these stories be seen to have any significance in terms of Pythagorean thought and life-style, within the convulsions of this narrative (N. Holzberg, *op. cit.*, 58–60). Then, the three chief elements – taken from the idealistic novel, from fantastic travel tales and from the fictional lives of philosophers, and accordingly heterogeneous – gave equal weight and together served one purpose: the basic theme which traditionally underlay the idealistic novel – that is, that of man's wandering through life – was to be presented this time on three different planes.

⁶⁸ A. Ph. Segonds, *Les fragments de l'Histoire de la philosophie (Appendice)*, in É. Des Places, *Porphyre. Vie de Pythagore. Lettre à Marcella*, Paris, 1982, 164.

⁶⁹ A. Smith, *Porphyrian Studies since 1913*, ANRW, II.36.2, 1987, 747. It is probable that Porphyry was influential in establishing the late tradition which gave a fixed place to Pythagoreanism as a philosophical propedeutic. The later Neoplatonists, Iamblichus and Porphyry, presented however an image of the philosopher, which combined parts of the other two precedent images (the group of scientific circle spoken of by Aristotle; the ascetic and pious order mocked by Middle Comedy) into something new and respectable though still religious in overtones. Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras*, then, must be also with those biographies of philosophers which sought to defend against distorted pictures of the man and to present a true one (Ch. S. Talbert, *Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propaganda in Mediterranean Antiquity*, ANRW, II.16.2, 1978, 1622). Later on, we may be

Porphyry copies more mechanically than Iamblichus from his sources, concludes Burkert, and his extracts are not certainly to establish. Rohde assigned to the novel the chapters 10–17 and 32–45 (in a first analysis); then, later, on the ground that in his novel Antonius could not have made explicit citation of sources, only 10–14, 32–36, and 44 (in 15 Dionysophanes is quoted, and in 41 Aristotle). On the other hand Jägger and K. Reyhl hark back to Rohde's original thesis excluding only the direct citations⁷⁰. To be positive, the mention of ἄδυντα attaches Porphyry VP 17 and 34. Reyhl added 46–47, which is quite impossible, because Iamblichus (VP XXXII, 228) has copied the same text, but Iamblichus did not use Antonius⁷¹.

In his special delineation of Pythagoras' tradition, I. Lévy alleged that Diogenes told that Pythagoras, pupil in Babylonia of Zaratas the Chaldean, received from his master the communication of a Περὶ φύσεως λόγος (Porph., VP 12). Furthermore, his account on Pythagoras inserted from this fantastic novel is no more, judging from the character of the whole book and some own inventions of the author, than a network of fables (as Rohde and Jägger formerly maintained). All of what Diogenes tells on the Samian reproduces the lines of the biography of Pythagoras as settled by a literary model⁷².

Porphyry's chapters 14–15 give detailed data on Zalmoxis, several originating quite probably from the *Wonders*. Before discussing them, here is the full text⁷³:

positive that Porphyry's text was known in the Islamic world, translated first in Syrian, then into Arabian. Fragments of the *Pythagoras' Life*'s translation subsisted in a work of Ibn Abī Usaibi'a: *Uyūn al-anbā* (XIIIth century); see R. Walzer, *Porphyry and the Arabic Tradition*, in *Porphyry* (Entretiens Hardt, XII), Genève, 1966, 283; Idem, s.v. *Furfurius*, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, II, Leiden, 1991⁴, 949. Moreover, in the famous *India* of al Biruni (1030 AD), it is told about Porphyry and Diogenes (certainly, our discussed author) concerning the music of the spheres (but here much confusion is present) (cf. A.-Ph. Segonds, *op. cit.*, 169–176). In Porphyry, VP 30–31 (p. 50.4–51.3 Des Places) it is told about Pythagoras and the music of spheres; Diogenes is mentioned only thereafter, in § 32 (al Biruni's paragraph is available in the translation of E. Sachau, 1882, vol. I, p. 43).

⁷⁰ See Reyhl, *Antonios*, 26 – Porphyry took from Antonius: 10–17 (intercalation from the Alexandrian handbook – Dionysophanes in 15), 31–47 (intercalation from the handbook – Aristotle in 41), 54–55. Anonymous informers were pointed by Rohde in 14, 15, 36, 41. See also I. Lévy, *Les sources de la légende de Pythagore*, Paris, 1926, 90. The later ascribed from the *Wonders* (as known indirectly) the chapp. 10–14 till τινὲς δὲ καὶ Θαλῆν (pp. 92–93). Fusillo ascribed 10–14, 32–36, 44, and Stephens–Winkler the 10–17, 32–45, 54–55.

⁷¹ Porphyry's basis for the reminder must be a handbook containing many citations of its sources, and for this part the points of contact with Diogenes Laertius are especially numerous (W. Burkert, *op. cit.*, 99 n. 9). His *Life* was drew on Nicomachus, Moderatus, Antonius and an Alexandrian life of Pythagoras.

⁷² I. Lévy, *op. cit.*, 81 and 94. Accordingly to Rohde, Diogenes composed his account from pieces taken from Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Heraclides; moreover, it had to find his materials reunited in a biography of Pythagoras.

⁷³ I use the edition Des Places, 42, ll. 3–15. The translation is from Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 135–137. This paragraph was quoted in the fifth century by Cyril of Alexandria, alongside with others from Porphyry, in his *Contra Iulianum* 6.208 E (PG 76, 820 B) (composed

14.

Ἦν δ' αὐτῷ καὶ ἕτερον μενράκιον ὃ ἐκ Θρᾶκες ἐκτίσαστο, ᾧ Ζάμολξις ἦν ὄνομα, ἐπεὶ γεννηθέντι αὐτῷ δορὰ ἄρκτου ἐπεβλήθη τὴν γὰρ δορὰν οἱ Θρᾶκες ζαλμόν καλοῦσιν. Ἀγαπῶν δ' αὐτὸν ὁ Πυθαγόρας τὴν μετέωρον θεωρίαν ἐπαίδευσε τὰ τε περὶ ἱερουργίας καὶ τὰς ἄλλας εἰς θεοὺς θρησκείας. Τινὲς δὲ καὶ Θαλῆν τοῦτόν φασιν ὀνομάζεσθαι. Ὡς Ἡρακλέα δ' αὐτὸν προσκυνοῦσιν οἱ βάρβαροι.

15.

Διονυσσοφανῆς δὲ λέγει δουλεῦσαι μὲν αὐτὸν τῷ Πυθαγῶρα ἐμπεσόντα δ' εἰς ληστὰς καὶ στιχθέντα, ὅτε κατεστασιάσθη ὁ Πυθαγόρας καὶ ἔφευγεν, δῆσαι τὸ μέτωπον διὰ τὰ στίγματα. Τινὲς δ' ἐρμηνεύσθαι τὸ ὄνομα φασὶ Ζάμοξιν ξένος ἀνὴρ.

14. "There was another youth in his company whom he acquired from Thrace, named Zalmoxis from the fact that at his birth he was wrapped in a bear hide, since the Thracians call a hide a *zalmos*. Pythagoras cherished him and taught him the theory of the heavens and about the cult of the gods. Some say that he was also called Thales. The barbarians worship him as Heracles.

15. Dionysophanes says that he was the Pythagoras' slave and that he felt into the hands of brigands and was tattooed, when Pythagoras was defeated by a rival faction and sent into exile and that he later bound his forehead to cover the tattoo. Some interpret the name Zalmoxis as meaning «stranger».

Certainly, not all this bulk of information come from the novel. Dionysophanes' direct quotation is not plausible in Antonius' novel; there are other anonymous sources (twice τινὲς in 14 and 15, for the Thales-equivalence, and the "stranger"-etymology; I like to believe that also the comparison with Heracles belongs to such a source, and not to Diogenes, as have thought Rohde and Fusillo). But the story of his slavery and teachings, and his etymology connected to his birth can be ascribed to Diogenes, as believe all scholars. As for the Zalmoxis-Astraeus problematic, Rohde ascribed assuredly the chapters 10, 11, 12, 13; the same was 14 about Zalmoxis, undoubtedly from Antonius, where Zalmoxis is a notable figure. But with the end of 14, ὡς Ἡρακλέα δ' αὐτὸν (*scil.* Zalmoxis) προσκυνοῦσιν οἱ βάρβαροι, connected by

between 433 and 441): Ἦν δὲ αὐτῷ ἕτερον μενράκιον, ὃν ἐκ Θρᾶκες ἐκτίσαστο, ᾧ Ζάμολξις ἦν ὄνομα: ἀγαπῶν δὲ αὐτόν ὁ Πυθαγόρας, τὴν μετέωρον θεωρίαν ἐπαίδευσεν. Cyril was interested only in the topic of the virtuous slave, able to acquire his master's wisdom (and he omits the anecdotal etymology). This accords well with the aim of the fragments extracted by him from Porphyry's *Philosophos Historia* - to show the common points between the best of Greek philosophy and Christian theology (A.-Ph. Segonds, *op. cit.*, 167). As for the name of the Thracian god, the confusion is at his best – Ζάμοξις Nauck: Ζάμολξις codd.: Ζάμολξις Des Places (misprinted?). Dionysophanes (this mention is registered by Jacoby as *FGHist* 856 F 1) is an unknown writer; he is also named in *Schol. Apoll. Rhod.* A 826 A (and connected with a Thracian topic too).

Rohde with Diogenes' Ζαμόλιξι παρὰ Γέταις ἥδη θεῶ νομιζομένῳ, Porphyry leaves the novelist. This is proved by the citation of Dionysophanes, with whom the chapter 15 begins⁷⁴. So only his relation with Pythagoras from the fourteenth chapter is assuredly established as originating from the novel.

Discussing the name of Zalmoxis, W. Tomaschek reported, alongside with Gebeleizis (from Herodotus 4. 95, as another name for this god in the case of some Getae), two epithets from Porphyry: first, the epithet Θαλῆς which would contain the syllable *thal*, *σαλ* – of the name Zalmoxis/Salmoxis; and Ἀστραῖος, which would prove the μεθέωρος θεωρία and the annual division (cf. Arm. *astil*, “star”, and the Thracian name Ἀστρίκιος); he seems however to consider Astraios, wrongly, an epithet of Zalmoxis (and a Thracian one!)⁷⁵, being thereafter followed in this confusion by Kazarow⁷⁶.

A. D. Cook paid a special attention to Porphyry's VP 10. According to him, the fine poplar in a far-off land with a divine infant lying beneath it (Astraeus) at once recall the remarkable poplar growing in the mouth of the Idaean Cave, where Zeus was born (and a place to which Pythagoras made pilgrimage). The ability to stare straight at the sun was characteristic of the eagle and thus might well mark an infant Zeus, on his inference. At last, the name Astraios would remind that the Cretan Zeus bore the title *Asterios*. Cook implied therefore that Diogenes wove into his romance a Neopythagorean account of the Cretan Zeus. If so, it would seem that Zalmoxis and Astraios, the two familiars of Pythagoras, stood respectively for Thrace and Crete, and that the sage in representing himself as an avatar of Apollon was acting under the influence of the Thracian and the Cretan cult of reborn Zeus. All this was characteristic by Cook in the context of his theory about bear-gods (as he considers Zalmoxis – on the basis of the bear-hide association –, and also a primitive variant of Zeus). So, “In view of these bear-stories it is reasonable to infer that Zalmoxis was a Thracian appellation of the new-born Zeus”. None of his assertions can be proved, being rather superficial presuppositions fitting entirely in his *Zeitgeist* (traces of primitive avatars in animal or vegetal form of the classical gods, Thracian influence over Greek religion, dying and resurrecting divinities and so on, in the predominant Frazerian trend of that time)⁷⁷.

⁷⁴ E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, Leipzig, 1900², 273 n. 2. I am not sure about the connection of “already regarded as a god among the Getae” with “the barbarians worship him as Heracles” (see my discussion).

⁷⁵ W. Tomaschek, *Die alten Thraker. Eine ethnologische Untersuchung*, Vienna (SBAW), II, 1894, 66 (reprint Vienna, 1980). *Thales* is not to be considered, evidently, as a Thracian appellation, but a facile assimilation or only association with the Ionian philosopher (however, quite strange); as for a “Thracian” etymology, there is no need to infer one. All betrays a lot of confusion.

⁷⁶ For whom Porphyry mentioned the nickname of Zalmoxis, *Thales*, like *Astraios* (and quotes Tomaschek – see G. Kazarow, *Zalmoxis*, «Klio», 12, 1912, 363 n. 12).

⁷⁷ A. B. Cook, *Zeus. A Study in Ancient Religion*, II, New York, 1965² (= 1925), 228–230. His theory of a bear-god Zalmoxis was influenced, as in the case of others, by the *zalmos* etymological

Since the literature about Zalmoxis has some extension⁷⁸, I will use only the authors referring mainly his presence in the *Wonders*⁷⁹ or very related matters. The Getic god occurs first in Herodotus' book IV. His story of Zalmoxis influenced the later tradition in many ways⁸⁰, and now it is the moment to expose these traditions, as they can be distinguished (in my view). First of all, I have the strong conviction that Herodotus 4. 94–96 is the only source which relies on particular data about Zalmoxis' cult (more exactly, *Salmoxis*, in his text); further, and this is very important, Herodotus' reports are not first hand data, but already adjusted and altered ones. Apart from the two strange mentioned rituals – a) a messenger sent every five years to Zalmoxis, being killed with spears; b) the shooting with arrows of the sky during tempests –, Herodotus records the Greeks of Pontus' account, a clear rationalized fiction. In this version, Zalmoxis was initially the slave of Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus, in Samos. After that, he returned home to his poor-minded Thracian fellows, and taught them the doctrine of immortality and of a happy afterlife. He used also a trick – the underground chamber –, where he hid for three years, and reappeared thereafter, convincing them of his veracity. Further Greek literature will recall some of this versions, in only allusive or, sometimes, larger accounts, and, very important, always betraying the contemporary cultural milieu⁸¹.

story. This is more likely an anecdotal report (no need to remind how cursory was Greek etymology), and has nothing to do with Zalmoxis' genuine personality, whatever it may have been.

⁷⁸ I will point only: G. Kazarow, *Zalmoxis*, “Klio”, 12, 1912, 355–364; s.v. *Zalmoxis*, in *RE*, IX A₂, 2301–2303 (K. von Fritz) and 2303–2305 (I. I. Russu); C. Clemen, *Zalmoxis*, “Zalmoxis”, 2, 1939, 53–62; R. Pfister, *Zalmoxis*, in *Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson on His Seventieth Birthday* (edd. G. Mylonas, D. Raymond), Saint-Louis (Missouri), II, 1953, 1112–1123; R. Engel, s.v. *Zalmoxis*, in *Der Kleine Pauly*, V, 1454–1455; M. Eliade, *Zalmoxis*, in *Zalmoxis. The Vanishing God*, Chicago–London, 1972, 21–75 [= *HR*, 11, 1972, 15–42]; F. Hartog, *Salmoxis: le Pythagore des Gètes*, in *Le miroir d'Hérodote. Essai sur la représentation de l'autre*, Paris, 1992² [= 1980], 102–125 (= *Salmoxis: le Pythagore des Gètes ou l'autre de Pythagore*, *ASNP*, 8, 1978, 15–42); P. Alexandrescu, *La nature de Zalmoxis selon Hérodote*, *DHA*, 6, 1980, 113–122; I. P. Culianu–C. Poghirc, s.v. *Zalmoxis*, in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. M. Eliade), XV, 1987, New York–London, 551–554; Z. Petre, *Le mythe de Zalmoxis*, “Analele Universității București. Istorie”, 42–43, 1993–1994, 23–36.

⁷⁹ General articles on the author and novel: W. Schmid, s.v. *Antonios* (49), in *RE*, I, 2615–2616; M. Fusillo, s.v. *Antonios* (3, *Diogenes*), in *Der Neue Pauly*, I, Stuttgart–Weimar, 1996, 806–807. In the Romanian historiography Zalmoxis' presence in this novel is mentioned only by G. Tocilescu, *Dacia înainte de Romani*, Bucharest, 1880, 688–689 and n. 302; I. I. Russu, *Religia Geto-Dacilor. Zei, credințe, practici religioase*, “Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice” (Cluj), 5, 1944–1948, 86; N. Gostar, *Zalmoxis–Zamolxis, zeul suprem al dacilor. Discuții și controverse*, “Cercetări Istorie”, 12–13, 1981–1982, 292 (for the form of the name; cf. also D. Detschew, *Die thrakische Sprachreste*, Vienna, 1976², s.v. Ζάμοξις, p. 175). Zalmoxis is incidentally mentioned in this novel by P.-M. Duval, *La Gaule jusqu'au milieu du V^e siècle*, I, Paris, 1971, 357.

⁸⁰ W. Burkert, *op. cit.*, 109 n. 65.

⁸¹ Mircea Eliade expressed in his paper *Zalmoxis* a view which is now the standard-theory, and largely accepted by scholars (thanks to Eliade's greatest prestige, and for individual reasons).

Herodotus may be therefore considered as the point of departure of various literary traditions, through the new cultural milieus, and, as for the Greek literary space, for more than 1500 years:

a) The Herodotean tradition (authors inspiring directly or indirectly from Herodotus, remembering some of the above mentioned elements): Hellanikos *FGrHist* 4 F 73; Lucian (*Scyth.* 1 and 4; *VH* 2.17; *JTr* 42; *Deor. conc.* 9); Libanius (*Or.* 64.93); Christian authors (Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Aeneas of Gaza), etc.⁸²;

b) Plato (*Chrm.* 156 de; 158 b) – Zalmoxis and his physicians can cure both body and soul through healing incantations: Apuleius, *Apol.* 26⁸³; Clement of Alexandria (*Protr.* 6.70.1; *Strom.* 1.15.66.3); Julian the Emperor (*Gal.* 244 A; *Caes.* 309 C); Stobaeus 3.37.23;

c) Mnaseas of Patara F 23 Müller – Zalmoxis is compared with Kronos, most likely because the human sacrifice: Diogenes Laertius 8.2; Hesychius s. v.

Accordingly, Zalmoxis' cult was a mystery religion with an initiatic doctrine; he was followed in this, by example, by I. P. Culianu-C. Poghir. This vision is extremely problematic for me, since Eliade omits discussing the real value of the Herodotean tradition (his arguments are those from the story of the Black Sea Greeks, rejected even by Herodotus, who believes Zalmoxis as living long before Pythagoras, except he is not a δαίμων ἐπιχθόνιος of the Getae), and overemphasizes some presumed mystic features (using later texts, where the Neoplatonic and Neopythagorean context is evident in the image of our item). Zalmoxis was interpreted, along the time, according to the dominant trends in the history of religions of each period: a vegetation god of nature (especially by the German school), a bear-god, a shamanistic figure (Meuli, Dodds, etc.), more recently in the Indo-European tradition, and so on. It is not meaningless that in the second half of the XXth century, he was principally considered an initiatic god, or the reformer and founder of a mystery cult, since the study of mystery religions was at his best; also, Eliade was particularly interested in this field. However, Eliade did not know about Zalmoxis' presence in our novel and, subsequently, the oracular association (which would have been certainly used as a further argument in his demonstration). Clearly, all this problem deserves a special survey, and his relevance for a "correct" consideration of Zalmoxis is not insignificant, of course.

⁸² This is however the largest tradition. These traditions may be intercrossed, or few delineated in some cases. From Herodotus till Eustathius, in full Byzantine times, Zalmoxis-Zamolxis occurs in more than 50 writers, in almost every literary genre; he is clearly only a *p r e t e x t* in their various discourses. His historical existence was accepted by their majority, and also his slavery at Pythagoras. He was considered as a Pythagorean, a prophet, an inspired lawgiver, a sage barbarian, a barbarian philosopher, an impostor, a deified man... The fascinating image sketched for Zalmoxis in antiquity determined surely the modern interpretations; many of the scholars are deeply influenced by his legend, and interpreted him according to their preoccupation or presuppositions. In Romania, by example, Zalmoxis is especially viewed as the very symbol of the Dacian "high" spirituality, being one significant figure of the national(istic) mythology.

⁸³ In Latin literature, we have only two occurrences of Zalmoxis, both of them inspiring from Greek works: Apuleius (in *Apol.* 26, quoting even Greek expressions from Plato's *Charmides*), and Jordanes *Getica* V, 39 (from Dio Chrysostomus' lost *Getica*, through the lost *Historia Gothorum* of Cassiodorus; Jordanes' mention will be later inserted in many medieval western chronicles). Definitely, Zalmoxis is a Greek character.

Zalmoxis and *Salmoxis*; *Schol. Plato Rep.* 600 b; and the Byzantine lexicons, s. v. *Zamolxis*⁸⁴;

d) (Neo)Pythagorean literature – here Zalmoxis is a entirely historical figure, a committed Pythagorean: Hippolytus of Rome, *Haer.* 1.2.17, 1.25.1; Porphyry, *VP* 14-15; Iamblichus (*VP* XXIII,104; XXX,173); also Dionysophanes *FGrHist* 856 F 1, etc. He was moreover considered a prophet and connected with oracular abilities, in Strabo 7.3.5 (following maybe Poseidonius), or an inspired lawgiver (Diodorus 1.94.2).

As for the form of the name, first appeared as *Salmoxis* (in Herodotus), then *Zalmoxis* (starting with Plato, then Diodorus; afterwards sporadically), and, in the imperial times and later on, the commonly widespread form is *Zamolxis*⁸⁵.

Alterity plays certainly a great part in Greek novels, and for our *Apista* there is no doubt (the travels within occur in all places of the *oikoumene*, especially in the fringes of the world, for not remembering the "beyond Thule"...). Zalmoxis and his Getae are to be registered in the same intention; they are one of the numberless topics of the complex narrative construction, in regard, this time, to far-off peoples and particular religious characters, being one of the numberless marvels in the north.

H. Kuch asks himself whether all these "barbarians" from the Greek point of view, non-Greeks in general and others (i. e. strangers, robbers, pirates, and slaves) are entirely without importance in the genre of the ancient novel; the main characters are generally Greeks of middle or higher provenance, but these characters, about whom the action of the novel is focused, are in constant contact with these aforementioned marginal groups. Such contacts are not always harmless meetings; and often, they are life-threatening, demanding combat and assertiveness. In ancient literature interactions between main characters and their antipodes form important preconditions for the whole, and only the interplay of the central and peripheral figures can create an ancient novel; many of the authors seem to have been intent on offering the lure of faraway lands in the titles of their books. The Orient was a preferred setting, even when a novel's title involved no

⁸⁴ There is a series of Byzantine lexicons which gives the same information s.v. Ζάμολξις: Photius, *Etymologicum Genuinum* (yet unpublished), *Suda*, *Etymologicum Magnum*. *Magnum* is extracted from *Genuinum*; the later, with Photius and *Suda*, are inspired from a previous work, maybe *Lexicon Rhetoricum* (also unpublished). Mnaseas is named only in the lexicons, but he must be the primary source for the others (in Diogenes Laertius 8.2, the comparison is ascribed, wrongly, to Herodotus!).

⁸⁵ I use the form *Zalmoxis* conventionally, of course. I fully agreed that in Greek antiquity "His name was of fairly common cultural currency, at least among the educated" (Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 125 n. 52). We must see primarily, from so many sources, the literary contexts; more likely, no other source except Herodotus reveals something sure or new about his real cult. All this matters are to be discussed separately for the future.

reference to this (as in our novel); a clearly visible trend toward the so-called barbarian lands can be found in the ancient Greek novel⁸⁶.

A more fruitful approach, while acknowledging that the novels are indeed Greek in rhetorical style and social mores, would examine more rigorously the reasons why such stories are all too often located in non-Greek and far-off lands, populated with non-Greek characters, and preoccupied with non-Greek cultures. This fascination with the "other" may lie indeed at the heart of the novel form or somewhere alongside its periphery (but, in abandoning the quest for novel's origins, we should not recede into a pro-Greek ethnocentrism that obscures or ignores the dynamics of such cultural interplay)⁸⁷.

From a philosophical point of view, alleges Váthelyi, the surviving novels and novel-fragments all seem to share a preoccupation with non-Greek cultures, even if they do not center on an erotic plot, and thus allows us to identify a characteristic of the genre that is not confined to the subclass of the romances.⁸⁸ The Egyptians are definitely the exemplary "other nation" of the Greek novel. The religious formulae circulating about the Egyptians, about the *boukoloi* sacrificing humans, or the priests practising magic (as our "thrice-wicked" Paapis) must have belonged to the wider field of narratives in the contemporary Mediterranean.⁸⁹ When these exotic features are mentioned, their function is not to collect the differences, but to represent them; yet, in contrast to ethnographic works, the novels will not try to organize their information Barbarian treachery and dishonest magician were standard fare in Greek novel. Magicians, prophets, and executioners are socially marginal, and the ambiguities inherent in this marginal status are often exploited in narrative fiction.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ H. Kuch, *A Study in the Margin of the Ancient Novel: 'Barbarians' and Others*, in *The Novel in the Ancient World*, 209–211. In the utopian adventure novel, a non-Greek fictional paradise is created. The Greek novel allows a wide field of contacts and conflicts between the most varied forces: Hellenes, "barbarians", and "others", being prolifically molded by the so-called barbarian elements. See also the section *L'Orient romanesque*, in *Le monde du roman grec*, 187–241. François Briquel-Chaumont remarks the major role of the Phoenicians in this genre, as, among others, Dercyllis and Mantineas (p. 189).

⁸⁷ Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 18.

⁸⁸ Zs. Váthelyi, *op. cit.*, 89. At the same time, the novels seem to belong to a more general historical interest in cultural diversity, within the Roman Empire, and form part of the four major, but non-exclusive types of the contemporary fictional productions: fantastic tales, Homeric revisionism, tragic or romantic novels, and comic or satiric novels. The wide range of fiction that tried to represent otherness includes the novels as well as fantastic extremes like Lucian's travel to the Moon.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 94–109. She examines subsequently the presence in the Greek novel of Egyptian priests, magic, magicians, seers, spells, oracles of this elected land of the Greek novel; Egyptian religion and magic, and their practitioners are recurrent themes in ancient novelistic. There is no doubt that the Egyptians were seen by the Greeks as a devout race, but also their religion and magic enjoys a considerable prestige.

⁹⁰ Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 16. The multi-cultural combination within the Greek novels – Egyptian, Persian, Greek – certainly points to Egypt at the time of the Persian invasion, but need not

During the staying at the Getae and Zalmoxis, there must have been some digressions on this subject, taken mainly from previous literature. After all, Zalmoxis, and consequently his Getae, were considered as examples of barbarian religiosity and wisdom.⁹¹ Such a case of a distinct sage people is to be found in *Aithiopiaka*. Here, Ethiopian Gymnosophists indeed are featured in the way in which Indian Gymnosophists used to be, because of idealization Greeks made concerning Barbarian groups, often presented as communities of wise men.⁹²

One discussed topic of both Reyl and Fauch was the presence of the typical figures of *theioi andres* in the *Wonders*. In the Hellenism of the first empire spread an element of great weight: the figure of the religious animator, prophet, *thaumaturgos* and wise man, namely the "divine man". The chosen divine man is called in the Greek texts θεῖος ἀνὴρ, δαίμων/δαίμωνιος, or θεοπρότερος.⁹³ At least in the time of the first empire, the notion of "divine man" closed inside a whole sequence of charismatic personalities, starting with wise men, inspired sophists, *thaumaturgoi*, physicians, and ending with impostors, fortune tellers, charlatans and priests of different religious sects; one of most individuated was of course Apollonius of Tyana. The Greek world possessed already an own model of divinity – the model incarnated by the Master Pythagoras. Starting with the first century BC, in Greece and Rome grew a new direction of the Pythagorean tradition: the Neopythagoreanism. Its promoters viewed in Pythagoras a messenger of Greek wisdom, the prophet of a new belief, *thaumaturgos* and master of an authentic life, based on devotion, justice and religious asceticism. By conferring a halo of miracle to his legend, they created an auspicious atmosphere for the increasing of divine men, successors of Pythagoras, patterned upon the master (such a hero of Pythagoreanism was Apollonius of Tyana).⁹⁴

be confined to this period or place. The trio might as easily occur elsewhere in the Greek-speaking world. After all, Neklanebos fled to the Macedonian court when he left Egypt, and the Egyptian Paapis seems to have spent the bulk of his novelistic outside of Egypt (Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 400).

⁹¹ Before Diogenes: of course Herodotus (about the immortality of the Getae – and he is the one establishing this cliché; they were the most manly and law-abiding of the Thracians), Strabo 7.3.3–4 (after Posidonius), Josephus Flavius (*AJ* 18.22 – where the customs of the Essenes are compared to those of δακτύον τοῦ ρήτορος). Further: Diogenes Laertius 1.1 (the Thracian Zalmoxis as a wise barbarian, one of the three "Uphilosophen" with Ochus the Phoenician and Atlas the Libyan, as Olof Gigon named them – but Laertius used here earlier sources), Celsus in Origen *C. Cel.* 1.16; Clemens, *Strom.*, 1.15.68.1. Maybe the most distinct idealized image was given by Dio Chrysostomus, 707 *FGHist* F 1 (in Jordanes *Getica* V, 40): "Wherefore the Goths [i.e. the Getae] have ever been wiser than other barbarians and were nearly like the Greeks" (transl. Mierow)...

⁹² Literary characters, chiefly, they are not masters of original wisdom (P. Robiano, *Les Gymnosophistes éthiopiens chez Philostrate et chez Héliodore*, *REA*, 94, 1992, 413–418).

⁹³ He is after all a complex object, since different types and models of "human divinity" can be exhibited (J. Flinterman labelled him as an "ubiquitous divine man", cf. M. Dzielska, *If "Theios aner"*, in ed. S. Settis, *I Greci. Storia cultura arte società*, II, Turin, 1998, 1262).

⁹⁴ M. Dzielska, *op. cit.*, 1261–1263.

Certain men were believed in their historical existence to have displayed the divine presence in some special way, and hence were regarded as *theioi andres*. Whereas some circles looked for the divine presence in a man's physical beauty or in his prophetic utterances and miraculous feats, others saw it manifest in exceptional virtue and rationality; some looked of a supernatural conception, and others to conscious cultivation of virtue by a man born as other men normally are. At times these varying views, both of what constituted the divine presence and of the source of such divinity, merged into a skeletic portrayal of the *theios aner* (Porphyry's *Life* being a good example). Many of them became immortals⁹⁵.

The largest commentary of this problem is still the work of L. Bieler. *Θεῖος ἀνὴρ* is a man with an unusual dimension of humanity, properties and capacities, beloved of gods and a kind of intercessor between the divinity and the humankind⁹⁶. *Theios aner* comes into view as a genial men, a religious hero, in an effective and real connection with the divinity. His activity is in the ministration of a god, attestation of a divinity, his science is conferred by the gods, his doctrine is a heavenly revelation⁹⁷.

Astraeus fits obviously in the pattern of the divine man⁹⁸, as plain as day in the story of his exceptional find, and the miracle of his eyes. This new personage assumed too the role of narrator, in a subsequent account within account: he told about Pythagoras' life and the principles of his mystic doctrine and his way of life. He performs the classical pragmatic function of the assistant, for he saves in Metapontum the two brothers from the evil Paapis.

It is now time to consider the discussions about the aretalogical side of this novel. The adventures of our author focused on the antithesis of the Egyptian

⁹⁵ Ch. H. Talbert, *op.cit.*, 1626–1627. Zalmoxis too was featured as a deified man, certainly on the basis of Herodotus story, but within different contexts: Strabo 7.3.5 and 16.2.39 (the eclectic Hellenistic milieu – the divinization of great men), Lucian, *Deor. conc.* 9 (satire), Iamblichus, *VP XXX*, 173 (deification of the lawgiver), various Christian authors (Euhemerism for the apologetic purposes).

⁹⁶ L. Bieler, *ΘΕΙΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ. Das Bild des "göttlichen Menschen" in Spätantike und Frühchristentum*, Darmstadt, 1967².

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 41. The universal type allows different nuances, as the prophet and the *thaumaturgos*, the *θεῖος φιλόσοφος*, the holy singer, the divine ruler, the wonder-child.

⁹⁸ Also Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 21. From Photius' summary, we know about him: a descent to Hades with Dercyllis and Ceryllus; "the wondrous spectacle relating to his eyes"; his travel in Iberia, where he escapes from enemies by playing his flute; similar escapes from the "crude and stupid people" of Celts; the story about the kings of Aquitania ("the change in the size of the pupils of his eyes signaled the phases of the moon and because he released the kings from strife over the right to rule; for being two in number, they took turns ruling in accordance with the condition of the moon"); adventures at the Artabri; his journey with Dercyllis and Mantinias at the Getae to his friend Zalmoxis, running from Papis, and intermediating an oracle. And from Porphyry: the miraculous circumstances of his birth and finding (with pertinent detailing), his adoption by Mnesarchus, who then entrusted him to Pythagoras, his relevant physiognomy, his Pythagorean knowledge.

sorcerer Paapis, as a negative pole of the black Egyptian magic, against whom put Antonius *Heilige* as Astraeus and Zalmoxis, who are clear examples of divine men⁹⁹. The run of the siblings reached typical places of the Greek romance: Rhodos, Crete, then Italy, where the two brothers separated for a motif obscured by Photius. After the descent into Hades (a topos of *Odyssey* and Pythagorean philosophy), guided by the servant Myrto (deceased because the spells of Paapis), Dercyllis is accompanied in his paradoxographical peregrination between Spain and Italy, by new personages: Ceryllus, and particularly Astraeus. Now, starts a new component of this work, described as aretalogy by many scholars, the account of miraculous actions of exceptional men.

First, the *Wonders'* strong connection with aretalogy was alleged by Reitzenstein¹⁰⁰, being afterwards followed by Kerényi, who saw it not only as aretalogy, "sondern auch als Reise-Aretalogie" (travel-aretalogy). He points the strong contrasts, and oppositions between the Pythagoreans and Egypt (as a not meaningless rivalry of the wanderer-priests and the Neopythagorean *θεῖοι ἀντροποι*); thus the figure of the magician Paapis enters in the anti-Egyptian tendencies of Antonius¹⁰¹.

Longo sustained the today conventional significance of aretalogy as being the account of a thaumaturgical power's manifestation. In the novels also diverting and incredible stories can be inserted, in connection or not with the supernatural; the chief aretalogical work (profane) of this type, the *True Histories* of Lucian, reveals, even with its title, the satiric intention to all the marvelous stories, in which, sacred or profane, we meet the solemn declarations on the account's truthfulness. That aretalogy can contain within points of departure and novelistic elements affirmed previously Cataudella, and Longo came to speak of

⁹⁹ Reyhl, *Antonios*, 123; Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 20–21. The anger of Paapis constitutes the novel's principle of unity (A. Borgogno, *Antonio Diogene...*, 141).

¹⁰⁰ R. Reitzenstein, *op. cit.*, 17–18. As main elements for this identification: the find of the books in a grave; not only the role of the Egyptian wizard, but also Pythagoras placed in the centre. The equilibrium of philosophy and religion, the stories of Pythagoras, Zalmoxis and Astraeus combine with pure religious descriptions, as are the Hades-descent and the entire activity of Paapis (*Ibid.*, 31–32). Reitzenstein conceived a too vast design, however, for aretalogy. Very useful is instead the article of Fauth (from 1978), as we will see hereinafter: the aretalogic, religious, and philosophical elements of the *Wonders*, are to be distinguished of other autonomous components (Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 38 n. 19). For Kerényi, *op. cit.*, 8, this Greek novel-named *πλάσματα* precisely by his author – does not enter in a pure category.

¹⁰¹ All these would fit properly into the practice of the Neopythagorean circles at the beginning of the Christian era – the "science" and the astrology, the heavenly underworld exhibited by the novelist; moreover, his great, scientific-aretalogic "Reiseroman", was intended against the propagandistic naïv-aretalogic novels of the Egyptian religion. Antonius accordingly wanted to remain in pure fictional elevation, "in reiner plasmatischer Höhe zu bleiben" (Kerényi, *op. cit.*, 45, 239). His statements are however too much questionable for being altogether admitted.

the "novella aretalogica"¹⁰². Aretalogy is the literary term for a communication prepared in poetic or prose form of extraordinary capacities of a superhuman science, and the subsequently manifestations of their capacities in acting accordingly, also with and marvelous words, indications and apparitions¹⁰³.

That the biographic material of the legendary images in the novel of Thule was inspired, there is no doubt. The question is if this material, on the two Pythagorean holly men Astraios and Zalmoxis, is somehow isolated embedded in the context of the "fantastic story"¹⁰⁴. Reyhl gave emphasis to the large space dedicated in the *Apista* for the divine men' accounts, especially Astraeus', with the typical marks of a θεῖος ἄνθρωπος; Astraeus is prominent in Dercyllis' section, the chief-heroine of the novel. This Astraios-section is clearly limited; starts, as Dercyllis tells, in Spain, Gaul, then follows the Sicily-episode, and finally Astraios at his companion Zalmoxis. According to Reyhl, it is little possible that Antonius have himself conceived all these (but we may find no trace of anything like this in the previous literature). There is a further place, continues Reyhl, where Pythagoras himself or Zalmoxis will be related to North (Hippolytus, *Haer.* 1.2.17; see my discussion below); furthermore, certainly there were later Pythagorean writings dealing with the North-West. A special Pythagorean science was connected with Astraeus, identical with Aristaios, who will appear in Iamblichus in *VP* XXXVI,265, as an ancient companion and disciple of Pythagoras (see above; but in Iamblichus, Astraeus lacks in the final catalogue of Pythagoras' followers)¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰² V. Longo, *Aretalogie nel mondo greco. I: Epigrafi e papiri*, Genova, 1969, 16, 33–36. From the distinct concept of ἀρετή, manifestation of a divine power, the idea of miracle is inseparable. The aretalogy is the exposition of a miracle and belongs to the narrative literature (*Ibid.*, 52). Admitting it, the term aretalogy is however loosely applied by modern scholars to a number of ancient texts that incorporate some testimonial to the power of a deity (Stephens–Winkler, *Fragments*, 374).

¹⁰³ W. Fauth, *Astraios und Zalmoxis*..., 220 (using A. Kieffer); R. Reitzenstein included Lucian and Diogenes into the so-called "profane aretalogy".

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 224–226. The novel of Thule is the oldest form of this genre, like the 'sophistic' love-romance with its covering of irrational and teratologic. As for the thesis of the philosophical tendency, we should know in detail the 24 books to maintain it; against the thesis of Burger, Fauth refers further the legendary *bios* of Pythagoras and his circle of thaumasiological anecdotes, mysterious capacities, supernatural actions, the spiritual ascetic of θεῖος ἄνθρωπος, and the philosophic science, represented in Diogenes' work by Pythagoras' adepts, Astraeus and Zalmoxis.

¹⁰⁵ A special aretalogy must have been about this Astraios or Aristaios, in the circle of those divine men as Zamolxis, Abaris or Epimenides. With Astraeus were related the other two "divine men" of the *Wonders*, Pythagoras and Zalmoxis, Pythagoras' biography being a rather a digression (Reyhl, *Antonios*, 90–94, in the sub-section *Die Astraios Aretalogie*). Also, he discusses the contrast of the "white" magician Astraeus and the "black" magic of Paapis, in the background of the aretalogic narrative. The travel of Astraeus to Zalmoxis seems little motivated in the *Apista*. Fauth (*Astraios und Zalmoxis*..., 227–228) traces a "philosophical aretalogy" on these Pythagoreans.

Zalmoxis is certainly another figure which fits in this aretalogy¹⁰⁶. His aretalogy reveals better in the light of the chapter 14 (unfortunately, not discussed by Fauth, who paid attention only to the Photian epitome). It illustrates also a "divine figure" (Astraeus' is surely more typical instead, not to mention Pythagoras' ...), which includes: birth (after he was born he was covered with a bear-hide, as relating to his name); his servitude and probation at Pythagoras, the specific teachings acquired from his master (τὴν μετέωρων θεῶν ἐπαίδευσε τά τε περὶ ἱερουργίας καὶ τὰς ἄλλας εἰς θεοῦς θρησκείας); Pythagoras' appreciation (ἀγαπῶν δ' αὐτὸν ὁ Πυθαγόρας); the returning home (after Pythagoras' death, more likely); he is a companion and friend of Astraeus, another eminent Pythagorean; back to the Getae he is worshipped as a god (the cliché of his immortal person); he gives or is the intercessor of the oracle. After the giving of the oracle, the Getae honour also Astraeus (Εἶτα ὡς τοιούτους χρησμούς λαβόντες ὑπὸ Γετῶν δοξαζόμενον, 110 a 34–37: "After hearing such predictions, they set sail from there, leaving Astraeus, who was revered by the Getae, with Zalmoxis"). This is very similar with his esteem among the Aquitani, in 109 b 32–33: "for these reasons, the people there rejoiced in Astraeus and his companions" (δι' ἃ καὶ ὁ ἐκεῖσε δῆμος τοῖς περὶ Ἀστραίων ἔχαιρον). These analogies imply certain manifestations of his divine nature among Zalmoxis' tribesmen. The divinization of (significant) men appears also in Zalmoxis' case. In Antonius, there must have been also a mention to Zalmoxis' physiognomy, since in Porphyry (*VP* 13) it is said about Astraeus: "Pythagoras accepted him, determined his character by studying the way his body naturally moved and rested. And oversaw his education. Pythagoras was the first to attain an accurate knowledge of this scientific physiognomy, searching out the individual nature of each person. He would accept no one as his friend or even acquaintance without reaching a physiognomonic analysis of his character".

But, from the today extant Greek literature, the "aretalogical" side of Zalmoxis reveals itself as fragmentary, and incomplete, inserted in many disparate sources, and not in a coherent image (it seems to have existed such an image only in our *Wonders*). I think to (exception made of his various image of deified men, prophet, lawgiver, barbarian Pythagorean and philosopher) his journeys in Egypt (Strabo 7.3.5), and particularly in Gaul (Hippolytus); he stayed also in southern Italy (as is implied in Hippolytus, and especially by the story of

¹⁰⁶ Fusillo conforms to the theory of Eliade in his consideration of Zalmoxis; so, this deity would have been very much in vogue in Greece during the first imperial period, like the Iranian Zarathustra, for his eschatological and mystic values (in an epoch of irrational fears, which absorbed many oriental cults and reevaluated the archaic figures of shamanistic prophets: Orpheus, Aristaeus, and in fact also Pythagoras) (Fusillo, *AntDiog.* 21–22). It is worthy to say that his vogue in Greece was only a literary one. Quite strangely, even in the territory of the Getae (in the Hellenistic and imperial times), lacks any evidence (be it epigraphic or iconographic) of his cult.

Dionysophanes), for not remembering his slavery on Samos (the original story from Herodotus)¹⁰⁷. All his travels are connected with the knowledge here acquired, specifically Pythagorean. However, in Antonius it was maybe the largest image, and more information put together than in any other known writer.

Photius pays some attention to this Zalmoxis-episode, which occupies some space in his epitome (not only for the oracle, which is however a turning point in the plot of the novel, but maybe also for Zalmoxis' figure, jointly with Astraeus).

In Hippolytus' *Refutatio* we may find two interesting stories about the Thracian god. The first considers him one of the survivors of the fire of Croton, major tragedy of Pythagoreans, together with Lysis and Archippus. But Lysis and Archippus are the only survivors of the fire of Croton, in the first hand Pythagorean tradition (Diogenes Laertius 8.39; Porphyry, *VP* 55 and 57; Iamblichus, *VP* XXXV,249). A second report mentions Zalmoxis introducing the Pythagorean teachings and philosophy among the Celtic Druids, as in the first one¹⁰⁸. I do not venture to connect strictly the data of Hippolytus' first book (*Philosophumena*) on Zalmoxis with Antonius' *Wonders*, but his elements are quite strange however; it would be a hazardous conjecture. But Hippolytus probably derived from Diogenes his bean taboo; also the name *Zaratias* – for Zoroaster – is common to Hippolytus 1.2.12–14 (in 12 as from Diodorus of Eretria and Aristoxenus), and Porphyry (*VP* 10 and 12)¹⁰⁹.

We may relate Astraeus' travels in Gaul and Iberia with Iamblichus, *VP* XXVIII,151 – where it is told about Pythagoras' travels and teachings acquired from the Orphics, the Egyptian priests, the Chaldeans and the Magi; also the mysteries of Eleusis, Imbros, Samothrace and Lemnos, and, finally, to the Celts and in Iberia (καὶ περὶ τοὺς Κελτοὺς δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἰβηρίαν). Yet, relating to Astraeus, the Celts (at least from Photius' summary) appear not as wise barbarians,

¹⁰⁷ For a good example of such an ideal image, Iamblichus, *VP* XXX,173: Ζάμολξιν γὰρ Θράξ ὦν καὶ Πυθαγόρου δούλος γενόμενος καὶ τῶν λόγων τῶν Πυθαγόρου δικοῦσας, ἀφεθείς ἐλευερός καὶ παραγενόμενος πρὸς τοὺς Γέτας, τοὺς τε νόμους αὐτοῖς ἔθηκε, καθάπερ καὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ δεδηλώκαμεν (cf. XXIII,104), καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀνδρείαν τοὺς πολίτας παρεκάλεσε, τὴν ψυχὴν ἀθάνατον εἶναι πείσας (...) καὶ ταῦτα παιδεύσας τοὺς Γέτας καὶ γράψας αὐτοῖς τοὺς νόμους μέγιστος τῶν θεῶν ἐστὶ παρ' αὐτοῖς.

¹⁰⁸ In 1.2.17: Τῶν δὲ μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ οἱ διαφυγόντες τὸν ἐμπρησμόν Λύσις ἦν καὶ Ἀρχίππος καὶ ὁ τοῦ Πυθαγόρου οἰκῆτης Ζάμολξιν, ὃς καὶ τοὺς παρὰ Κελτοῖς Δρυΐδας λέγεται διδάσκει φιλοσοφεῖν τὴν Πυθαγόρειον φιλοσοφίαν; and in 1.25.1 – Δρυΐδαι <δὲ> οἱ ἐν Κελτοῖς τῇ Πυθαγορείῳ φιλοσοφία κατ' ἄκρον ἐγκύωντες, αἰτίου αὐτοῖς γενομένου ταύτης τῆς ἀσκήσεως Ζαμόλξιδος δούλου Πυθαγόρου, γένει Θρακίου· ὃς μετὰ τὴν Πυθαγόρου τελευτὴν ἐκεῖ χωρὶς αἰτίας τούτοις ταύτης τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἐγένετο (ed. M. Marcovich, Berlin–New York, 1986, 61,88). Zalmoxis' mention among the standard survivors was intended to explain, maybe, his returning home after Pythagoras' death, and the presumed "mission" to the Celts. The connection between the Druids and Pythagoreanism was a common place (for immortality, metempsychosis, lore) in all ancient literature, but nowhere else Zalmoxis appears as such an intercessor.

¹⁰⁹ M. Marcovich, *ed. cit.*, 30.

but a "crude and stupid people" (109 b 23: ἔθνεϊ ὠμῷ καὶ ἡλιθίῳ)¹¹⁰; therefore, such a relation seems fortuitous.

Zalmoxis was also placed by Lucian in the Islands of Blessed (*VH* 2.17)¹¹¹. Alongside with the heroes, the Seven Sages and another Greek wise men, appears the following series: at the barbarians, the two Cyrus, the Scythian Anacharsis, the Thracian Zamolxis, thereupon Numa of Italy, Lycurgus of Lacedemonia. This shows clearly that Lucian is not parodying Antonius, since this list (of remarkable lawgivers) fits into his intent – to place in this mythical island the most featured persons as respectability, of his extremely unbelievable "true history". Pythagoras was also present in 2.21, and very ironically. No further resemblance with the *Wonders* can be asserted. In the other writings of Lucian, Zalmoxis betrays clearly the "usage" of Herodotus (see above), except here, where is transparent a source in regard to barbarian wisdom or notably lawgivers (or only indicating his rhetoric formation; and we may suppose many such lists or texts for this time); certainly, Diogenes is not his source for the parody.

Antonius wanted the occasion to set forth another Pythagorean, thought Reyhl, and hence the prophecy on the two brothers will be intermediated by Astraeus from his friend Zalmoxis. From Zalmoxis, the brothers heard an oracle detailed gave by Photius, probably in metric form, believes Reyhl¹¹². His sources (for the relationship of Zalmoxis with oracles) are those of his time, and according to them he will be described as a divine man. Generally, the gods interfere in the fate of the heroes in the novels, by sending them oracles or dreams. The role of the divine signs and of their authorised interpreters, the seers, in the five novels preserved in a complete form (the essential novel-corpus) is extremely relevant. Similar oracles occur in the majority of the novels-pertaining to travels, probation and happy ends (cf. Xenophon Ephesus 1.6.2, then Heliodorus 2.25 with the oracle of the Pythian god, and the psychological motivation of the oracle in Achilles Tatius). This intervention of divine will, be it Fortune, or *numen aduersum*, in men's affairs is one of the typical feature shared in varying degrees by the novelists¹¹³. The oracles are here previsions and admonitions, as the

¹¹⁰ The Thracian Zalmoxis is almost everywhere considered a disciple of Pythagoras. A reversed view, thought some scholars, was expressed by Hermippus F 22 Wehrli (in Josephus Flavius, *Ap.* 1.22) – the Jews and the Thracians as Pythagoras' masters of ideas and doctrine; they implied that "Thracians" covered Zalmoxis. I am not sure of this interpretation, since both Jews and Thracians are clear examples of idealized barbarian peoples, and, as I have said above, never this relation was inverted.

¹¹¹ Also noticed by Reyhl, *Antonios*, 58, 65, as an argument of Lucian's parody of the *Wonders*.

¹¹² Reyhl, *Antonios*, 93. See especially his subchapter *Götter, Orakel, Jenseitsvisionen* (102–106).

¹¹³ G. N. Sandy, *Apuleius' 'Metamorphoses'...*, 1557. Diogenes' novel seems to involve magic rather than mystery or religion (*Ibid.*, 1559 n. 129). Stephens-Winkler, *Fragments*, 7 – In Greek and Latin novels alike, magicians, prison, breaks, grisly rites, religious scandal, and sacrilege are the staples of this entertainment.

traditional oracle of Apollo, at Delphi, or at Claros, or others, more exotic, as Apis' oracle in Memphis. Achilles Tatius mentions two oracles (and gives even the text in verses of the first), undoubtedly by showing the provenance (2.14.1; 3.19.3; every time the oracle is held, ἵσχειν) The single oracle expressly identified, of Zeus Cassius, a god who is said to be diviner, functions strangely (3.6.1–8.6)¹¹⁴. The effort of men for escape the oracles precipitates their accomplishment, because, contrary to men, "the destiny do not forget" (X.Eph. 1.10.2: ἄλλ' οὐχὶ τὸ εἰμαρμένον ἐπελέληστο)¹¹⁵. Rohde used this oracle-episode of the *Wonders* for the date of our novel, since the belief in the overwhelming science of the demons and oracles implied the beginning of the imperial times¹¹⁶.

While, during the beginning of the imperial period (though on a previous trend) the Greek oracles (those from the continent, precisely) fall into decay, new centres came to their acme (especially in Asia Minor), like the oracles of Apollo at Claros and Didyma, which outshone Delphi – to judge from archaeological as well as literary evidence. Also the foreign oracles are very much in vogue, even if they are plain falsehood or literary constructs¹¹⁷; the presumed divine science of the Orient was ascribed to them.

While prophets was the title for the highest priestly class in Egypt, and elsewhere usually a title of distinction and respect, not all prophets in fiction were morally upright. Daulis in his bitter attack on the Delphic prophets equates him with a dishonest fortune-teller. In Antonius, Paapis' villainous use of magic spells is a prime mover for the novel's plot. Against these there are to be placed the "good prophets" – Heliodorus' Kalasiris and possibly Apuleius' Zatchlas. Tinouphis, who is both prophet and magician, may belong in this latter category if he is the king's saviour¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁴ S. Saïd, *Oracles et devins dans le roman grec*, in ed. J.-G. Heinz, *Oracles et prophéties dans l'antiquité*, Paris, 1997 (Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 15–17 juin 1995), 367–370. In the novels proper fate in one form or another forces the principal characters out on the sea: kidnap, flight or obedience to an oracle (Th. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity*, 119).

¹¹⁵ S. Saïd, *op. cit.*, 381. Paradoxically, the incorrect interpretation determines the process which allows a more accelerated accomplishment of the oracle or dream (S. Bartsch). The oracles serve not only as motives of action for the romances, but also as elements of narration and address both the readers and the actors. In Xenophon Ephesus it is clear that the oracles have a programmatic value starting with the oracle of Apollo at Claros, with which the narration begins. This oracle announce not only the probation and the terrible sufferings, but also the final salvation (S. Saïd, *op. cit.*, 389).

¹¹⁶ E. Rohde, *op. cit.*, 304–305.

¹¹⁷ S. Levin, *The Old Greek Oracles in Decline*, ANRW, II.18.2, 1989, 1600. The second century AD is precisely the time when the belief in oracles develops, and are put into circulation the outlandish and exotic oracles, as the famed "Chaldean Oracles" (consider also the great esteem of Egypt and Magi). The belief in oracles was however a widespread item in the Mediterranean area of that time.

¹¹⁸ Stephens-Wikler, *Fragments*, 401.

W. Bessel (one of the first scholars interested in Getic history and religion, in his *De rebus Geticis*, as early as 1854) thought that Antonius referred undoubtedly to the oracle of the Bessi (a Thracian tribe from Haemus), and, since he made confusion between the Thracians and the Massagetae, he did the same for the institutions of the Bessi and the Getae¹¹⁹.

A. D. Nock implied that one strange mention in Euripides' *Rhesus* (970–973), according to which Rhesus, who will be not one of the dead, though he may never more see his mother, will have a kind of divinity comparable with that of a prophet of Bacchus (Βάκχου προφήτης) while dwelling in a cave of Pangaion, was Zalmoxis. His argument was expressed on the basis of Strabo's information from 7.3.5 and 16.2.39. But his hypothesis¹²⁰ (others thought about this prophet as being rather Dionysus, Lycurgus, or Orpheus¹²¹) has no real support, being only a facile connection.

Rohde, regarding these oracular and prophetic features related to Zalmoxis¹²², recalled Origen in *Cels.* 3.34: that for Zalmoxis at the Getae, Mopsus in Cilicia, Amphilocus in Acarnania, Amphiaraus and Trophonius, are consecrated temples and ἀγάλματα, and that in Strabo 16.2.39 he is called μάντις¹²³. It is important therefore to examine the considerations of Strabo¹²⁴, in order to understand the way such an image was constructed for the Getic god. First, he considers, "it is natural and common to the Greeks and the barbarians" that the mandates are twofold; "for they come either from gods or from men", and among the Cretans there is Minos (with Zeus), and Lycurgus at the Lacedemonians (with Apollo) (Strabo 16.2.38, transl. H. L. Jones). "For these things, whatever truth there may be in them, have at least been believed and sanctioned among men; and for this reason the prophets too were held in so much honour that they were deemed worthy to be kings, on the ground that they promulgated to us ordinances and amendments from those gods, not only when they were alive, but also when they were dead (καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ οἱ μάντιες ἐτιμῶντο ὥστε καὶ βασιλείας ἀξιόσθαι, ὡς τὰ παρὰ τῶν θεῶν ἡμῖν ἐκφέροντες παραγγέλματα καὶ ἐπανορθώματα καὶ ζῶντες καὶ ἀποθανόντες), as, for example, Teiresias, «to whom even in death Persephone granted reason, that he alone should have understanding,

¹¹⁹ W. Bessel, *De rebus Geticis*, Göttingen, 1854, 49. The great oracle of Dionysus at the Bessi (this is the oracle implied by Bessel) is present in Herodotus 7.111, Suetonius, *Aug.*, 94.7 (barbarian oracles in a forest consecrated to Dionysus), Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.18.11. No one took into discussion thereafter this Bessi-theory.

¹²⁰ A. D. Nock, *The End of Rhesus*, CR, 40, 1926, 184–186.

¹²¹ See the discussion also in E. Rohde, *Psyche. Seelenkult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, Tübingen, 1910, II, 30.

¹²² Eliade used this oracular association as a major proof of his mystery-religion theory (for the same reason, see also I. P. Culianu–C. Poghirc, *op. cit.*).

¹²³ E. Rohde, *Psyche*, I, 121 n. 1; II, 30. The temple-building or statue-veneration is certain for all this oracle-givers, except, of course, our Zalmoxis (he is the only un-Greek person in this list).

¹²⁴ After Poseidonius 87 *FGrHist* F 70. All this is a digression of Strabo in his survey of Judaea and Moses.

whereas the others flit about a shadows» [*Odyssey* 10.494]. Such, also, were Amphiarus, Trophonius, Orpheus, Musaeus, and the god among the Getae, who in ancient times was Zamolxis, a Pythagorean, and in my time was Decaeneus, the diviner of Byrebastas (καὶ ὁ παρὰ τοῖς Γέταις θεός, [τὸ μὲν παλαιὸν Ζάμολξις Πυθαγόρειός τις, καθ' ἡμᾶς δὲ ὁ τῶι Βυρεβίσται θεοπίζων Δεκαίνεος])¹²⁵; and, among the Indians, the Gymnosophists; and, among the Persians, the Magi and the necromancers, as also the dish-diviners and water-diviners, as they are called; and among the Assyrians, the Chaldaeans; and, among the Romans, the Tyrrhenian nativity-casters. Moses was such a person as these, as also his successors, who, with no bad beginning, turned out for the worse" (Strabo 16.2.39). Diodorus, in his chapter 94 from the first book gives a similar list – of lawgivers inspired by gods: among the Greeks, Minos in Crete (from Zeus) and Lycurgus at the Lacedemonians (from Apollo); at the "Arians" (i.e. Iranians) Zathraustes (i.e. Zarathustra, from the Good Spirit, i.e. Ahura Mazda), at the Getae Zalmoxis (from "the common Hestia"), and, at the Jews, Moses (from Iao, i.e. Yahweh) (Diodorus 1.94.2)¹²⁶. Some thought that also this text originates in Poseidonius, since there are many resemblances, not only for the ideas (however commonly in that time), but at least for the common list of Minos, Lycurgus and Zalmoxis. Celsus (second half of the second century AD) in Origen *Cels.* 3.34 provided another list, of men deified (and, as it is obvious, givers of oracles): "After this he thinks that *because we behave like the Getae who reverence Zamolxis, and the Cilicians who worship Mopsus, the Acarnanians Amphilocheus, the Thebans Amphiarus, and the Lebadians Trophonius* ..." (transl. H. Chadwick). This proves that many similar lists had to exist in those centuries, where Zalmoxis was often present.

As for the story of the Getic god in Strabo 7.3.5¹²⁷, Zalmoxis was the slave of Pythagoras, from whom he acquired some knowledge in regard to the sky bodies (τῶν οὐρανίων παρ' ἐκείνου μαθεῖν, compare to Porphyry, *VP* 14 – τὴν μετέωρον θεωρίαν ἐπαίδευσεν), and other from the Egyptians, where he had been also. Back in his country, he enjoyed great esteem for he was predicting the sky phenomena (προλέγοντα τὰς ἐπισημασίας). Hence he was associate by the king, for he seemed to reveal the gods' choices (ὥς τὰ παρὰ τῶν θεῶν ἐξαγγέλλειν ἱκανόν). First, he was the high-priest of the most revered god, but consequently he was himself named god; and, isolated in a cavernous place, was exceptionally visited by the king and his servants. The king used this circumstances because now his subjects were more submitted to his authority, his orders seeming in accord with gods' will (ὥς ἐκφέροντι τὰ προστάγματα κατὰ συμβουλήν θεῶν). This was, of course, a widespread common opinion in the Hellenistic times¹²⁸.

¹²⁵ Considered by Jacoby as Strabo's insertion.

¹²⁶ Registered as Poseidonius' F 134 by Theiler. A similar list to Strabo, in Cicero *Div.* 1, 87b–96.

¹²⁷ As from Poseidonius F 135 Theiler (=F 277 a Edelstein-Kidd); but not registered by Jacoby among the fragments of the Apamean philosopher.

¹²⁸ Strabo as a source for the oracular association of Zalmoxis in Diogenes is not plausible, since his text was rather obscured for several centuries, till his later use, in Byzantine times (starting as early as Stephanus Byzantius). Therefore, Diogenes used similar sources to Strabo's.

Fauth sets forth marker points in the *Wonders* such as Zeus' grave in Crete, Apollo's grave in Delphi, the funeral of Pherecydes in Delos, the tomb of the Siren, the death of Ceryllus, or the cave-oracle of Zalmoxis (he presumed this following Strabo), which frame a tint of the underworld¹²⁹. In 111 a, in the last book, after the ultimate travel, this time beyond Thule (of Deinias, Carmanes and Meniscus) another oracle is mentioned: "Then the Sibyl picked up her art of divination again, with Carmanes". However, the oracular features seem to enjoy a great part in the novel (consider also the Hades-descent).

Surprisingly, in Photius' epitome the brothers arrive in Thrace at the Massagetae and to their god Zalmoxis. Further, this tribe appears twice as Getae (this time, rightly). Many editors even corrected the text as "Getae" (see Stephens–Winkler). For Rohde, "Massagetae" is a misunderstanding of the copyist of Photius, since then, in two places, occurs correctly "Getae"¹³⁰. But it is worthy to say that this confusion is not a ἀπαξ in ancient literature, and it may well belong to Antonius, even we could not eliminate a conjecture of Photius¹³¹. For this equivalence (or the location of the Massagetae beyond Danube, and not in their homeland of Central Asia) was featured also by Lucanus, *Phars.* 2.50 – *Massageten Scythicus non adliget Hister*; but more interesting is the *scholium* at 2.50 – *Massageten gens Thraciae* ... – Philostratus, *Her.* 6.5 – when Cyrus was leading an expedition over Hister (sic!) against the Massagetae and the Issedones.

¹²⁹ W. Fauth, *Astraios und Zalmoxis*..., 240. The whole discussion about Zalmoxis, Herodotus, oracles and Strabo also in *Ibid.*, 229–230.

¹³⁰ E. Rohde, *Der griechischer Roman*..., 285–286; here is to be placed also Porphyry, *VP* 14, with his etymological part (if it is Antonius' affirmation).

¹³¹ From similar situations for other ethnic naming in Photius, I will allude at several references to the Massagetae and the Getae. So, in *cod.* 64, 26a (Theophanes of Byzance, end of the VIth century) – the eastern regions after Tanais (Don) are inhabited by Turks, formerly named Massagetae ("Ὅτι τὰ πρὸς Εὐδρον ἄνεμον, τοῦ Τανάϊδος τοῦτοκοι νέμονται, οἱ πάλαι Μασσαγῆται καλούμενοι, οὓς Πέρσαι οἰκίει γλῶσση Κερμιχινάς φασι). Theophanes' *Histories* are no longer extant, and we do not know if it is a remark of Photius. The fifth century Christian writer Philostorgius (partisan of Arius, and preserved, another irony, only in a Photian redaction) equated maybe (if it is not Photius' interference) Scythians, Goths and Getae: ἐκ τῶν πέραν Ἰστροῦ Σκυτῶν (οὓς οἱ μὲν πάλαι Γέτας, οἱ δὲ νῦν Γότθους καλοῦσι) (2.5 Bidez). But in the *Histories* of Theophylactus Simocatta, yet extant, and epitomized by Photius, we have equated Getae and Slaves in 3.4 (ed. Bekker): Τὸ δὲ Γετικόν, ταῦτόν δ' εἰπεῖν αἱ τῶν Σκλαβηνῶν ἀγέλαι, τὸ περὶ τὴν Θράκην ἐς τὸ καρτερόν ἐλυμαίνετο. Οἱ δὲ Μῆδοι τοῖς Ῥωμαίων στρατηγοῖς συγκυρήσαντες παρανάλαμα φόνου ἐγένοντο. Ῥώμη δ' ἡ πρεσβύτερος ταῖς τῶν Λογγοβάρδων ἀντεῖχεν ἐφόδοις. Τῇ δὲ Λιβύῃ αἱ τῶν Μαυρουσιῶν δυνάμεις κτλ. And in Photius *cod.* 65, 29 a, we read a similar phrase, as from the third book (an extract, in fact: Οἱ δὲ Γέται ἦτοι Σκλάβοι τὰ περὶ τὴν Θράκην ἐλυμαίνοντο, ἡ Ῥώμη δὲ πρὸς τοὺς Λογγοβάρδους ἀνθοπλίζετο, καὶ Λιβύῃ τῶν Μαυρουσιῶν περιεγίνετο). Moreover, a similar equation occurs in 31 a, for the seventh book (κατὰ Σκλαβηνῶν ἦτοι Γετῶν. Γέται γὰρ τὸ παλαιὸν ἐκαλοῦντο). And in Theophylactus 7.2 there is: οἱ δὲ Ῥωμαῖοι πεπλησιακότερος τοῖς Γέταις (τοῦτο γὰρ τοῖς βαρβάροις τὸ πρεσβύτερον ὄνομα). Here we have a proof of Photius' observance of his source.

Scythian nations [ὑπὲρ ποταμοῦ Ἰστροῦ, ἐπὶ Μασσαγέτας τε καὶ Ἰσσηδόνας (τὰ δ' ἔθνη ταῦτα Σκύται)], he was killed by the woman reigning over those barbarians; – Synesius, *De regno* 15.17 – referring the pushing back of the barbarians who came from Asia or Europe, and the crossing of Euphratus to fight against the Parthians, or the Hister to attack the Getae and the Massagetae (τὸν δὲ Ἰστρον ἐπὶ τὸν Γέτην τε καὶ Μασσαγέτην); – Isidorus, *Orig.* 9.2.63 – *Massagetae ex Scytharum origine sunt. Et dicti Massagetae, quasi graves, id est fortes Getae. Nam sic Livius argentum graue dicit, id est massas.*

The confusion is certainly due to the resemblance of names (their last part); moreover, both peoples were barbarians dwelling in the fringes of the world. It occurs, as it is visible, in particularly later writings, where the erudite reference is not absent (and, when it is no explicit confusion, there is at least a putting together). There were also other two tribes ending in – *getae*: the Thyssagetae (another Scythian people) and the Tyragetae, situated on Tyras, today Dniester (more likely a Getic tribe). The Getae were also confounded with the Scythians (or at least related), and Zalmoxis was sometimes thought as a Scythian (Lucian *Scyth.* 1 and 4; Apollonius of Tyana *Ep.* 28; Celsus in Origen. *Cels.* 2.55; the series of the Byzantine lexicons).

Two features are united in the *Wonders* concerning Zalmoxis, as I tried to show: the obvious Pythagorean tradition, and the *oracular association*. The question of Antonius' sources for Zalmoxis is very delicate, since the original version of the complete text is lacking, and only conjectures can be proposed. Moreover, only some literature on Zalmoxis survived across the time (like the rest of the Greek literature). But, from the extant material, one can observe a plain development of his literary presence in the second, third and fourth centuries AD; the variety of his images is remarkable (but he is a literary and erudite example, in the rhetoric of the time). Diogenes quite probably used Herodotus and some Pythagorean writings, with peculiar information (also in Porphyry we meet various sources, some strange enough¹³²). From among all known authors speaking about Zalmoxis, in Porphyry we find amalgamated the most numerous and varied sources; this brings forward the problem of his other sources, since for the other matters regarding Pythagoras he did not use not so many authors or such a bizarre mixture.

¹³² The story of Dionysophanes is an anecdotal one, with a Pythagorean background (moreover, the tattooing seems "typical" to a Greek in Zalmoxis' case, since he was both a slave and a Thracian; further, he was marked after his capture). The comparison with Thales implies maybe the "wise barbarian" image of Zalmoxis. His worship among barbarians as Herakles refers to the deification of Herakles, originally a human (a widespread topos), and, subsequently, to Zalmoxis veneration as a god among "barbarians". And the other etymology – "stranger" is very relevant for the "otherness" of our character.

Finally, Zalmoxis is just another strange character in the series of significant persons, numberless places and *apista* of the novel, which is best to be seen as an encyclopedia of marvels. Diogenes featured him as a Pythagorean (following the Herodotean and some Pythagorean traditions) and as a prophet with oracular capacities; but very important must have been his own inventions. He may have been an important figure, but not of such significance as Astraeus (who possesses a clear aretalogy, not to mention Pythagoras); and his oracle is a turning point of the novel's plot. He occupied some space in the book 13 (the informations preserved in Porphyry), and was important in an account somewhere before the book 23 (here with a larger extent). Antonius' *Wonders* may have been one of the most "complete" works with data about Zalmoxis (except his own inventions), from whom we have only shadowy traces. I conjecture the following reconstruction of his role in the novel: Zalmoxis, a Thracian, is acquired as a slave from Thracia by Pythagoras (his name is put in relation with an event of his birth). Observing his abilities, Pythagoras made of him one of his disciples, like Astraeus, and taught him the essential of his doctrines. Maybe he was acquired on Samos, before the philosopher's expatriation (as in Herodotus), but his Pythagorean membership – till his master's end, and his returning home – must be placed in southern Italy. All this was told by Astraeus in the thirteenth book (or nearby). Around the twentieth book, in the narration of Dercyllis, Zalmoxis appears as an oracle-giver, at his friend's request; he was already worshipped as god by his Getae, as a result of his marvelous nature and Pythagorean wisdom. His oracle is a turning point in the destiny of the two brothers. There must have been, with this occasion, another mentions on him and Astraeus, finally honoured also by the Getae, where he had stopped. Zalmoxis' marvelous presence is another argument against Antonius' Pythagorean commitment; this "Pythagoreanism" is made up of various digressions (inspired from various literary writings), properly *apista* and *incredibilia*.

In the end, we may point out the perfect irony of the history: in the fascinating *Wonders Beyond Thule* (fascinating also because it is so vaguely known), where we find such a tremendous sequence of transmission – letters, buried documents, and retellings –, reached to us quite in the same way – Photius' epitome, the excerpts of Porphyry and Lydus, some papyri (and some *dubia* in addition), and other late citations...

March 2000

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