

SOME FEATURES OF STRUCTURE AND NARRATIVE
IN THE *BYZANTINE ACHILLEID*¹

1. The 15th century verse romance known since Hesselings' edition as *The Byzantine Achilleid*² has never been able to attract much attention. It has always been overshadowed by the *Digenis* and the four representatives of the Palaiologian romance, which (especially since their edition by E. Kriaras³) have attained a kind of special status, even to the detriment of what is at least as good an example of the genre, the *Livistros and Rhodamne*⁴. There is some apparent justification for this state of affairs. The *Achilleid* has appeared to many scholars a second-rate *Digenis*, without the many features that have made the undoubtedly older poem a much more interesting field for research. However this may be —and I would agree that a case can be made for some connection between the two texts⁵— due to the almost total lack of satisfactory editions⁶ we do not really know the texts. There is, as a consequence, nothing at all in the way of serious literary analysis, although the

1. The present article is a revised version of a paper given at the Second International Conference on the Ancient Novel (Dartmouth College 1989). I wish to thank Panagiotis Agapitos for his helpful suggestions and incisive criticism at several stages of my work. I have also benefitted from discussions with Margaret Alexiou, Suzanne MacAlister and other participants in the conference. Last but not least, I would like to express my debt to the scholarly milieu at Dumbarton Oaks where I had opportunity to clarify and expand several points in the revision.

2. *L'Achilléide byzantine publiée avec une introduction, des observations et un index par D. C. Hesselings*, [Verhandelingen der koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, Afdeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel xix.3], Amsterdam 1919. For the *Achilleid* MSS, see now P. A. Agapitos & Ole L. Smith, *The Study of Medieval Greek Romance* [Opuscula graecolatina edenda curavit Ivan Boserup 33], Copenhagen 1991, 54 n. 123 (on N, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale iii.B.27), 55 n. 126 (on O, Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Auct.* T.5.24), 67 n. 165 and 68 n. 167 (on L, London, British Museum, *Add.* 8241).

3. *Βυζαντινὰ ἱπποτικά μυθιστορήματα* [Βασική βιβλιοθήκη 2], Athens 1955.

4. The balance is now about to be redressed: P. A. Agapitos has announced a new critical edition of *Livistros*, see his forthcoming paper «*Libistros und Rhodamne*: Vorläufiges zu einer kritischen Ausgabe der Version α», *JÖB* 42 (1992). Tina Lendari has finished as her Cambridge thesis an edition of version V.

5. Though not in the framework of mistaken intertextuality established by Roderick Beaton in his recent book *The Medieval Greek Romance* [Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 6], Cambridge 1989.

6. Besides the Hesselings edition of the N and L versions which superseded the older edition of the Naples MS by Wilhelm Wagner (*Trois poèmes grecs du moyen-âge inédits* recueillis par feu

poem belongs to a type well known in Western tradition, the transformation of Homeric material. This Homeric tradition is to some extent also known in Byzantium, but very little work has been done on it; it has thus been possible to research the Achilles figure in literature without mentioning Byzantine material at all. What we have seen of literary analysis of the *Achilleid* until now⁷ have been attempts at determining the various presumed sources of the poem with no thought for the text as literature, for the internal structure and the use of different motifs in the strategy of the text itself. These treatments state more or less explicitly that the poem should be regarded as little else than a compilation heavily influenced by other romances and with no life of its own⁸. My intention in the present paper is to try to argue for a different view, namely that the *Achilleid* has an intrinsic interest of its own, and that it exhibits certain literary qualities. It may not be a masterpiece but it surely deserves better than complete neglect⁹.

2. The fact that the *Achilleid* has been avoided by editors is to some extent explained, if not justified, by its peculiar textual situation. The romance, as mentioned above, has survived in three different versions and of course a good deal of energy has been wasted in an until now fruitless discussion of the relation between the three versions, a question that cannot possibly be solved on the basis of quite insufficient editions. Anyone who has cared to look into the MSS will have noticed that the situation of the text is extremely bad. The problems of the *Achilleid*

le professeur W. Wagner, Berlin 1881), one should mention the dissertation by Benedikt Haag, *Die Londoner Version der byzantinischen Achilleis*, München 1919. For older editions of the Oxford version see *The Oxford version of the Achilleid* edited by Ole L. Smith [Opuscula graecolatina edenda curavit Ivan Boserup 32], Copenhagen 1990. For the general problem of unsatisfactory editions of the medieval romances, see the devastating criticism by M. K. Chatzigiakoumis, *Τὰ μεσαιωνικά δημώδη κείμενα. Συμβολή στη μελέτη και την έκδοσή τους. Α': Λίβιστρος, Καλλίμαχος, Βέλθανδρος*, Athens 1977, and the analysis of 19th century Greek philology in P. A. Agapitos, «Byzantine Literature and Greek Philologists in the Nineteenth Century», *CIMed* 43 (1992) [forthcoming].

7. K. Mitsakis' dissertation *Προβλήματα σχετικά με τὸ κείμενο, τὴν πηγὴν καὶ τὴν χρονολόγησιν τῆς Ἀχιλλίδος*, Thessalonica 1963, [now reprinted in his *Τὸ ἐμψυχὸν ὕδωρ. Μελέτες μεσαιωνικῆς καὶ νεοελληνικῆς φιλολογίας* [Κριτική - Μελετήματα 10], Athens 1983, 389-404] and Rudolf Keydell's paper «Achilleis. Zur Problematik und Geschichte eines griechischen Romans», *Byzantinische Forschungen* 6 (1979) 83-99 are prime examples of lack of consideration for literary approaches to the medieval romances. Hans-Georg Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* [Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft xii.2.3], München 1971, 132 is far more perceptive but his treatment in the framework of a *Handbuch* is too brief to allow any in-depth analysis.

8. Keydell, *op. cit.*, 97 concludes that «der Verfasser der Ach. seinen Roman zum grossen Teil aus übernommenen Werkstücken komponiert hat».

9. I intend at a later occasion to deal with the literary analysis of the most important version in more detail, and to take into account the connections with Byzantine literature and culture in order to show the essentially Byzantine character of the poem.

can to some extent be paralleled with that of *Livistros*¹⁰, the text of which has suffered a similar neglect due to the fact that the manuscript material is rich and diverse, and hard to bring into the strait-jacket of a Maasian stemma¹¹.

3. When the *Achilleid* was discovered, it was widely held that O, the shortest of the three versions which was published for the first time by Sathas in 1878¹², should be regarded as the original text, and that the considerably longer L and N versions were later and expanded adaptations of the poem¹³. The tide turned after a while and the Oxford version came to be regarded as a very ham-handed excerpt and redaction of the longer texts¹⁴. A discussion of these problems is not on the agenda here. I would like to state at the outset, however, that I regard the Naples version as decidedly a written composition¹⁵, and the Oxford version as being not far removed from an oral performance of the Achilles story¹⁶. In any case the Naples version, whatever its age and relation to the two other versions, is the most closely structured and literary work of the three¹⁷. The Achilles story, if this holds true, can thus be studied in three different realizations, and this in itself would seem to make the poem worth our attention. To make my position clear, I wish to emphasize that I think we can compare the texts and the stories, their constituent elements and narrative structure, always with the proviso that we have adequate knowledge of what is in the MSS, and bearing in mind that we are not discussing chronological or genetic (in the traditional sense of the term) relations between the texts¹⁸. In the case of the *Achilleid*, I find it wholly legitimate to analyze the relation

10. It must be emphasized, however, that Jacoba A. Lambert's edition of the S and E versions (Amsterdam 1935); is better than the standard *Achilleid* editions. See the forthcoming paper by P. A. Agapitos (above n. 4) and Chatzigiakoumis, *op. cit.*, 37-43.

11. The attempts at establishing stemmata for the vernacular texts have not met with particular success. The present writer for one is not impressed by what has been done in this field by editors of the *Belisarios* and the *Poulologos*.

12. «Le roman d'Achille», *Annuaire de l'association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France* 13 (1878) 162-175.

13. For the various positions on the problem see my forthcoming study «The Byzantine Achilleid. A Comparative Study of the Three Versions».

14. Cf. Mitsakis, *op. cit.*, 37ff; Keydell, *op. cit.*, 85.

15. I must refer to my forthcoming analysis (cf. above n. 13) for detailed arguments.

16. See my paper «Notes on the Byzantine Achilleid. The Oxford Version», *CIMed* 39 (1988) 259-272. It should be added here that I am totally out of sympathy with the approach to the problem of the versions by A. F. van Gemert - (W. F. Bakker), «'Η Ἀχιλλείδα καὶ ἡ Ἱστορία τοῦ Βελισσαρίου», *Ἑλληνικά* 33 (1981) 82-97.

17. The odd man out, by all means, is the London version with its many prose-like lines and heavily corrupted text. The kind of linguistic register employed here must be analyzed in detail; unfortunately Haag in his dissertation (cf. above n. 6) did almost nothing on this score, and seems to have been unaware of the problem.

18. For a similar approach, cf. P. A. Agapitos, *Narrative Structure in the Byzantine Vernacular Romances. A Textual and Literary Study of Kallimachos, Belthandros and Livistros* [Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 33], München 1991.

between the versions in the sense that a comparison will bring out their different characters, their different realizations of what I assume no one would doubt is the same basic story, built with identical plot-elements in a definite and hierarchical structure. The variations can be found in the different treatment of the plot-elements, in the connections between them, in the changing emphasis and in the stylistic registers¹⁹. I would also argue here that some differences can even be found in the interpretations of the plot-elements, especially in the sexual aspects of the story. What I find illegitimate is to discuss literary problems in these texts as if basic editorial problems no longer existed²⁰.

4. The Palaiologian romances stand at the end of a long tradition. In Byzantium they have grown out of what seems to have been an as yet far from investigated sociocultural development which manifests itself both in the use of the vernacular language and in the renaissance of a popular narrative tradition. Obviously the literary use of vernacular language is not restricted to the late romances, and I am not suggesting that the emergence of the chivalry romance should be seen as Western influence. But it cannot be denied, I think, that within the ideological world of the Palaiologian romance we find not only the common heritage and traditional values reaching back to Antiquity, rediscovered and reformulated in the framework of Byzantine education and rhetoric, we also seem to find a different literary reception expressed in the changed stylistic register. Much more work needs to be done in this field, and it would be presumptuous to argue for a break solely on the basis of the «emergence» of the romance or the vernacular language as a literary vehicle, without emphasizing that the continuity and the rhetorical tradition from education by far outweigh innovation in the Palaiologian vernacular romance²¹.

5. Now, in the case of the *Achilleid*, the connection with the antique tradition and Byzantine reception seems to be the weakest possible. Hardly more than the name of the hero and his companion Pandrouklos would seem to bind our text to the mainstream of Greek tradition. Here, it has been argued, sight of Antiquity has been lost completely²². The story is in outline²³ as follows: After a prologue, which

19. It is not clear what the Naples version means in line 1805 that the story had been changed εἰς σαφεστέραν ῥῆσιν but probably the change is as against Homer and not as against other versions.

20. This is the main disagreement with Beaton's approach, cf. Agapitos & Smith, *op. cit.*, 10 and 58f.

21. The danger inherent in the «cultural break» and discontinuity idea is well brought out by P. A. Agapitos' analysis of the bath scene in *Kallimachos*, see his «The Erotic Bath in the Byzantine Vernacular Romance *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*», *CI Med* 41 (1990) 257-273.

22. H.-G. Beck, *Byzantinisches Erotikon*, München 1986, 173 calls the *Achilleid* «ein Beispiel für den Abschied von der Philologie». See also his earlier judgment in *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* 130.

23. In the present paper I refrain from a detailed commentary on the plot. The story and the

is found in the Naples version only, we are told that the king of the Greeks²⁴ wants to marry another woman because he can get no children. Threatened by his wife's relatives, he gives up his plan of getting divorced, and the royal pair soon produce a son who after a miraculous childhood in the manner of Digenis, Imberios and Paris²⁵ goes off on a military expedition against an enemy king. The young Achilles is described as a beautiful youth who in spite of his sexual charisma will have nothing to do with love and actually pours scorn on people who fall victim to the god of love. He is warned by Pandrouklos that he should not be defiant against Eros. After the enemies have been driven back to their own castle, Achilles falls in love with the daughter of the enemy king. He writes to her and confesses his love, but she will have nothing to do with Eros, proudly rejecting her own sexuality. Achilles is reminded of his own rejection of love and invokes the god by praying to a painting of the god that he has made, promising complete subservience. In the disguise of a bird Eros appears in a dream-like vision to the girl and makes her fall in love with Achilles. Now Achilles tells his companions about his love, and Pandrouklos reminds him of the warning he gave him before the expedition started. Achilles then meets with the girl during the night but he very markedly refrains from having sex with her, and promises to return the next night. The next day, however, he returns with his twelve companions in full array, and their marriage is recognized by themselves and their companions, and emphasized by Achilles' destroying her bed-chamber with his ἐρωτικό ἀπελατίζι. After having had sexual intercourse during the night they decide to elope and Achilles abducts her²⁶. He provokes the girl's brothers to a fight; they are defeated and accept the marriage. At the marriage festivities a tournament is held, in which a Frankish knight takes part with great success, until he is finally defeated by Achilles. The pair is said to live happily for six years. Then Charon takes the girl, and Achilles lamenting blames his abduction of her as the reason for her fate and wants to die himself. There follows

plot will be analyzed exhaustively in my forthcoming study (cf. above n. 13). I also refrain from taking up here the discussion with Beaton who in his treatment of the *Achilleid* plot misrepresents and overlooks important details, cf. Agapitos & Smith, *op. cit.*, 62f.

24. Achilles' father is called king of the Greeks even though the country is called τῶν Μορμιδόνων which was a Byzantine name of the Bulgarians, cf. Gy. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* ii. 180f.; D. F. Sullivan, *The Life of St. Nikon. Text translation and commentary*, Brookline, Mass. 1987, commentary on 62.4, see also D. J. Georgakas *BZ* 43 (1950) 307-309. If the *Achilleid* uses the term in its classical meaning, there is another link with antiquity.

25. Paris appears in the text published as the *Byzantine Iliad*, see Lars Nørgaard & Ole L. Smith: *A Byzantine Iliad. The text of Par. Suppl. Gr. 926 edited with Critical Apparatus, Introduction and Indices* [Opuscula graecolatina edenda curavit Ivan Boserup 3], Copenhagen 1975. It serves no useful purpose to persist in calling it by other names (as is done by e.g. Beaton, Spadaro and the Jeffreys), even if one does not agree with the title under which the text was published. Especially not after the title has been accepted in Kriaras' *Lexicon*.

26. On this part of the romance see below para. 13-14.

in the Naples version a description of the Greek expedition against Troy, and we are told the story of Achilles' death at the hand of Paris when he is promised marriage with Polyxena.

6. As far as the connection with the Achilles-tradition is concerned, we may note in the first place that the romance knows that Achilles' people were the Myrmidons, irrespective of what this name meant to a Byzantine audience²⁷. Then, though the object of Achilles' fascination is unnamed in the main text, there is a rubric in N before line 1268 giving her name as Polyxene²⁸. The major connection with tradition is of course to be found in the Trojan ending, which has been regarded as interpolated²⁹. Here we are suddenly brought into the middle of the Trojan War and a much more real Homeric world. Far from being spurious—whatever the word may mean in a context like this—the Trojan ending is an integral and significant part of the N version, as will be seen later (para. 7). Moreover, I will insist that the very name of the hero is important, and to my mind sufficient proof of the connection with the Homeric and post-Homeric tradition. After all, Achilles is not a Byzantine name, and Homer was read extensively enough in Byzantium to ensure that the name of the hero had specific connotations. Achilles as the warrior-lover *par excellence* comes through clearly enough in the text so as to connect our romance with the strong tradition from Antiquity. I would also point out that the temperament of Achilles is brought out in a couple of episodes in the romance in such a way that would not be lost even on the reader/listener whose Homeric learning had not gone beyond memorizing the first line of the *Iliad*. For example, in his fight with the brothers of the girl they ask him, after having received a solid beating, to control his wrath: *κράτησον τὸν θυμὸν σου* (N 1345), and during the tournament after the marriage ceremony, when the

27. Cf. note 24 above. For the textual differences here in N 21 and O 1, see Agapitos & Smith, *op. cit.*, 98 with n. 247.

28. Keydell, *op. cit.*, 91 has overlooked this evidence to which I return below. Although the status of the rubrics has been doubted and they have been held to be later accretions in the MSS, there are in fact no good reasons for rejecting them, and several good arguments for their being original parts of the texts. For the time being, see Agapitos & Smith, *op. cit.*, 68f and the discussion in Agapitos, *Narrative Structure* 95-103. We intend to return to this problem to give an exhaustive analysis of the material. It should be pointed out, by the way, that references to the N text are usually to Hesselings' edition except for the few cases where I have to refer to my own text.

29. Hesselings, *op. cit.*, 18 argued that N 1759-1820 was spurious and could not be the original end of the poem. Cf. also Beck, *Geschichte* 130. Renata Lavagnini, *I Fatti di Troia. L'Iliade bizantina del cod. Paris. Suppl. Gr. 926* [Quaderni dell'istituto di filologia greca della Università di Palermo, 20], Palermo 1988, 74ff deals sensibly and convincingly with the intricate relation between the *Achilleid* and the *Byzantine Iliad*, rejecting the idea of an interpolated *Achilleid*. Both texts are independently homericized (*op. cit.*, 81).

Frankish knight joins the show and knocks even Pandrouklos off the horse, Achilles' anger is said to disfigure him (N 1490); and he speaks to his lady in very unchivalrous language, when she tries to hold him back from joining the tournament. What is hardly Homeric, however, is the strong streak of boastfulness in Achilles' character. From the very beginning of the story, he never tires of pointing out that he can do anything and can fight anybody³⁰. His boasting comes to nothing, however, in a very significant way, at the death of his wife, where she even reproaches him for not being able to save her and for not having kept his promises (N 1602-1609):

*Αὐτὰ ἦσαν τὰ μὲ ὑπέσχεσθον, αὐθέντη μου ἀνδρειωμένε,
αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ ἀγάπη σου ἢ πολλή, ἐρωτικέ μου αὐθέντη,
αὐτὸς εἶναι [εἶναι del. H.] ὁ πόθος ὁ πολὺς τὸν εἶχες εἰς ἐμέναν,
αὐτὰ ἦσαν τὰ μὲ ἔταζες οὐ μὴ ἀποχωρισθοῦμεν;
ἔδε συμφορὰ καὶ πικρασμὸς καὶ χωρεσιὰ καὶ λύπη.
οὐκ ἔχεις δύναμιν πολλὴν καὶ περισσὴν ἀνδρείαν
νὰ πάρης τὸ σπαθάκιν σου νὰ κόψης τὸν ἐχθρόν σου,
ἀλλὰ ἐκ παντὸς ἀφίνεις τον νὰ πάρη τὴν ψυχὴν μου;*

These are strong words, although they may be compared to traditional laments³¹, especially in view of Achilles' efforts to point out his own strength and virility. On one hand this serves to bring out the central idea of the finale of the romance, the futility of life and the inevitability of death who pities neither beauty nor riches, on the other hand one is strongly tempted to see a more directly applicable moral here. Achilles almost suggests that the reason for their plight was his abduction of her; at least, he says that if he had known that she would be taken away from him he would not have carried her away from her parents and family, and would have preferred to be killed by Eros. It is as if he is now being punished for his acts, and realizes it (N 1667-1676 [L 1323-1326 H.])³²

*ἀνάθεμα καὶ τὸν καιρόν, ἀνάθεμα τὴν ὄραν
ὅταν ἐγὼ σὲ ἤρπαξα ἀπὸ τὸ περιβόλιν*

30. See e.g. N 199-200, 937-941, 1176-1177, 1376, 1507-1509. At 1612-1614 Achilles even claims that he would be able to fight Charon, if only he could see him. Cf. also the even more impressive parallel in O 723-724.

31. The lament has been reversed, however, for here it is the dying girl that rebukes the living hero. For this type of lament see Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, Cambridge 1974, 182ff.

32. I have referred to this tragic dimension of the *Achilleid* in my paper given at the «Neograeca Medii Aevi 2» Conference *Origini della letteratura neogreca* at the Greek Institute for Byzantine and Post-byzantine Studies in Venice, 7-10 November 1991. As far as I can see, the plot of the *Achilleid* in this way becomes very different from the traditional happy end structure found in the canonical Palaiologian romances and places the *Achilleid* in a category of its own.

δίχως βουλήν καὶ θέλημα πατρός σου καὶ μητρός σου
 τῶν γλυκυτάτων σου ἀδελφῶν καὶ ὄλων τῶν ἐδικῶν σου.
 εἴαν ἤξευρα ὅτι ὁ θάνατος οὕτως σὲ θέλει πάρειν
 νὰ ὑστερηθῶ παρὰ καιρὸν τὰ πάντερπνά σου κάλλη,
 τὰ ὀμμάτια σου τὰ ἐρωτικά, τὰ πάντερπνά σου χεῖλη,
 τὴν ἡλικιάν σου τὴν λαμπρὴν, τὴν ὄντως θαυμασία,
 οὐ μὴ ἐπλησίαζα εἰς τὸ ἐκ παντός, κόρη, νὰ σὲ ἐπάρω·
 ὁ Ἔρων νὰ μ' ἐφόνευεν πολλὰ τὸ εἶχα κάλλιον.

7. A comparison with an almost Homeric Byzantine romance like the one we have in the *Byzantine Iliad* will make similarities and differences more apparent. In the *Byzantine Iliad*, where Paris is the hero and the romance his love affair with Helen, we are much closer to Homer. But it is fascinating to observe that, just as in the *Achilleid*, we have a romance-type story in the first part, followed by a much more Homeric second part. It is also noteworthy that there are considerable similarities, even in wording, between the Trojan parts of the two texts. We might consider the possibility of a common tradition³³, from which stems the non-Homeric features such as the 12 companions of Achilles³⁴ which is one of the obligatory elements in the *Achilleid* story. At any rate, the close relation between the two texts, as far as theme and structure go, shows that we have to do with a separate distinctive genre within Byzantine literature, a crossing of Homeric tradition and Byzantine romance that has little to do, as far as we can see, with the late antique romances. Obviously this should be worked out in much more detail; here I can only refer briefly to these aspects³⁵. The structural similarities between the two texts and their combined evidence for the Homeric tradition in Byzantine vernacular literature make it difficult to accept the verdict of Beck that the *Achilleid* is totally removed from the learned tradition; at the same time they suggest a radically different framework for discussion about the «spurious» Trojan end of the Naples version.

8. In my opinion, one of the main problems of the Byzantine Achilles tradition is the relation to the Western works of literature that have recently been analyzed in detail by Katherine C. King³⁶. It appears from her discussion that in all

33. Konstantinos Manasses has sometimes been proposed as the common source for both text, but not proved in a compelling way. That the two texts (*Achilleid* and *Byzantine Iliad*) do not depend on one another has already been mentioned above n. 29.

34. *Byz. Il.* 973, *Ach.* N 197 and *passim*. It is obvious from where the number 12 originally came.

35. Cf. Nørgaard & Smith, *op. cit.*, 8-13 on the structure of the *Byzantine Iliad* and on the relations to the Trojan ending of the *Achilleid*. See also Renata Lavagnini, *op. cit.*, 84f.

36. *Achilles. Paradigms of the War Hero from Homer to the Middle Ages*, Berkeley & Los Angeles 1987.

the works of the Western tradition considered by her the opposition between love and anger is dominant. Nothing of this can be found in the *Achilleid*, though of course Achilles' withdrawal is featured in the *Byzantine Iliad*. This is a fundamental difference between the Byzantine story and the majority of Homeric and non-Homeric tradition. Thus it might be held that the Byzantine treatment of the hero has lost the specific distinctive features in the portrayal of Achilles who is thus reduced to a more or less normal heroic figure. Nor would it be possible to see much connection between the Byzantine Achilles and «the unprincipled war machine that was turned off and on by crude desires»³⁷, portrayed in the Medieval Western tradition. It could be argued, however, that if there is any connection between the mainstream Achilles tradition and our *Achilleid*, it could be found in the post-Homeric love story of Achilles and Polyxena which is best known from Dares and Dictys. The way in which Achilles falls in love with the girl at first sight in the *Achilleid* may be compared to the post-Homeric tradition, but on the other hand this motif of love at first sight is so common from Achilles Tatios to the Comnenian romance³⁸ that no useful conclusions can be drawn. The only evidence we have is the fact that the rubric before line 1268 mentioned above gives the otherwise anonymous girl the name Polyxene. How are we to judge this evidence? It was suggested above³⁹ that only a complete analysis of the whole material in the Palaiologian romances would yield the necessary solid basis for solving the question. It may be held that we should regard this solitary mention of the name as an interpolation (in which case it is surely a problem that the assumed interpolator acquiesced in her anonymity elsewhere in the text proper and the rubrics) but we really cannot say as long as we have no clear idea of the exact status of these parts of the transmitted MS text. In some cases the rubrics are no doubt integral parts of the texts (but then they may just be part of the text and mistakenly written as rubrics), in other cases the situation is much more doubtful⁴⁰. However this may

37. King, *op. cit.*, 232.

38. The strong emotional language used to describe this situation should be noticed, cf. Ach. Tat. i.4,4 and see for instance *Ach.* N 615, where Achilles sees the girl looking from the wall of the enemy castle, and the identical line 1150 where the girl is confronted with Achilles by day light for the first time: ἐστάθη ἄφωνος ἐπὶ πολλῆς τῆς ὥρας. Max Lüthi, *The Fairytale as Art Form and Portrait of Man*, Engl. transl., Bloomington 1984, 3 has some good remarks on this shock effect common in fairytales. In the Greek context, the language used suggests a supernatural psychic intervention that explains why Achilles and the girl convert from rejection of love to complete subservience. There is also the fact not to be overlooked that in «closed» societies like the Byzantine (and the Mediterranean) the situation of man and woman meeting eye to eye is likely to be much more charged.

39. See n. 28.

40. At *Byz. II.* 201 there can be no doubt that the prose rubric is necessary for understanding the text; at 236-237 one might argue that the rubrics are verses from the main text

be, Achilles as lover in the Byzantine romance can only be placed within the rest of the tradition by connecting him with the Dares-Dictys story about Polyxena, although it must be held in mind that the plot in the non-Homeric part of the *Achilleid* bears no resemblance whatsoever to the Trojan story. Nor can the strong moralistic attitude to love be found in the *Achilleid*; the blind lover who stops concerning himself with «justice, nobility, honesty and proper appearance»⁴¹ is foreign to the *Achilleid*, and to the Palaiologian romance in general. What the Byzantine (male) lover is said to give up, are values like fame, parents and family—which are essentially Greek values. In the *Achilleid*, at least, the rejection of family and honour is regularly found as a result of having fallen in love, see N 288, 856 and 1030. Thus, it is obvious why the king chides his daughter (N 1437) for having left her family to follow a stranger (ξένον καὶ ἀλλότριον), and why the girl says (O 732-733) that she has left her family⁴² although she by now has got the approval of her father. It is less easy to understand why love implies loss of honour, if this is not connected with the idea of Eros as a master, and the lovers as his slaves, and with the idea that love is unmanly. One may also notice that Achilles does not want to admit that he is in love, until he knows that the girl has been hit by Eros; when he is overwhelmed by passion, praying to the icon of Eros (N 953-959), and falls unconscious on his bed, his companions think that he has seen a vision and ask him what he has seen⁴³. He still does not want to confess. Later, however, he discloses the μυστήριον (1037), but has also to invoke the oath that his companions have sworn to him. He is torn between his passion and the male code of behaviour that rejects sexuality. And it should be noticed that the code still has the upper hand. Within this code, but still not to be clearly distinguished from the ideology of the antique romances, is the notion of love as a physical wound and as an illness⁴⁴.

9. This brings us finally to the central question of the idea and role of love in the *Achilleid* and the structure of the romance. Though all three versions tell

written erroneously in red as if they were subtitles. In our particular case from the *Achilleid*, Hesselung (*op. cit.*, 16) thought that the rubric was spurious.

41. King, *op. cit.*, 207.

42. The difference between the girl's and Achilles' situation at the abduction is also implied in that it is Achilles who consoles her (N 1273).

43. Interestingly enough, Achilles' strong reaction is explained by his companions within the framework of supernatural interference (a dream or a vision); they have no idea of what is really the matter, but Achilles' behaviour is so irrational, i.e. unmanly, that the reason must be found outside of Achilles himself. Seen from another angle, Achilles' strong emotional reaction is explicable in the framework of his initial rejection of love. It may be noticed that the girl reacts in the same way when she is waiting for Achilles in the garden; when she realizes that he is approaching she loses her consciousness.

44. See for these ideas, Ach. Tat. i.6,3 and v.1,1.

basically the same story, only in the Naples version do we find a consistent pattern from beginning to end⁴⁵. I will therefore concentrate on this version and from this perspective point out some of the differences in the other versions. The main distinction in the formal structure comes out very clearly in the fact that only the Naples version has a prologue where the view of love and the didactic purpose of the narrative is presented. The prologue refers expressly to Achilles' scorn of love as the main feature, and throughout the romance we are reminded of the dangers inherent in a negative attitude to Eros (N 15-17):

ὡς μάθετε τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν τὴν ἔχει,
ὡς μάθετε τὰ τόξα τοὺς καὶ ὡς τοὺς προσκυνῆτε,
καὶ ὡς μὴ ἀλαζονεύεσθε πρὸς τὴν φρικτὴν τὴν τόλμην⁴⁶,

None of the other Palaiologian romances have a prologue of this kind. For example, in the *Kallimachos* there is a prologue, but it is far more general and lacks a specific direct application to the actual story, being a reflection on life as a mixture of happiness and sorrow, especially in love, whose nature it is τὸ συμμικτὰ γλυκαίνειν (21)⁴⁷. Again, at the end of the story of Achilles' love, the tragic force of love is brought forward in the passage already referred to, where Achilles reproaches himself for the sin he committed in abducting her whereby he brought about their present ill-fate. At this point, the power of love is mixed up with the general theme of the inevitability of death and the futility of man's existence⁴⁸.

10. The main idea of the plot, Achilles' disdain and scorn for Eros, runs through the whole romance in such a way that we are justified in seeing it as the central motif; moreover, it is strengthened by the description of the girl, who is also negative and scornful towards Eros⁴⁹. In both cases their negativity is implied to be unnatural, for they are both described as erotic beings, in the sense that their

45. L does not qualify, for though this version comes very near to N in comprehensive treatment of the story, L does not have the prologue. As I have proved elsewhere (cf. Hans Eideneier (ed.), *Neograeca Medii Aevi. Text und Ausgabe. Akten zum Symposion Köln 1986* [Neograeca Medii Aevi 1], Köln 1987, 315f.), L did not have the prologue in the part now lost from the beginning of the MS. Cf. also now Agapitos & Smith, *op. cit.*, 67 n. 165.

46. This is my own text which is different from Hesseling's by keeping to the MS. There is no need to introduce a false uniformity here, since throughout the text both singular ἔρωσ and plural ἔρωτες are used indiscriminately.

47. The prologue in *Livistros* is more orientated towards the actual story, concentrating on the sufferings of the protagonist. A central idea is lacking, however. For the didacticism in the prologues, see Agapitos, *Narrative Structure*, 56f.

48. That the same themes are found at the end of the *Byzantine Iliad* 1062ff serves to illustrate the close similarity between the two texts.

49. Most obviously in the passage 970-984 where she contrasts her erotic garden with her own rejection, and even emphasizes her own sexuality.

appearances evoke strong erotic emotions, and especially the whole world of the girl (her garden) is painted in strong sexually evocative terms⁵⁰. In this way they are both implied to be reacting against their own nature. Probably this is also why Eros, when he presents himself to the girl in the guise of a bird (a common Greek folktale motif) says that it has been his decision to couple precisely these two people (N 1000-1006)⁵¹.

11. Achilles' scorn is revealed early in the text, at a very crucial point in the story when he is leaving with the army and his twelve companions on his first military expedition. He declares in a song performed for his companions that anyone falling in love and being dominated by love is without heart and without manhood (N 272-278):

*Ἄν ἔναι ὀκάτις εὐγενής, ἔχει καὶ κάλλος ξένον,
καὶ χαίρεται εἰς τὸ κάλλος του καὶ εἰς τὸ λαμπρὸν του γένος,
καὶ οὐκ ἔχει ἀνδρείαν ἐπαιετὴν καὶ τόλμην ἢ ψυχὴ του,
ἄξιον ἔναι εἰς αὐτὸν νὰ μηδὲν ζῆ εἰς τὸν κόσμον·
εἴτις δὲ πέσῃ εἰς ἔρωταν καὶ κρατηθῆ εἰς ἀγάπην,
τοῦτον ἀκάρδιον καὶ ἄνανδρον νὰ τὸν κατονομάσω.*

Pandrouklos objects to this and says that he hopes Achilles will never be wounded by the arrows of Eros, for if this should happen, he will understand the power of love and reject his family, his parents and fame to follow his lover. Pandrouklos gives his own situation as an example—he himself does not take account of parents, riches or the dangers of war, since he is solely occupied by his love for a girl—and says that Achilles will understand what he means when he is hit himself by Eros' arrows (N 283-300):

*Ἐγὼ νὰ σὲ εἶπω, δέσποτα, κἂν τολμηρὸς ὁ λόγος,
εὔξου νὰ μὴ σὲ τρώσουσιν τὰ βέλη τῶν ἐρώτων,
νὰ μὴ ἐμπῆ ἡ καρδιά σου εἰς πόθον κορασίου·
εἰ γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο γένηται καὶ λάβῃς πόθου τρῶσιν,
τότε νὰ μάθῃς ἐκ παντὸς τὴν τρῶσιν τῶν ἐρώτων⁵²,
νὰ ἀρνήσῃσαι καὶ συγγενεῖς, πατέρα καὶ μητέρα,*

50. See for the description of Achilles N 107, and for the girl N 801, 814 and 828.

51. This idea of their predestination is not found in the other versions and may be thought a blind motif (a similar blind motif we have in the reference (in N only) to meetings between Achilles and the girl's father 838-842) were it not that the story gets a wholly different and distinctive character in comparison with the other versions. The preordained love between Achilles and the girl underscores the tragic necessity which is absent in the other versions, and points to a different interpretation of the story.

52. Hesseling corrects the text here for no reason, reading τὸ βέλος τῶν ἐρώτων.

νὰ ἀρνήσῃσαι τῇ δόξαν σου καὶ αὐτῆς νὰ ἀκολουθήσῃς.
 Πολλὰ ἔναι, δέσποτα, φρικτὸν τὸ βέλος τῶν ἐρώτων,
 ἐγὼ οἶδα τί ἔναι ἢ τρῶσις των καὶ πάντας νὰ τὸ λέγω·
 εἰς τοῦτο μας, ὦ δέσποτα, τὸ τωρινὸν ταξίδιον,
 οὔτε σπαθία δειλιῶ, οὔτε κοντάρια τρέμω,
 οὔτε γονεῶν ὑστέρησιν, οὔτε τοσοῦτον πλοῦτος,
 ἀλλὰ ἔχω βέλος ἔσωθεν καὶ τρῶσιν τῶν ἐρώτων.
 Καὶ τρώγεται ἡ καρδιά μου διὰ πόθον κορασίου.
 Καὶ σύ, δυνάστα βασιλεῦ καὶ αὐθέντη δέσποτά μου,
 ὅταν ἐξ ἔρωτος πληγῆς νὰ μάθῃς τί ἔν' τὸ λέγω.

It can hardly be accidental that Achilles' rejection of Eros comes at a liminal point when he is about to leave home and parents; this is a clear case of crossing the border between youth and maturity with a singularly bad omen. Pandrouklos' speech also shows that love is in opposition to the traditional values; they are of no consequence when one is in love.

When Achilles finally confesses to his companions that he is in love with the daughter of the enemy king, Pandrouklos says with a smile (N 1045)

οὐκ ἔλεγά σε, δέσποτα, τοὺς ἔρωτας μὴ ψέγῃς;

To bring out this motif, Achilles after his conversion talks to the girl (who is still negative towards Achilles' overtures) in precisely the same way as Pandrouklos did to him, warning her against her high-handed refusal of Eros (N 901-903).

12. On the other hand, the way in which Eros is described throughout the romance beginning with the prologue, the power that love has in the life of men, is hardly positive. Love destroys young people, and lovers are Eros' slaves —or vassals⁵³. At the girl's death Achilles, as we have seen, even goes so far as to say the he would have preferred to be killed by Eros instead of abducting the girl. This tragic dichotomy is never resolved⁵⁴.

13. At this point it will be useful to discuss a few passages where some of the main tendencies in the romance are brought out, but so far have found little understanding. Let me begin with the central passage of Achilles' three meetings

53. The basic idea of Eros as the master and the lovers as his slaves, and the lovers as each other's slaves, is of course nothing new in the Byzantine romance, but traditional from the late antique romance, see e.g. Xenophon Ephesius i.4,1. As far as I am aware it has never been investigated whether the different social realities in Byzantium effected any change in the specific use of this terminology.

54. On the problem of Eros' role and character in the romance, one should notice that the three versions do not quite agree in the scene where Achilles invokes Eros by praying to the icon he has made of the god. I intend discuss this at length in my forthcoming study.

with the girl. Much fun has been poked at the longish description of the girl's garden, Achilles' coming and going for no obvious purpose, and the seemingly unrealistic description of Achilles' visits to the castle of the enemy king⁵⁵. Most discussions of these episodes have had as their primary object to show that the *Achilleid* is an ill-digested hodge-podge of motifs and elements from other romances. To mention but one scholar: Rudolf Keydell in his previously mentioned paper wrote about the description of the second visit:

«Diese Szene mit der Parade vor dem feindlichen Schlosse am hellen Tage und dem unmotivierten Keulenschlag ist von äusserster Unwahrscheinlichkeit und eine unpassende Erfindung des Dichters, der offenbar Freude an prächtigen Aufzügen hatte»⁵⁶.

The scene that Keydell refers to is N 1098-1202, where I believe one can find good sense, but let us look a bit further. The description of the garden is also written off, regarded as nothing else than the usual Byzantine *topos*⁵⁷ without any significance for the plot. However, the garden *ekphrasis* has two purposes in the narrative. The overt sexual symbolism in the description of the garden is part of the portrait of the girl and her milieu, and functions as a background for the girl's violent provocation of Eros, when she declares that in spite of the sexual nature of her garden, she will remain free and have nothing to do with love. Second, there is no doubt that the garden, and the wall surrounding it, are symbols of her virginity⁵⁸. When therefore Achilles at their second meeting responds to her gift of a crown of flowers she has made—an obvious marriage symbol—by breaking the wall, the garden is suddenly invested with a meaning far removed from traditional, but mistaken, ideas of Byzantine *ἐκφράσεις*. And to make the implications clear this is how Achilles' act is described (N 1194-1198):

Ἐγὼ δὲ δώσω χάρισμαν ἑδῶ δὲ μὲ θυμοῦνται·
 Τὸ ἀπελατίκιν ἔσυρεν τὸ ἐρωτικόν του ἐκεῖνο,
 ἐτίναξεν τὸ χέριν του, κρούει το εἰς τὸ τεῖχος,
 καὶ ἐπάνω κάτω ἐρράγισεν τῆς κόρης τὸ κουβοῦκλιν.

It would be difficult to find more overt sexual double-entendre. So much for Keydell's «unmotivierter Keulenschlag». Furthermore, this scene also makes sense

55. As if realism were adhered to in the romances.

56. *Op. cit.*, 94.

57. Of course the garden descriptions are *topoi* but not without meaning. See Agapitos, *Narrative Structure* 180-183 and further 290-297 (on *Kallimachos*), 298-300 (on *Belthandros*) and 311-313 and 322-329 (on *Livistros*).

58. This has been argued well by A. R. Littlewood, «Romantic Paradises: The Rôle of the Garden in the Byzantine Romance», *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 5 (1979) 95-114.

of the description of their first meeting, if we remember that they take leave of each other, after she has given him the crown and he has performed the feat just mentioned. When they meet for the first time they kiss and embrace frantically, but they are quite explicitly said not to consummate their love (N 1080-1084):

ἔτρεμεν ἡ καρδία του βλέπων τοσοῦτον κάλλος·
 περιλαμβάνει τὴν γλυκειά, συχνοκαταφιλεῖ την,
 καὶ ἡ κόρη τὸν νεώτερον ἐπεριπλάκηκέν τον.
 ἦυρεν καιρὸν τὸν ἤθελεν ὁ Ἀχιλλεύς ὁ μέγας
 πλὴν οὐκ ἐθέλησεν ποσῶς τὸν ἔρωταν πληρῶσαι,
 ἵνα μὴ πάλιν γένηται θερμότερος ὁ πόθος⁵⁹.

It is Achilles who does not want to take the final step. They are not yet married, and Achilles is the one who has problems with admitting his passion⁶⁰. But when they meet again, there are no obstacles —they have been married: she has given him the crown as the symbol of marriage, and he has replied by destroying the wall of the garden and the bedchamber which her father built for her. One is reminded of the similar situation in the *Digenis Z 70ff* where Eirene's father built a castle to protect her from falling in love. To proceed along these lines, the rôles of the parents, we may notice the following interesting features. In N 708ff her father builds the garden with high walls and iron gates to protect her, while her mother makes for her the golden plane which later has a central function in the plot; for it is in this tree that Eros will appear in the guise of a bird and will shoot his arrows at her, and Achilles will jump over the wall into the tree when he first enters the castle⁶¹. The traditional Greek rôle of the mother can also be seen in Achilles' relation with his parents: it is his mother who guesses what is wrong when Achilles looks distressed

59. The fourth line in this passage has been written as a rubric in N and therefore it does not appear in Hesselings' text. There can be no doubt that it is part of the text, and it is certainly not a rubric. I will return to this passage, where there are several other problems, in my forthcoming study.

60. If that is the sense of line 1084. At least one can argue that Achilles until now has had great difficulty in accepting his own situation, and has not yet revealed his being in love even to his comrades. In the two other versions there are differences which it would take us too far to discuss in the present context.

61. Two things should be added. First, L reverts the rôles (which fact may be significant for the characterization of this version): it is her father who builds the golden plane, and the mother is not mentioned. Second, and perhaps more interesting: The description of the golden plane has a striking resemblance (but is probably also an independent source) to descriptions in learned literature of the famous golden plane in the Imperial court, and invests the plane with an erotic symbolism found elsewhere in learned literature only. I intend to deal with this question at length elsewhere but will emphasize in the present context that the golden plane is an important link between Byzantine learned tradition and the *Achilleid*.

after his second visit (though we seem not to be told why he is so) and tells him that if he is in love with the daughter of the king, he can have her with her blessings (N 1206ff). When Achilles elopes with the girl he tells her (in the O version 533): «Let us go that you may see my mother».

14. Thus, when Achilles returns after their second meeting, he can ask for consummation of their love in veiled but very suggestive terms by singing a song packed with sexual imagery which once again stresses the implications of the garden (N 1225-1226):

δός με ἀπὲ τοῦ κήπου σου μηλεὰ νὰ τὴν τρυγήσω,
καὶ ὑπόκλινε τὴν κορυφήν, τοὺς κλάδους καὶ τὰ ἄνθη⁶²

It will be recalled that at lines 821-22 in the garden ἔκφρασις the girl was described in this way:

τὰ μῆλα τῆς ἐφλέγασιν ἀπὸ ψηλῆς θεωρίας,
τὸ στῆθος τῆς παράδεισος ἐρωτικὸς ὑπάρχει⁶³.

And to remove any doubt as to the coherence of the imagery we should also refer to her vaunt about herself (N 982-83):

ἀλλ' ὡς φυτὸν ἐρωτικὸν μωσχόδενδρον νὰ στέκω
στὴν μέσην τοῦ περιβολιοῦ νὰ στέκω καὶ νὰ θάλλω.

Before leaving the topic of the garden as a sexual symbol I would like to mention two other passages which each in their own way may clarify and emphasize some

62. For the symbol of the apple see A. R. Littlewood, «The Symbolism of the Apple in Byzantine Literature», *JÖB* 23 (1974) 33-59 with extensive discussion and material. He does not seem, however, to have taken the vernacular romance much into account. For the notion in τρυγήσω cf. the brief remarks by H. Hunger, «Un roman byzantin et son atmosphère: Callimaque et Chrysorrhôè», *Travaux et Mémoires* 3 (1968) 408-409.

63. Almost the same lines in inverted form are found in *Belth.* 713-14 which means that they are topical in such contexts. The question is not what μῆλα means (though this has been doubted); the real difficulty is ἀπὸ ψηλῆς θεωρίας. I intend to deal extensively with the passage elsewhere, so I will briefly state the problems here. As for μῆλα, Kriaras has argued that the word here means not apples (i.e. breasts) but μάγουλα (see his *Lexicon* s.v. μήλο 4γ, and his «Παρατηρήσεις στὸ κείμενο τοῦ μυθιστορήματος Βέλθανδρος καὶ Χρυσάντζα», *Studi bizantini e neoellenici* 9, 1957, 248, now most easily accessible in his *Μεσαιωνικά μελετήματα* vol. 1, 452). This cannot be true; in these descriptions there is a logical order, and we have already heard about the girl's cheeks (703). Besides, there is a number of parallels in the romances and in folk song, none of which have been mentioned in the *Lexicon*, but I will refer here to *Dig.* Z 3697 which is quite plain. The second problem is more difficult, for what does «seen from above» mean, if the girl is not heavily decollated? And if she is, this might be another instance of her Frankish dress, described N 803ff. The sense of ψιλῆς proposed by Kriaras «on a closer look» is not what one would expect in a context where the emphasis is on the overwhelming beauty of the girl.

aspects of the garden imagery. At their second meeting Achilles and the girl decide to meet again, but Achilles expressly makes the girl promise that she will not betray him, and tell her brothers (presumably), for as Achilles says «when I am outside of your garden I can fight against any number of enemies, but if they find me in your garden sleeping with you they will kill me as an unmanly woman» (N 1180 ὥσπερ γυναῖκαν ἄνδρον). The opposition between manly behaviour and prowess and love is still dominant in Achilles' mind. The garden is a different world, where his strength comes to nothing⁶⁴.

Finally, I will point to the passage in the *Byzantine Iliad* where Paris describes his feelings after he with Helen ἐπεπλήρωσε τὰ τοῦ φρικτοῦ τοῦ Ἑρου (713ff):

*ἑσέμπηκα εἰς παράδεισον, ἑστέκομουν ἀπέξω,
ὥσπερ νὰ ἤμουν σκοτεινός, νὰ μὴν ἐβλέπω κόσμον,
νὰ περπατῶ δίχως τὸ φῶς καὶ τωρινὰ νὰ βλέπω
τὸν κόσμον οὐκ ἐγίνωσκα καὶ τώρα τὸν ἐβλέπω,
φαίνει με περιπέτομαι καὶ εἰς ἀέρα τρέχω
φαίνει με ἐμονάρχησα εἰς ἅπαντα τὸν κόσμον*

This passage shows very clearly the sexual connotations of the word παράδεισος. After this second meeting between Achilles and the girl, they decide to stick together, and Achilles promises to come back and abduct her. Thus each of the three meetings has a function in the story: Their initial contact, but no sex, at the first; at the second, their marriage, and finally at the third meeting, consummation of their love and elopement. Probably we should add here in reply to Keydell's criticism of the unreal and improper idea of Achilles appearing in full daylight at the second meeting⁶⁵, that this serves to bring out the social accept of their marriage. The maids of the girl agree that the two are made for each other (N 1157).

15. At this point we must take a very brief look at the treatment in the other two versions. In the London version the strong sexual symbolism is almost absent, and the imagery in connection with Achilles' destroying of the wall cannot be found there. In the Oxford version the whole episode is only referred to in an oblique way: Achilles' companions criticize him for his act (though it is not said what he did), since the brothers of the girl will now guard her more strictly. In fact, the Oxford version tells the whole story in such a way as to furnish ample proof that the plot was so well known that central elements could be left out and only referred to. For instance, while the Oxford version includes Pandrouklos' remark to

64. It is interesting that the Oxford version does not reflect this difference between the erotic garden and the outside world, but between the garden and the more direct sexual symbol of the bed, cf. O 486-489. The possibility that something has gone awry in the O text cannot be wholly discounted.

65. See above para. 13.

Achilles: «didn't I tell you not to scorn Eros», the episode where Achilles poured scorn on people who fall in love is not in the Oxford version⁶⁶. Though, in contrast, the Naples version was made with much more literary pretensions there are still a number of loose ends in this MS, besides some passages that seem to be more or less corrupt. The strange mention of Achilles' meetings with the enemy king after he has fallen in love with the king's daughter (N 838-842) is suspect, and has been obelized by Hesseling. Of a different kind is the story at the beginning of the poem, that Achilles' father originally wanted to marry another woman in order to have a son. As far as I can see this element has no function in the plot, and must belong to the type of motifs, students of folk-tales have termed «blunt» or «blind» motifs⁶⁷. We must keep in mind, however, that the textual problems in N strongly suggest errors in a written transmission, and that accordingly we may see blind motifs where the truth is corruption.

It follows from the interpretation given above of the central scenes in the garden during their first and third meetings, that we cannot speak of premarital sex in the *Achilleid*. The lovers studiously abstain until they have exchanged marriage-symbols, and from that point on they regard themselves as married. Their formal marriage takes place later on in the presence of their parents, but significantly without the blessings of any religious authority. Their marriage is a wholly private affair, as is indicated in the brief authorial comment on the ceremony (N 1450):

αὐτὸς ἦτον ὁ γάμος τους, καὶ πᾶσα ἡ εὐλογία τους

referring to the bride's father's short prayer for their future happiness (1443-1449).

Whether the morality implicit and explicit in the *Achilleid* can be extended to cover the Palaiologian romances in general is a question that cannot be solved here. As far as I can see at present, given the lack of detailed analysis except for a few studies on isolated points⁶⁸ in some of the romances, the difference between the *Achilleid* and the other texts may not be very marked⁶⁹. The only signal exception among the Palaiologian texts would seem to be the *Byzantine Iliad* where Orthodox morality and the taboo on premarital sex are absent⁷⁰. The outcome of the

66. I have discussed this and similar cases in my *CI Med* paper referred to above n. 16.

67. See Lüthi, *op. cit.*, 64ff.

68. But see Agapitos, «Erotic Bath», (cf. above n. 21) where wider perspectives are opened.

69. Panagiotis Agapitos has discussed sexual morality in some of the romances in his paper to be published in the proceedings from the 1991 Venice *Neograeca Medii Aevi* conference. His conclusions seem to agree with my impression: That premarital sex is confined to people who regard themselves as married.

70. In the sense that Paris and Helen's sexual escapades are presented as a *fait accompli*; when Helen becomes pregnant, however, they decide to run away in fear of the consequences.

discussion of the *Achilleid* is that we seriously need more work on these and related questions, before we can arrive at a synthesis⁷¹.

16. Obviously the question of the nature of Eros in the romances is of primary importance. Recently, Suzanne MacAllister, in connection with a discussion of the rôle of Eros in Eustathios Makrembolites' *Hysmine and Hysminias* has suggested that Eros in the 12th century romance may be regarded as an allegorisation of human emotions⁷². This makes sense, I think, especially if we go a step further and see the parallel between the dream in *Hysm.* iii.1 and the description of what happens to the girl in the *Achilleid* N 985ff⁷³. Here the girl has just declared in a song that she is not going to submit to Eros, and as I have already pointed out, she has done so in a very provocative way, since she emphatically connects her garden with erotic emotions and imagery. After her song is finished she goes away from her maids, falls on her bed, and looks towards the trees. Here she sees a falcon in the golden plane⁷⁴ and tries to catch it. The falcon then speaks to her: he is Eros, she cannot catch him, and he is going to make her fall in love with Achilles. How are we to interpret this? I think that what we have to do with here is not a dream (the girl is not sleeping, though she is lying on her κλίνη) but a vision —and I would point out that dreams and visions are not kept strictly apart in

71. The recent attempt by Lynda Garland, «Be Amorous, But Be Chaste... Sexual Morality in Byzantine learned and vernacular romance», *BMGS* 14 (1990) 62-120 demonstrates how far we are from the prerequisites for such a synthesis. I will deal with her views in detail elsewhere, but in the present context I should perhaps state my fundamental disagreement with her approach, based as it is on insufficient knowledge of the texts in question, on an anachronistic view of Byzantine society and class structure, and basic ignorance of the difficulties of interpretation. To mention a couple of disqualifying points in her presentation: she used Hesselings' edition of the *Florios* which results in a significant error as to the detail in which the discovery scene is described in the romance (*op. cit.*, 104, and cf. Kriaras' edition lines 1680-1681); she has no knowledge of Chatzigiakoumis' study of the state of our texts, and she writes without any reservations about «popular expectations», «sexual liberation», «popular interest in illicit love» and similar —at least on our present knowledge— nebulous concepts. And as far as sexual morality is concerned, she seems to be intent on having her cake and eat it, for she seems unable to make up her mind whether there is any uniformity in the sexual morality in the Palaiologian texts, and if so, where and how does it differ from Orthodox teaching or from the Komnenian novels? And if there is no uniform morality in these texts, where is then the «popular culture»? On one hand she writes about laxity, on the other hand there is only one text where moral laxity can be proved, and that is the *Byzantine Iliad*. For a critique of Beaton's view of morality in the romances, see Agapitos & Smith, *op. cit.*, 81.

72. *The Dream in Greek Romance: An Examination of the Dream Motif in the Ancient Greek Romance and in the Romance's Revival in Twelfth-Century Byzantium* (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Sydney 1987). I am grateful to Suzanne MacAllister for permission to use and quote her work.

73. For an analysis of the dream in *Hysmine and Hysminias* see MacAllister, *op. cit.*, Chapt. 9.

74. For this element see above n. 61.

Byzantine literature— and moreover of a type well-known from hagiographic stories of conversion⁷⁵.

The girl, though negatively disposed towards Eros, is obsessed with erotic emotion, and thus the vision/dream is an exposition of her mental state; what the vision effects is a conversion, and her passion starts from here, precisely as it does in the case of Hysminias in *Makrembolites*, since he is made aware of his passion for Hysmine through the dream⁷⁶. In the *Achilleid* the vision in the garden is the last stage in a process that began with the girl's reply to Achilles' second letter, where she no longer excluded the possibility that she might fall in love with him. On the other hand, we should recognize that this series of events is overdetermined, for we also have the god Eros at work as a result of Achilles' prayer and laments (cf. N 946ff)⁷⁷. In any case the parallel is obvious also in that both dreams/visions function as indicators of critical pivotal points in the plot. The interpretation of the girl's vision in the garden may also be supported from Eirene's dream in the *Digenis* Z 196-221 after having seen a picture of Eros, and Rhodamne's dream in *Livistros* E 1319-1334⁷⁸.

17. An attempt at vindicating the Naples version as a literary work worthy of more attention than it has received until now, including the broader context of the history of the Greek novel in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, would also have to deal with more general problems of interpretation like the feudal terminology used to describe love and sexual relations. This analysis would also have to take up the important fact that Eros is still conceived as an external force interfering in men's lives, a force that does not belong to the self, but comes from outside. I am also aware that the differences between the three versions would have to be discussed and explained in more detail than has been possible here. What I have tried to do here, is to show that the Naples version is a far more intricate text than has been thought until now, that it can be read as a literary work with relations to other romances and, perhaps more unexpectedly, to learned literature and Byzantine realities; that it constitutes, together with the *Byzantine Iliad* a sub-genre of Homeric tradition in Byzantium, and finally that it has a tragic dimension that distinguishes it from the other romances.

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75. Cf. MacAllister, *op. cit.*, Chapter 8, and see especially 229 on the conversion vision.

76. I do not intend to suggest that the author of the *Achilleid* took the dream from *Makrembolites*.

77. In this connection I wish to mention that I have not yet seen any convincing parallel to what is going on here; Achilles has a picture of Eros made to which he prays for help as if it were an icon (N 843-45).

78. Both parallels have different idiosyncracies of their own. I am here only referring to them for the general structural significance.