

THE HERO, THE RIVAL, AND THE DRAGON:  
THE TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE  
OF *KALLIMACHOS AND CHRYSORRHOE*

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Byzantine vernacular romances conventionally show a well-defined narrative structure in two main parts. The first part stands as a coherent unit telling a story of love and adventure based upon a set of typical situations and repeated motives. Then, the same story is told again, retold, and reshaped with some variation, but still based upon a set of recurrent episodes, in the second part. Usually a hero departs from a familiar place and travels throughout faraway lands, overcomes several hardships along his journey, behaves courageously faced with danger, meets a beautiful princess from whom he is separated by circumstances beyond his control. In the second part, the hero follows a very similar pattern to that drawn in the first part of the romance, with the appropriate variations and reshaping that the story requires to run its course, and reaches his happily ever after. This bipartite structure works as “a canon of medieval narrative art.”<sup>1</sup>

*Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* is one such late Byzantine romance written in Greek vernacular, and the only one whose authorship is known.<sup>2</sup> This narrative of 2,607 lines falls into two main parts, the second part, as tradition dictates, repeating the chain of events already told in the first one. Scholars almost unanimously place the boundary between the two main parts around line 840.<sup>3</sup>

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This article is a result of my postdoctoral research on the Byzantine romance, sponsored by FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (SFRH/BPD/99542/2014)

- 1 R. BEATON, *The Greek Novel in the Middle Ages*, in: R. BEATON (ed.), *The Greek Novel AD 1-1985*. London – New York – Sydney 1988, 141.
- 2 On *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe's* authorship, see M. PICHARD, Introduction, in: M. PICHARD (ed. – trans.), *Le Roman de Callimaque et de Chrysorrhoe*. Paris 1956, xv-xxxi; B. Knös, *Qui est l'auteur du roman de Callimaque et de Chrysorrhoe?* *Hellenika* 17 (1962) 274-295; R. BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance*. London – New York 1996, 104-105; G.S. HENRICH, *Ein neu(artig)es Argument für den Prinzen Andrónikos als Autor von Kallimachos und Chrysorrhoe*. *Parekbolai* 2 (2012) 77-84 (<https://ejournals.lib.auth.gr/parekbolai/issue/view/48>).
- 3 P.A. AGAPITOS, *The Erotic Bath in the Byzantine Vernacular Romance Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*. *CM* 41 (1990) 259-261, and 267-268; P.A. AGAPITOS, *Genre, Structure, and Poetics in the Byzantine Vernacular Romances of Love*. *SO* 79 (2004) 28-29; C. CUPANE,

At this precise point in the story, the young couple is living happily in Dragon's Castle, where they met for the first time, and their love story seems to come to an end. It is also at this moment that the narrative echoes the words of the proem, indicating a new beginning:

Ὅμως ἂν ἴδῃς τὴν γραφὴν καὶ τὰ τοῦ στίχου μάθῃς,  
 ἔργοις γνωρίσεις ἔρωτος γλυκοπικρὰς ὀδύνας·  
 τοῦτο γὰρ φύσις ἔρωτος, τὸ σύμμικτα γλυκαίνειν.  
 If, however, you read this tale and learn the matter of its verses  
 you will see the workings of Love's bitter-sweet pangs.  
 Such is the nature of Love, its sweetness is not without alloy.

Ἄλλ' ὅπερ φέρει τὸ γλυκὺν φέρει καὶ τὴν πικρίαν,  
 ὡς ἔγνωκας, ὡς ἔμαθες ἀπὸ τοῦ προοιμίου.  
 Ἄκουσε τὴν ὑπόθεσιν τοῦ λόγου καὶ νὰ μάθῃς.  
 But what brings joy also brings sorrow,  
 as you already know from the preface.  
 Hear the story and you will learn that this is so ...<sup>4</sup>

However, the new story starting at line 840 belongs to Kallimachos' rival. The hero and his princess play a secondary role in this new story, remaining in the background, since the focus of the narrative shifts in order to highlight the tale of the rival. From this point on, just for a while, one reads the story of the rival and his pursuit of love. The rival momentarily becomes the dominant character of the narrative.

If we consider that the repetition of the proem functions as a formal break between the two main parts of the narrative, we may notice that the first part does not even cover one-third of the romance, and that the second part is extremely overdeveloped. This asymmetry does not in itself invalidate the two-part division identified at line 840, yet the action of other late Byzantine romances centers, in both parts, in one single character, usually the hero. In *Belthandros and Chrysantza*, for instance, the hero departs from his father's castle, travels, ar-

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Introduzione, in: C. CUPANE (ed. – trans.), *Romanzi Cavallereschi Bizantini*. Torino 1995, 48; R. BEATON, *The Byzantine Revival of the Ancient Novel*, in: G. SCHMELING (ed.), *The Novel in the Ancient World*. Leiden 1996, 723; BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (cited n. 2), 119; E. CASTILLO RAMÍREZ, *El Calímaco y Crisórrhoe a la luz del análisis del cuento de V. Propp*. *Erytheia* 21 (2000) 80-81.

4 *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* 20-22, and 843-845. The Greek text comes from PICHARD, *Le Roman de Callimaque et de Chrysorrhoe* (cited n. 2), 1, and 31. English quotations of the text come from G. BETTS, *Three Medieval Greek Romances*. New York – London 1995, 37, and 53.

rives at the Castle of Eros the King, obeys its lord, and sees his bride-to-be. Here the first part ends. In the second part, the hero arrives at the Castle of Antioch, obeys its king as his vassal, meets the princess, flees with her, suffers hardships on his travels, and finally returns to his father's castle, where he rules alongside the princess, now his wife, as king and queen.<sup>5</sup>

From a thematic point of view, it's possible to locate the transition between the two main parts of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* closer to its midpoint, when the rival abducts the princess, taking her to his domain, and the hero is forced to depart in search of his beloved.<sup>6</sup> The convenience of such a division lies in the change of setting, which seems to be a feature shared by other Byzantine vernacular romances. In the first half, the action thus takes place mostly at Dragon's Castle, in the realm of the fantastic, while the action of the second half, on the other hand, takes place at the rival's palace, in a social and court environment, in the real world. *Belthandros and Chrysantza* also shows a similar division between the fantastic realm in its first half and the human world in the second.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the second part of *Libistros and Rhodamne* initiates a change of setting, far from the Castle of Silver, where most of the action of the first part took place. Furthermore, in the second part of this complex first-person narrative, Libistros undertakes a quest to rescue his wife after her abduction and his own temporary death caused by magic, the exact same situations that occur in *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* around its midpoint.<sup>8</sup>

The hero's temporary death and Fortune's intervention stand beside the change of setting as strong arguments for locating the division in the bipartite structure around the midpoint of the narrative. Kallimachos is killed by the old witch, who summons a fake dragon and offers the hero an enchanted apple that takes his life. His death is recounted between lines 1292 and 1311, and his return to life between lines 1387 and 1412, which means that these two scenes are located in symmetrical positions at the very center of the romance. The apparent or temporary death of the hero is a recurrent theme in Hellenistic romance, but its use can be traced all the way back to the mythology and epic of the archaic

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5 On *Belthandros and Chrysantza's* symmetrical narrative structure, see BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (cited n. 2), 121-125. In the introductory study that precedes his translation of this chivalric romance, José M. Egea divides the narrative into five acts as in a play. J.M. EGEEA, *Estudio Preliminar*, in: J. M. EGEEA (ed. – trans.), *Historia Extraordinaria de Beltandro y Crisanza*. Granada 1998, 30-31.

6 BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (cited n. 2), 119.

7 *Ibid.*, 121.

8 On *Libistros and Rhodamne's* narrative structure, see BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (cited n. 2), 126-134; AGAPITOS, *Genre, Structure, and Poetics* (cited n. 3), 31-33.

period, if we consider that contacting or descending to the realm of the dead is a frequent deed of the ancient hero. The famous Nekyia, in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, shows Odysseus talking with the dead. This scene is set at the center of Odysseus' wanderings in his sea journey from Ilion to Ithaca (it's his seventh adventure of the twelve he goes through), and Book 11 stands at the middle of the epic poem as a border between the first part of his journey and the second part of the war against the suitors.<sup>9</sup> The hero reaching the realm of the dead works, we may conclude from this example, as a turning point within the narrative. In *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, this turning point is also reinforced by the topos of divine intervention. Lady Fortune herself appears to Kallimachos' two older brothers in the sole dream of this romance, presented at its core, lines 1329-1358. Cupane argues that it isn't an allegorical dream, rather a supernatural epiphany which, on the one hand, is intended to unlock an impasse and, on the other, at a structural level, articulates the two segments of the narrative, opening the way for the second cycle.<sup>10</sup>

According to this thematic division, we may analyze the love story of Kallimachos as built upon two contrasting moments. He leaves his fatherland, his family domain in the human world, and enters the realm of the fantastic and the unknown where Dragon's Castle is found, and this first sequence of events covers the first half of the narrative; in the second half, Kallimachos leaves the amazing and terrifying castle, which he has conquered, and goes back to the human world, moving to the kingdom of the rival. Agapitos refers to a "spatial movement" from the outside to the inside, and later on from the inside to the outside.<sup>11</sup> Castillo Ramírez describes two journeys made by Kallimachos: the first takes him from the real world to a marvelous one ("mundo maravilloso"),

9 In her analysis of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, Castillo Ramírez also refers to the *Odyssey*, relating the slaying of the sleeping dragon to the blinding of the Cyclops Polyphemus while he sleeps. CASTILLO RAMÍREZ, *El Calímaco y Crisórroe* (cited n. 3), 109. On the epic character of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, see also L. NØRGAARD, *Byzantine Romance – Some Remarks on the Coherence of Motives*. *CM* 40 (1989) 271-294; R.C. FONSECA, *A excelência heróica na luta contra o dragão: um motivo épico no romance bizantino Calímaco e Crisórroe*. *eClassica* 1 (2015) 82-90 (<http://www.tmp.letas.uisboa.pt/eclassica-nova-serie/2574-eclassica-1-2015>).

10 C. CUPANE, Ἀκούσε τί μὲ ἐφάνη. Sogni e visione nella narrativa greca medievale, in: G. LALOMIA – A. PIOLETTI (eds.), *Temi e motivi epico-cavallereschi fra Oriente e Occidente. Medioevo Romano e Orientale*. Soveria Mannelli 2010, 99. For a brief analysis of this meeting between Fortune and Kallimachos' two older brothers, see also G. VAN STEEN, *Destined to Be? Tyche in Chariton's Chaereas and Callirhoe and in the Byzantine Romance of Kallimachos and Chrysorroï*. *L'Antiquité Classique* 67 (1998) 209-210.

11 AGAPITOS, *The Erotic Bath* (cited n. 3), 267.

and the second runs from the marvelous realm back to the real world, but not to the same place from which he had departed (his fatherland) – instead he reaches a different territory (the rival’s kingdom).<sup>12</sup> This narrative structure, two main parts joined at the midpoint, draws our attention to the recurrent motif, which appears three times: at the beginning of the story, Kallimachos leaves his father’s castle and reaches Dragon’s Castle; at the middle, he leaves Dragon’s Castle and reaches the rival’s palace; and at the end, he departs his rival’s palace for Dragon’s Castle. The beginning and the end converge upon Dragon’s Castle, but the center differs from the two extremities of the narrative by showing a journey in the opposite direction, since this is the sole part where the hero doesn’t travel towards the wondrous castle, instead turning away from it. Cupane states that the typical romance is “at the same time a story of alienation and removal from the familiar native environment.”<sup>13</sup> It is precisely a movement of alienation that occurs in each of these three parts of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*.

Castillo Ramírez analyzes the narrative structure of Kallimachos’ romance using the same functions which V. Propp created for Russian fairy tales. In doing so, Castillo Ramírez stands out among other scholars since she perceives a third unit and isolates it from the two main parts whose meeting point is conventionally located around line 840. In Castillo Ramírez’s opinion, the narrative structure of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* consists of two major sequences (one from the beginning up to line 844, the other from line 845 to the end) and one minor sequence (lines 645-693). This third, minor unit covers the story of the dragon and is told in flashback by the princess.<sup>14</sup> This “two plus one” scheme suggested by Castillo Ramírez presents a new hypothesis that scholars have not previously entertained: the possibility that Kallimachos’ narrative may hold a threefold pattern.

This three-part structure, within the established main bipartite structure, is the subject I intend to examine here. For the purpose of this essay, I will take into account the main bipartite structure of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, placing

12 CASTILLO RAMÍREZ, *El Calímaco y Crisórroe* (cited n. 3), 91.

13 C. CUPANE, *Other Worlds, Other Voices: Form and Function of the Marvelous in Late Byzantine Fiction*, in: P. ROILOS (ed.), *Medieval Greek Storytelling: Fictionality and Narrative in Byzantium*. Wiesbaden 2014, 184. On a similar topic, see also C. CUPANE, *Lo straniero, l’estraneo, la vita da straniero nella letteratura (tardo) bizantina di finzione*, in: L. MAYALI (ed.), *Identité et Droit de l’Autre*. Berkeley 1994, 103-126. Castillo Ramírez also highlights the importance of departure and alienation from one royal environment to another: “La partida (↑) es la función central en la narración. En la novela está íntimamente ligada a la función (G), el desplazamiento en el espacio entre dos reinos.” CASTILLO RAMÍREZ, *El Calímaco y Crisórroe* (cited n. 3), 81-82.

14 CASTILLO RAMÍREZ, *El Calímaco y Crisórroe* (cited n. 3), 91.

the thematic junction around its midpoint (lines 1458-1466), where we find a change of setting and Dragon's Castle is no longer the central axis around which the entire action is focused. At this point, this wondrous castle is replaced by a new court environment, the rival's palace, where the second half of the narrative takes place.<sup>15</sup> In fact, in this second thematic part a similar chain of events is set in motion, and the hero repeats the pattern already set in the first part: again he departs from a castle, faces dangers along his way, meets the princess, enjoys sexual pleasure with her, and again overcomes the lord of a castle with the help of Chrysorrhoe. Comparing the two parts, the first presents a formal arrangement clearly more complex in terms of discursive techniques and storytelling, since it has three units, I believe, each of which tells the story of a male character who wants to make the fair lady his wife. These three characters are the hero, the rival, and the dragon. The author creates one simple story which he reshapes and adapts to each of these characters, presenting in this way three similar yet reworked storylines from a common source, like three branches of different sizes leaving the same tree trunk. The same story is thus told three times in the first half of the romance. The three storylines share so many points in common (even though they don't make a perfect match since the order in which typical situations and motives appear in each unit is not always the same), that those similarities cannot be considered simple coincidences; they are repetitions of the same pattern told three times.

The three-part structure of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* may seem innovative among Byzantine vernacular love fiction, but a tripartite pattern is already known in the tradition of Byzantine romance. Looking closely at the *Achilleid*, one can see that its narrative is built upon three equally arranged parts: the hero and his exploits in war, the hero and his initiation into love, the hero excels in those two intertwined domains.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps the most suitable example, closer to the narrative structure of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, is the twelfth-century Byzantine epic – or “proto-romance,” as Beaton calls it – of *Digenes Akrites*.<sup>17</sup> Its narrative falls into two asymmetrical parts: books I-III tell the love story of Digenes' parents up to his birth, and books IV-VIII tell the full story of Digenes' life, his exploits in war and achievements in love up to his death. The second part, considerably

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15 For further reading on the presence of the castle and its meaning in Byzantine vernacular romance, see C. CUPANE, Il motivo del castello nella narrativa tardo-byzantina. *JÖB* 27 (1978) 229-267.

16 BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (cited n. 2), 117-118. On the same subject, see also AGAPITOS, *Genre, Structure, and Poetics* (cited n. 3), 29-30.

17 BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (cited n. 2), 32.

longer than the first, has a tripartite structure.<sup>18</sup> The first part of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, I believe, is similarly built upon a tripartite structure. This triple pattern fully covers the first half of the narrative, as I intend to show next.

The fourteenth-century romance of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* is based upon a set of conventional medieval topoi:

a handsome and wealthy young man, the leader of a great army, travels through far-off lands, and faces countless hardships along the way until he reaches a wondrous castle; he behaves more fearlessly than his travel companions, receives magical help, and manages to jump over the walls of the castle; inside he sees a princess, falls in love, slays the dragon, and the young couple lives happily together; their happiness is broken by the abduction of the princess and the death of the young man, who comes back to life with others' assistance; after speaking of all things that have happened to him, the young man departs from the castle, in distress, looking for his beloved princess.

This is a general survey of the hero's plot in the first half of the narrative up to its midpoint. As we recall, the story of Kallimachos is framed by the traditional theme of the journey: at the beginning of the narrative he departs from his father's castle looking for adventure, and at the end of this first segment he leaves Dragon's Castle looking for his missing beloved.

Based on the hero's story, as told in the first half, I have developed a sequence of twenty steps which includes several typical scenes and topoi from the medieval romance and which I have applied to *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*:

#### *A. Kallimachos' storyline*

1. Kallimachos is handsome (28-33) and wealthy (57-61).
2. He travels across distant and trackless lands with a mighty army (70-81).
3. He faces three obstacles during his mission: the mountain (80-144), the meadow (145-169), the castle (232-247).
4. He arrives at Dragon's Castle (173-176).
5. He flees, terrified by the dragon gatekeepers (203-209).
6. He is offered a magical solution to his problems (259-265).
7. He becomes isolated as he approaches Dragon's Castle: he travels with an

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18 Ibid., 31-42. See also C. CUPANE, Una passeggiata nei boschi narrative. Lo statuto finzione nel "Medioevo romanzo e Orientale." In *margin* a un contributo recente. *JÖB* 63 (2013) 63-64.

- army (70-81), goes up the mountain alone with his two brothers (129-137), and goes round the castle by himself and gets inside all alone (266-280).
8. He goes round the castle (271).
  9. He gets inside Dragon's Castle undetected; he escapes the watch of the gatekeepers (271-277).
  10. He sees Chrysorrhoe hanging by the hair and falls in love with her (449-469).
  11. He hides in the dragon's chamber, under a silver vessel (489-500).
  12. He obeys Chrysorrhoe's instructions (547-576).
  13. He slays the lord of the castle with Chrysorrhoe's help (577-580).
  14. He rescues Chrysorrhoe and lives with her at Dragon's Castle (779-840; 1239-1248).
  15. He dies and comes back to life (1292-1311; 1387-1412).
  16. His older brothers are visited by Lady Fortune in their sleep (1329-1358).
  17. He gets help from guests, who rouse him from death (1359-1384).
  18. He tells the whole story to his brothers (1420-1434).
  19. He is in great distress, deprived of his beloved (1413-1421; 1435-1457).
  20. He departs from Dragon's Castle in search of Chrysorrhoe (1458-1466).

Kallimachos is the hero and goes through all these steps. He is not the only male character in this first half though. A new male character is introduced in the narrative at line 846. This is another king (ἄλλος βασιλεύς), who comes to play the role of the hero's rival.

Traditionally, in ancient romance, the rival has the function of separating the main couple and testing their loyalty to their oaths of love. In this fourteenth-century romance, this unnamed king separates Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe, brings them misfortune, and causes them much pain and suffering. He doesn't manage to break their oaths, since the abducted princess remains loyal to her beloved Kallimachos, even when she believes that he is dead.

This noble and mighty king doesn't just serve as the hero's rival. He is in fact another version of Kallimachos, his double, for he goes through a similar set of events.<sup>19</sup> His story contains the same conventional scenes and *topoi* we find in the narrative sequence of the hero, although they appear in a different order and in reshaped form:

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19 Cupane argues that the rival matches the hero in every aspect: "Il rivale in amore che rapisce all'eroe l'amata è un principe o un re del tutto simile a lui per aspetto, valore e virtù." CUPANE, *Lo straniero* (cited n. 13), 118.



*B. The rival's storyline*

1. The rival is handsome and wealthy (847-851).
2. He travels across distant and trackless lands with a mighty army (855-859; 866-867).
3. He arrives at Dragon's Castle (860-873).
4. He becomes isolated as he approaches Dragon's Castle: he travels with a mighty army (855-859; 866-867), sets out for the castle with only three horsemen (875-893), and goes round the castle with only one horseman (895-899).
5. He goes round the castle (900).
6. He flees terrified by the dragon gatekeepers (902-908).
7. He sees Chrysorrhoe leaning over the castle wall and falls in love with her (918-935).
8. He faces three obstacles to his love: the council of lords (954-964), an elder man (965-994), and the entire aristocracy (1023-1047).
9. He is in great distress, deprived of the object of his desire (995-1002).
10. He spends his days alone in his chamber, lying face down on his bed (1011-1018; 1101-1102).
11. He gets help from a guest, who will relieve him of his suffering (1065-1133).
12. He tells the whole story to the witch (1134-1156; 1174-1193).
13. He dies of a heart attack and comes back to life (1157-1168).
14. His pain is lengthened by the witch (1197-1204).
15. He is offered a magical solution to his problems (1206-1214).
16. He obeys the old witch's instructions (1217-1235; 1252-1260).
17. He slays the lord of the castle with the witch's help (1292-1311).
18. He doesn't get inside Dragon's Castle; he waits undetected outside for the witch's sign (1315-1320).
19. He abducts Chrysorrhoe (1321-1322).
20. He departs from Dragon's Castle, taking Chrysorrhoe to his kingdom (1323).

Kallimachos and the foreign king are both handsome and wealthy (A1, B1), both cross faraway lands (A2, B2) and come to Dragon's Castle (A4, B3), where they see Chrysorrhoe and fall in love with her (A10, B7). Both face obstacles in their journeys, fall out with their travel companions (A3, B8), and become gradually isolated in their decision to approach the wondrous castle (A7, B4). Both receive the support of helpers (A17, B11), die, and come back to life through the magic spells of an old witch (A15, B13). Both slay the lord of the castle (A13, B17) and

take the princess (A14, B19). Their stories start with a journey to Dragon's Castle (though this is not their intended destination) and end, in the first half of the narrative, with their departure from Dragon's Castle. Obviously, these two storylines don't make a perfect match. The order of events is quite similar, but not necessarily identical. Some scenes and topoi are shaped by narrative requirements.

Both hero and rival benefit from the help of an old witch. It is worth noting, though, that the rival accepts the witch's magical schemes in order to abduct Chrysorrhoe, while Kallimachos does not. Kallimachos is given a magic gold ring by his older brother (A6), which will allow him to fly and escape danger, but he doesn't actually make use of it. Later on, he accepts the enchanted apple as a reward for having rescued an old woman apparently in danger of being eaten by a dragon. He takes the apple not knowing its magical nature and, putting it into his shirt, drops dead (A15). Kallimachos is brought back to life with the help of his two older brothers: they use the twofold power of the enchanted apple in order to awake him. In contrast, the foreign king makes a pact with the old witch and obeys her instructions, allowing her to prepare magical incantations in order to abduct the princess of Dragon's Castle (B15). The different contact which these two male characters have with magic seems not to have damaging results right away in the first half of the narrative. Nevertheless, the one who made use of magical objects will pay the price in the second half of the narrative: what magic gave him at first, magic will take away from him later. In this way, the rival manages to abduct Chrysorrhoe in the first half of the narrative, and loses her at the very end of the romance. Kallimachos loses the fair lady and dies. Without magic, depending only on his strength and endurance, he comes to recover his beloved at the end.<sup>20</sup>

Both hero and rival fall in love with Chrysorrhoe at first sight (A10, B7). It is worth mentioning that the hero is the only one who manages to jump over the high walls of Dragon's Castle and get inside this fortress protected by fearful guards. The rival king doesn't get inside the castle, nor does he overcome the mighty walls. He takes the princess by force and magical incantations, without actually facing the dangers of the castle. And because he doesn't accomplish this

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20 For further reading on the topic of the apple in Byzantine literature, see A.R. LITTLEWOOD, *The Symbolism of the Apple in Byzantine Literature*. *JÖB* 23 (1974) 33-59. On Byzantine magic, see C. CUPANE, *La magia a Bisanzio nel secolo XIV: Azione e reazione. Dal registro del patriarcato costantinopolitano (1315-1402)*. *JÖB* 29 (1980) 237-262; CUPANE, *Other Worlds* (cited n. 13), 183-202; R.P.H. GREENFIELD, *A Contribution to the Study of Palaeologan Magic*, in: H. MAGUIRE (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*. Washington, D.C. 1995, 117-153; A.J. GOLDWYN, *Towards a Byzantine Ecocriticism: Witches and Nature Control in the Medieval Greek Romance*. *BMGS* 39.1 (2015) 66-84.

task, he won't be able to enjoy sexual pleasure with the girl.<sup>21</sup>

These are the main differences between the storylines of the hero and his rival. In fact, both are Chrysorrhoe's suitors, even though their stories don't start as such. In the first half of the narrative, there is also a third suitor: the dragon. The dragon is the only male character to play the role of suitor from the start of his storyline. From his initial portrayal as a powerful lord up to the moment of his death, in the story of the dragon we find most of the same twenty steps, most of the same standard scenes and topoi found in the stories of the hero and the rival king:

### C. *The dragon's storyline*

1. The dragon is powerful, inhuman (489-492), and wealthy (177-447).
2. He lives in a distant and desolate land protected by a fearsome army of dragons (189-193).
3. He falls in love with the emperor's daughter (648-651).
4. He terrifies Chrysorrhoe's parents (652-654).
5. He goes around the empire (658-662).
6. He controls the empire's borders, besieges Chrysorrhoe's castle (658-662).
7. He faces three obstacles: he stops the river's water on the mountain top (655-662), he gulps down all the animals (665-667), he gobbles up everyone (674-677).
8. His beloved refuses to marry him (663-664; 672-673).
9. He becomes isolated: he devours everyone in the kingdom (674-677), he eats the emperor and empress (678-687), he is alone with Chrysorrhoe (690-693).
10. He kills the emperor and empress due to Chrysorrhoe's refusal (678-687).
11. He seizes Chrysorrhoe (689) and lives with her in his castle.
12. [He returns to his castle (688-689).]
13. He obeys Chrysorrhoe's will and is thus unable to consummate his desire (690-693).
14. He received a [magical] gown (629-632; cf. 1556-1561).

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21 The walls are in fact a metaphor of the girl's chastity, since she is protected behind the walls surrounding the castle or the garden. On this subject, see A.R. LITTLEWOOD, *Romantic Paradises: The Rôle of the Garden in the Byzantine Romance*. *BMGS* 5 (1979) 107; C. BARBER, *Reading the Garden in Byzantium: Nature and Sexuality*. *BMGS* 16.1 (1992) 1-19; BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (cited n. 2), 162. On chastity and erotic pleasures in Byzantine romance, see L. GARLAND, "Be Amorous, But Be Chaste...": Sexual Morality in Byzantine Learned and Vernacular Romance. *BMGS* 14 (1990) 62-120.

15. He lives in his castle with Chrysorrhoe, mistreating her (502-536; 700-714).
16. He unintentionally hosts a guest, who replaces him as lord of the castle (271-279 ff.).
17. He falls asleep in his chamber and dies (537-552).
18. He dies, and another dragon appears (supposedly a relative) (553-580; 1262-1292).
19. His corpse is taken outside the castle and burnt (633-641).
20. Chrysorrhoe tells Kallimachos everything in detail (644-693).

Like the other two suitors, the dragon commands a great army (the dragon gate-keepers), falls in love with Chrysorrhoe (at first sight we suppose; the text does not actually say so), faces opposition, isolates himself from the world in his pursuit of love, slays the lords of a mighty empire (Chrysorrhoe's parents), and abducts the princess. Some of the twenty steps of this standard plot are reshaped and adapted to meet the requirements of the storyline designed for the dragon. Kallimachos and the rival king flee, both terrified before the dragons at the gates; in contrast, the dragon is not afraid but the source of fear when it terrifies the emperors, Chrysorrhoe's parents (A5, B6, C4). The hero and his rival employ different schemes to escape the castle's surveillance. The dragon, on the contrary, doesn't need to disguise himself in order to obtain the object of his desire. For this reason, he crosses the empire, takes control of the river which flows from the mountain, and lays siege to the emperor's castle (A9, B18, C6).

In the dragon's story, Chrysorrhoe functions as the bringer of bad news, when she refuses to join the beast in matrimony. This role of messenger of misfortune bears thematic parallels with the stories of the other two suitors. Lady Fortune herself appears to the hero's two older brothers, warning them of Kallimachos' distress (A16). The rival king is sleeping when the witch arrives at his chambers; she is his helper and, at the same time, a messenger of bad news, since she will need time to prepare her incantations (B14). Chrysorrhoe refuses to marry the dragon, stating that she would never do so, not even in her dreams (C8). Paralleling these three scenes, we may verify that misfortune is announced by a female character in all three stories and is often related to the realm of dreams.

The helper's arrival is also present in the story of the dragon, but is inverted. Helpers arrive at the hero's castle and the rival's palace: the two older brothers bring Kallimachos back to life (A17), and the witch provides a magical solution to the rival king's suffering (B15). The dragon unintentionally hosts a foreigner (Kallimachos), who slays him (C16). The dragon is the only suitor to be killed by his guest. The two stories are actually intertwined at this point, since Kallimachos is in fact Chrysorrhoe's helper and her savior.

The dragon's sleeping scene results in its death (C17). Likewise, the rival suffers a heart attack in his royal chamber (B10 and 13), and Kallimachos hides himself in the dragon's chamber fearing that he will kill him (A11). The dragon dies and so his departure from the golden castle is not a journey intended to seek the princess, but the transportation of his corpse to be thrown into the fire by the princess' command. For that reason, the recap usually offered by the suitor to his helpers (A18, B13) is now made by the dragon's victim (Chrysorrhoe) to her savior (Kallimachos, the dragon's successor) (C20).

The resurrection scene is also reshaped in the dragon's story (A15, B13, C18). The return from the world of the dead is always accomplished by the old witch: she enchants the apple that allows the two older brothers to bring Kallimachos back to life; she saves the rival king from a heart attack; and she makes use of her magical schemes in order to summon a dragon to separate the young couple. Chrysorrhoe assumes that this other dragon is a relative of the first one.

If we consider the chronological sequence of the narrative, we find the dragon to be the first actual suitor of Chrysorrhoe. Next, Kallimachos appears as the second suitor, who slays his predecessor (the dragon), and the rival is the third suitor, who also kills his predecessor (the hero). Each new suitor kills the previous one in order to take the princess, and each one progresses through a near-identical set of standard events, in line with the conventions of the medieval romance.

Byzantine vernacular romances are believed to have been court poetry, performed orally before an imperial audience.<sup>22</sup> This may explain the three-part structure of the first half of the narrative. The oral background of the medieval romance explains the three versions of the same story intended for each of the three male characters. It is always the same storyline we read, with necessary adjustments. The same repetitive elements change in order to suit each new suitor. The hero, the rival, and the dragon are three figures reshaped from a common pattern. The actions of one equal the actions of the other two.

In the second half of the romance, from lines 1458-1466 onwards, there is no dragon, and the rival is largely absent; he appears only at the end, in the final scene of the trial. Despite his absence, the rival's presence is maintained by his servants: the guards, the eunuchs, and the maid. The second half of the narrative thus presents a twofold structure, since there are two stories being told: the story

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22 On the oral background of Byzantine vernacular romance, see F. CONCA, *Il romanzo nell'età dei Paleologi: temi e strutture*, in: C. ROCCARDO (ed.), *Il Romanzo tra Cultura Latina e Cultura Bizantina*. Palermo 1986, 33-45; R. BEATON, *Oralità e scrittura nel romanzo Greco del tardo Medioevo*, in: A. PIOLETTI – F.R. NERVO (eds.), *Medioevo romanzo e orientale: oralità, scrittura, modelli narrativi*. Soveria Mannelli – Messina 1995, 1-9; BEATON, *The Medieval Greek Romance* (cited n. 2), 98-100, and 164-188.

of the hero recovering his beloved princess and the story of the rival king losing his queen. Considering the narrative as a whole, we may draw the following parallels between the stories of the three male characters (see the scheme below): in the first story, Kallimachos is the hero, a foreign prince who slays the dragon and rescues the princess; in the next story, the rival is the foreign king who slays the lord of the castle and abducts the princess (in this story Kallimachos replaces the dragon); in the second half of the narrative, Kallimachos is the foreign king in disguise and takes the princess away from the lord of the palace (Kallimachos is actually playing the role of his rival).

		Hero	Rival
First half of the narrative	First story	Foreign prince  Slayer of the dragon (the lord of the castle)  Rescuer of the princess	
	Second story	Lord of the castle  Slayed by a foreign king	Foreign king  Slayer of the hero (the lord of the castle)  Captor of the princess
Second half of the narrative		Foreign king  Winner in love  Rescuer of the princess	Foreign king  Captor of the hero  Loser in love

This medieval romance ends in the same way it began. At the outset, a mighty king sends his three sons on a journey with a great army; at the very end, the rival king plays a similar role to that played by Kallimachos' father at the beginning of the narrative. The rival is unnamed, as is Kallimachos' father, the first king mentioned in the narrative. Therefore, the rival is actually the second king, the ἄλλος βασιλεύς as he is first announced. The second proem presented at lines 843-845 does not mark the bipartite division of the narrative. In my opinion, it rather opens the story of the rival, a character shaped in the same pattern created

for the hero. This second story runs as an autonomous one but quickly meets the story of the hero, kept backstage. In fact, the rival's storyline intertwines with the hero's storyline, in both first and second halves of the narrative. The hero's storyline is similarly intertwined with the dragon's storyline in the first half. The hero's rival is the princess' third suitor and he too slays a magical creature by fire (the old witch), but he simply does not get the girl at the end. Despite this, the rival works as an essential structuring element.

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#### ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the narrative structure of the Byzantine vernacular romance *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*. I argue that the first half of the romance is built upon a tripartite pattern, telling the stories of three male characters playing the role of the princess' suitor. These three male characters are the hero, the rival, and the dragon, and their stories are reshaped and adapted from a common basic plot, each involving a similar set of typical situations and repeated motives.

