

ATHENA ΦΙΛΟΚΟΛΠΟΣ

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Τί μοι λοιπὸν καταλέγειν τὰ περὶ Ποσειδῶνος καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος, ἢ Διονύσου καὶ Ἡρακλέους, ἢ Ἀθηνᾶς τῆς φιλοκόλπου καὶ Ἀφροδίτης τῆς ἀναισχύντου, ἀκριβέστερον πεποιηκότων ἡμῶν ἐν ἑτέρφ τὸν περὶ αὐτῶν λόγον;

The point at issue in this characteristic outburst of Theophilus of Antioch¹⁾ is the meaning of the apparent *hapax legomenon* φιλόκολπος and its appropriateness to Athena. In his recent and judicious discussion, Miroslav Marcovich,²⁾ rightly scouting all current explanations,³⁾ has recourse to the emendation φιλόκομπος. If the text is to be changed, that is certainly the most attractive of the various proposals. But need we emend? In the sense of "garment lover", the epithet is defensible on two counts.⁴⁾ First, it would suit Athena in the light of the old Panathenaic ceremony of draping her statue with a new robe. Second, and perhaps more to the point, given her present juxtaposition with the shameless Aphrodite, Theophilus might be thought of as drawing upon the epigrammatic motif whereby a girl or woman dedicates her spinning implements to Athena, either in simple honour or because she is going over to the erotic service of Aphrodite.⁵⁾ In terms of language, it is worth subjoining that in one poem (*AP* 6.247) Athena is addressed as φιλέριθος, an epithet almost as rare⁶⁾ as the one in question.

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NOTES

1) *Ad Autolyicum* 3.3.22; cf. 1.9.9; 2.7.1, for similar effusions.

2) 'Theophilus of Antioch: Fifty-five Emendations,' *Illinois Classical Studies* 4 (1979), 89-93.

3) Which are mainly sexual in nature.

4) Thus, Ardizzoni came closest to what is here proposed as the truth in taking the epithet to criticise Athena for devotion to elegant clothes; cf. Marcovich for reference and discussion.

5) *AP* 6.39, 47-8, 160, 174, 247, 283, 285, 288-9; cf. H. L. Levy, 'Terence, *Andria* 74-79, and the Palatine Anthology,' *AJP* 89 (1968), 470-1.

6) Seemingly only here and Theocritus 28.1.

