

Decoding the *Erōtes*: Reception of Achilles Tatius and the Modernity of the Greek Novel.

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Abstract. This article reconfigures the Lucianic *Erōtes* as an outstanding testimony to the early reception of Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*, predating all other early examples of sophisticated readership. The analysis demonstrates the author's extensive remodelling of the novelist's technique of proleptic ekphrasis, and uses it to tease out the literary implications, so far undetected, of the characters' debate on sex preferences. By proposing an evolutionary theory of imitation and putting it into practice, the author inserted the novel in literary history.

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The aim of this article is to investigate the presence of Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* in the Lucianic *Erōtes* and enrich the understanding of both the early reception of the novel and the *Erōtes*' literary project. The witnesses and testimonia we currently possess do not tell the full story of the afterlife of *Leucippe and Clitophon* (henceforth *L&C*). In between its composition sometime in the first half of the second century C.E. and its earliest appearance in a medieval codex in the twelfth, there are six papyri fragments dating from the middle of the second century to the fourth.¹ The earliest testimonia can be dated to the ninth century and consist of Photius' summary in *Bibliotheca* 87, *Palatine Anthology* 9.203, written by Photius or, more likely, Leo the Philosopher, and the entry in *Suda* (s. v. Ἀχιλλεὺς Στάτιος).² In addition to these, some ten memorable *gnomai* from *L&C* are catalogued in florilegia whose date may span from the ninth to the eleventh century.³ Although remarkable by the standards of ancient Greek novels, this is sparse evidence for a time span of one millennium, and particularly so for the period closer to the composition of the novel.⁴ This picture, however, improves considerably if we follow intertextual trails and observe authors who, in a number of ways, alluded to or borrowed from Achilles Tatius throughout Late Antiquity.⁵ While some looked to the novel for its stylistic refinement and made targeted borrowings when in need of well-phrased maxims, like the abovementioned florilegia, or informative naturalistic descriptions, like the *Commentary to Hexameron*, others employed it (alongside other novels) extensively and purposefully to enrich their narratives. This is the case, for example, for Nonnus, Musaeus, and Aristaenetus in the fifth and sixth centuries. They were attentive readers who absorbed and re-invented the novels' contents, and who, in turn, could count on a readership capable of seeing the novelistic models and appreciating the innovations. A case in point is Achilles

Tatius' technique of proleptic ekphrasis, one of *L&C*'s driving forces, which Nonnus imitated in the *Dionysiaca*, showing that as a reader he understood the novelist's strategy, and as an author he could replicate it.⁶ Depending on the proposed date of the *Erōtes*, whether to Lucian's times or the fourth century, its author predated this kind of sophisticated reception by one or a few hundred years.⁷

Aside from the issue of authorship, the multifaceted nature of the *Erōtes* has attracted a range of responses from scholarship.⁸ Cultural historians consider the debate concerning the superiority of heterosexuality or pederasty which features in the *Erōtes* as important documentation for the history of sexuality in Imperial times.⁹ Art historians, conversely, draw information from the text concerning one of the most remarkable losses of classical sculpture, especially with reflections on nudity and the gaze.¹⁰ Literary critics, finally, analyse the text's rich literary pedigree in keeping with the *esprit* of the age, a point first raised by Goldhill in response to Foucault's use of the dialogue as testimony concerning attitudes towards heterosexuality and pederasty.¹¹ Goldhill highlights the dialogue's framework to observe that any serious reading of this kind is undermined by its rich, self-aware, and often humorous relation with past literature, including the contemporaneous Greek novel, but as points of contact he goes no further than mentioning "the journeying around the Mediterranean of the Romances, the ecphrastic accounts of the rhetorical masters", and the debate on the merits of heterosexuality and pederasty in Achilles Tatius' *L&C* 2.34-38.¹²

In fact, the author of the *Erōtes* had specialised knowledge of novels. Elsewhere I argue that the scene around the statue of Aphrodite (*Erōtes* 13-16) is informed by the construction of Callirhoe in Chariton's novel.¹³ An even wider web of references reveals that the author of the *Erōtes* had read Achilles Tatius and that talking not just *with* but *about* the novel was a significant

part of his project. I will further corroborate these two connected claims by showing first the author's debt to Achilles Tatius in relation to the proleptic use of ekphrasis of gardens and artworks, and, second, the metaliterary value of the argument in favour of pederasty and modernity, which makes the *Erōtes* an original voice on the place of the novel in literature. This is not to say that sexuality or the viewing of art are merely foils for literary musings. The author was interested in, and had something to say about, sexuality and art because otherwise he would not have created a stage with a statue as the centrepiece and actors discussing nothing other than sex preferences. But while these are the unmissable and interlocked themes of the dialogue, it is less obvious that erotic literature too is thematised through them and therefore becomes inseparable from them. Thus, it will emerge that the Greek novels were generating discussion even in times when they are normally thought to have been by and large neglected.

Erotic gardens

Ekphrasis of paintings is one of Achilles Tatius' signature moves and has received its due attention.¹⁴ In general terms the main dynamic operating for the reader, as Bartsch has demonstrated, is that the contents of the paintings foreshadow the contents of the story.¹⁵ The reader's recognition of the connections between the paintings and the story is meant to be aided both by the similarity of themes and by the capillary reuse in the story of key details from the paintings.¹⁶ Fully entangled in this strategy are gardens, four of which are described in Book One of *L&C*.¹⁷ (a) The first belongs to the painting of Europa and is rich with erotic undertones (1.1.3-6).¹⁸ The plants are described in a language applicable to intercourse, and the walls surrounding the garden can be interpreted as a symbol of virginity, all of which matches the viewpoint of a

describer, the primary narrator, who defines himself as erotic (1.2.1).¹⁹ (b) The second garden is where the primary narrator goes with Clitophon to listen to his story (1.2.3), and displays many allusions to Plato's *Phaedrus* (229-230c): plane trees, a stream of cold water, and the fact that it is a good place to sit down and talk. (c) The third is the garden of Hippias, Clitophon's father, where most of Clitophon's courting of Leucippe takes place (1.15). Imagery and language link this garden, described by Clitophon, both to the first garden and to a love lesson imparted on Clitophon by Clinias based on the *Phaedrus*.²⁰ Μίξις and πλέκω, as well as their compounds, used by Clinias to describe the union of bodies (μίξιν; συμπλοκή, 1.9.4-5), are echoed by Clitophon for the intertwining of plants (περιπλοκαί; συμπλοκαί; συμμιγεῖ, 1.15), and even the image of the mirror of the soul (1.9.4) finds a counterpart in the garden pond (1.15.6). There is therefore no mistaking Clitophon's sexually-prone mindset both here and when, shortly after, he describes (d) Leucippe's face as a meadow (1.19), using elements of (c) and, transitively, (a) as well. She competes with the flowers of the garden: the white complexion with the narcissi, the red cheeks with the rose, the light of the eyes with the violets, and the curls of the hair with the ivy. Shortly after, her lips are also compared to a rose (2.1). By re-weaving the contents of the ekphrases into the fabric of the story Achilles Tatius draws readers into an interpretive activity which creates expectations (and frustration) around the plot, develops the erotic themes of the book, and characterises the protagonists.²¹

This narrative technique is imitated by the author of the *Erōtes* and applied to the description of the gardens of the temple of Aphrodite at Cnidus and indeed to the subsequent plot. The dialogue's story up to that point revolves around the question by the hypersexual Theomnestus to the seemingly asexual Lycinus on the superiority of heterosexuality or pederasty (1-5). Lycinus' response is an elaborate first-person narrative of a journey to Italy during which, in Rhodes, he encountered two old acquaintances, the heterosexual Charicles and the homosexual Callicratidas,

with whom he then sailed on to Cnidus to see Praxiteles' statue of Aphrodite. The vision of the statue is delayed by the description of the garden in the temple's *temenos*:

καί πως εὐθὺς ἡμῖν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ τεμένους Ἀφροδίσειοι προσέπνευσαν αὖραι· τὸ γὰρ αἶθριον οὐκ εἰς ἔδαφος ἄγονον μάλιστα λίθων πλαξὶ λείαις ἐστρωμένον, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐν Ἀφροδίτης ἅπαν ἦν γόνιμον ἡμέρων καρπῶν, ἃ ταῖς κόμαις εὐθαλέσιν ἄχρι πόρρω βρύοντα τὸν πέριξ ἀέρα συνωρόφουν. περιττόν γε μὴν ἢ πυκνόκαρπος ἐτεθήλει μυρρῖνη παρὰ τὴν δέσποιναν αὐτῆς δαψιλῆς πεφυκυῖα τῶν τε λοιπῶν δένδρων ἕκαστον, ὅσα κάλλους μετείληχεν· οὐδ' αὐτὰ γέροντος ἤδη χρόνου πολὺα καθαύαινε, ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἀκμῆς σφριγῶντα νέοις κλωσὶν ἦν ὥρια. τούτοις δ' ἀνεμέμικτο καὶ τὰ καρπῶν μὲν ἄλλως ἄγονα, τὴν δ' εὐμορφίαν ἔχοντα καρπὸν, κυπαρίττων γε καὶ πλατανίστων αἰθέρια μήκη καὶ σὺν αὐταῖς αὐτόμολος Ἀφροδίτης ἢ τῆς θεοῦ πάλαι φυγὰς Δάφνη. παντὶ γε μὴν δένδρῳ περιπλέγδην ὁ φίλεως προσεῖρπυζε κιττός. ἀμφιλαφεῖς ἄμπελοι πυκνοῖς κατήρτηντο βότρυσιν· τερπνοτέρα γὰρ Ἀφροδίτῃ μετὰ Διονύσου καὶ τὸ παρ' ἀμφοῖν ἡδὺ σύγκρατον, εἰ δ' ἀποζευχθεῖεν ἀλλήλων, ἤττον εὐφραίνουσιν. ἦν δ' ὑπὸ ταῖς ἄγαν παλινσκίοις ὕλαις ἱλαραὶ κλισίαι τοῖς ἐνεστιᾶσθαι θέλουσιν, εἰς ἃ τῶν μὲν ἀστικῶν σπανίως ἐπεφοίτων τινές, ἀθρόος δ' ὁ πολιτικὸς ὄχλος ἐπανηγύριζεν ὄντως ἀφροδισιάζοντες. *Erōtes* 12.²²

And immediately, it seemed, there breathed upon us from the sacred precinct itself breezes fraught with love. For the uncovered court was not for the most part paved with smooth slabs of stone to form an unproductive (ἄγονον) area but, as was to be expected in Aphrodite's temple, was all of it prolific (γόνιμον) with garden fruits. These trees,

luxuriant far and wide with fresh green leaves (κόμαις), roofed (συνωρόφουν) in the air around them. But more than all others flourished the berry-laden myrtle growing luxuriantly beside its mistress and all the other trees that are endowed with beauty. Though they were old in years they were not withered or faded but, still in their youthful prime (ὑπ' ἀκμῆς σφριγῶντα), swelled with fresh sprays. Intermingled (ἀνεμέμικτο) with these were trees that were unproductive except for having beauty (εὐμορφίαν) for their fruit — cypresses and planes that towered to the heavens and with them Daphne, who deserted from Aphrodite and fled from that goddess long ago. But around every tree crept and twined (περιπλέγδην) the ivy, devotee of love. Rich (ἀμφιλαφεῖς) vines were hung with their thick clusters of grapes. For Aphrodite is more delightful when accompanied by Dionysus and the gifts of each are sweeter if blended together, but, should they be parted from each other, they afford less pleasure. Under the particularly shady (παλινσκίους) trees were joyous couches for those who wished to feast themselves there. These were occasionally visited by a few folk of breeding, but all the city rabble flocked there on holidays and paid true homage to Aphrodite.

First, Lycinus' humanised and eroticised garden can clearly be analysed as on a par with those in *L&C*. The plants are described in terms of age, fertility, and affection, with words that may as well have been applied to the people walking among them. Verbal echoes tighten the link. Κόμη, as is common, is used by both to describe the plants' leafage like hair (cf. *L&C* 1.15.3). Both Lycinus and Clitophon play on the association of love and wine (cf. *L&C* 2.3.3). More specifically, the same compounds of μείγνυμι and πλέκω are used for the plants mingling (cf. ἀνεμέμικτο at *L&C* 1.1.3) and embracing (cf. περιπλοκαί at *L&C* 1.15.2). Such a tone is the result of the combination

of the gardens themselves and the describers' pre-existing erotic dispositions. The latter is clear in *L&C*, but I would argue that it is clear in the *Erōtes* too. In Theomnestus' view Lycinus may seem unaffected by love, but he is certainly not indifferent to the pleasure derived from Theomnestus' love talks (*Erōtes* 1-3) or from the aphrodisiac atmosphere of Cnidus (11).

Second, the *Erōtes* also displays a Phaedran setting in addition to the garden, as does *L&C*. The different responses of Charicles and Callicratidas following the vision of the statue and the story of agalmatophilia (13-17) give way to a contest of speeches on erotic preferences which takes place outside the temple: "When we had come to a thickly shaded (συνηρεφές και παλίνσκιον) spot that afforded relief for the summer heat, I said, "This is a pleasant place (ἡδύς... ὁ τόπος), for the cicadas chirp melodiously overhead".²³ The choice of place is not incidental. On the one hand it is connected to the garden inside the temple, which also had a roof-like structure (συνωρόφουν, 12) and shade (παλινσκίοις, 12). On the other hand the location is an obvious reference to the place chosen by Phaedrus for his dialogue with Socrates.²⁴ Both places offer shade and respite from the heat of the season, are home to cicadas, are presented as good places to sit for some time, and are greeted by the speaker with words of pleasure (cf. "how lovely and pleasant (ἡδύ) the breeze of the place (τοῦ τόπου)", *Phdr.* 230c). To cast any doubt about the similarities between the two places from the readers' mind, Callicratidas makes the Platonic reference explicit later on (31). The *Phaedrus* was an important and easily quotable hypotext for Imperial literature that dwelled on love, and a Phaedran setting in *L&C* and in the *Erōtes* does not in itself imply that one author read the other. But what suggests a specific connection between the two texts is, in a way, the setting and use of the Phaedran setting. In both cases the desire to find a good place to talk is triggered by the observation of an artwork in a temple, part of which is the vision of a garden where shade is provided by the roofing leaves (cf. σκιάν and συνηρεφές at *L&C* 1.1.4). And notice too how the

wording of the *Erōtes* (ἡδύς... ὁ τόπος) is actually closer to *L&C* (ὁ τοιοῦτος τόπος ἡδύς, 1.2.3) than to the *Phaedrus*. Moreover, the Phaedran setting in the *Erōtes* paves the way for Phaedran contents to emerge later, as it did in *L&C*. Motifs like irrigation or the mirror of the soul (*Phdr.* 255d) are recalled when Callicratidas' talks about the young boy irrigating his soul with virtue (*Erōtes* 45) or about seeing one's kindness reflected in the beloved as if from a mirror (48).²⁵ The garden of the *Erōtes* is a multireferential space in which readers can recognise Plato, Achilles Tatius, Achilles Tatius' use of Plato, and our author's use of both.

Finally, like in *L&C*, elements from the humanised gardens re-emerge in the subsequent narrative to discuss people and what happens to them, especially from a sexual point of view. What is more, garden references in the *Erōtes* form a fairly consistent pattern whereby elements from the garden are used predominantly in arguments related to pederasty. The prime (ἀκμῆς) of the old trees is reflected in two points of Callicratidas' speech: when he tells how in human history pederasty and philosophy came to maturity at the same time (συνακμάση, 35); and when he invites young men to moderate their affections towards boys until the time of maturity (ἀκμῆς, 49). The bursting (σφριγῶντα) of the old trees returns in Theomnestus' speech about heavy petting with young boys ("the belly throbbing (σφριγώσης) full spate", 53). The beauty (εὐμορφίαν) of the sterile plants mingling with the old trees had occurred earlier in reference to the handsome boys among the servants of Callicratidas (εὐμόρφοις, 10), and returns later for the beauty of the back of the statue of Aphrodite (εὐμορφίαν, 13), and the bodily beauty of young boys which philosophers pretend to ignore but actually seek (τὸ εὖμορφον, 23). Significantly, the only time the word is associated with women, in Callicratidas' speech, it is qualified as fake ("the deceptive beauty of a spurious comeliness (εὐμορφίας)", 41). The abundance (ἀμφιλαφεῖς) of the vines in the garden is picked up twice, first in Callicratidas' praise of the flanks of the statue of Aphrodite ("What

generous (ἀμφιλαφεῖς) flanks she has!”, 14) and then again in Theomnestus’ hot and heavy speech, with reference to the bellies of young boys during petting (“the belly throbbing full spate (ἀμφιλαφὲς)”, 53). When indicating embraces, compounds and cognates of πλέκω are used for the ivy intertwined on the gardens trees (περιπλέγδην), the intercourse of the young man with the statue of Aphrodite (περιπλοκῶν, 16), and the embraces with boyfriends, again in Theomnestus’ speech (συμπλοκαῖ, 53). Compounds of μείγνυμι are used for plants mingling in the garden (ἀνεμέμικτο), for the best form of love, later to be revealed as love for boys, (“pleasure which is blended (μεμιγμένην) with virtue”, 37), and for the union of the lover and his beloved even after death (ἀναμίξαντας, 46). The thickness (πυκνόκαρπος; πυκνοῖς) of the myrtle and vines in the garden is also transferred onto boys, described when the dust accumulates under the heat of their “developing (πυκνούμενον) body” (45). All of this is the result of the same kind of methodical composition that can be seen in Achilles Tatius, for example in his reuse of the violets’ brilliance (ἀστράπτει, *L&C* 1.15.6) for Leucippe’s face (ἀστράπτων, 1.19.1).

This leads to two conclusions. On the one hand the author of the *Erōtes* understood Achilles Tatius’ technique of proleptic ekphrasis well and disseminated the contents of the ekphrasis of the garden in the ensuing narration. On the other hand the garden, a feature which is eroticised in unequivocally heterosexual terms in *L&C*, is reinterpreted in the *Erōtes* predominantly in pederastic ones.²⁶ A case in point is the focus on sterility which occurs a couple of times in the description of the garden. The first time is when Lycinus describes the ground of the *temenos* underlining the absence, for the most part, of a barren (ἄγονον) floor of rocks in favour of a fruit-bearing garden. The detail reoccurs in Charicles’ pseudo-chronological account of the beginnings of pederasty, which is compared, in its unfruitfulness, to sowing seed “on barren (ἄγόνων) rocks” (20.14). Looking back at *Erōtes* 12, the barren rocks can be seen as a hint to pederastic images in

the garden. The second mention of sterility refers to the trees which are “barren (ἄγονα) of fruit except for the fruit of beauty”. These plants intermingle (ἀνεμέμικτο) with trees which “in spite of old age were neither grey nor withered (πολιὰ), but instead youthful, still at their peak and bursting (σφριγῶντα) with new shoots”. The description of the old trees as not yet grey-haired (πολιὰ) and the innuendoes in the use of σφριγᾶω and ἀναμείγνυμι, confirmed by their later use in the dialogue in a context of pederastic relationship, invite the reader to see this image as symbolic of the relationship between an older *erastēs* and a younger *erōmenos*.²⁷ If we look back at the gardens in *L&C* it is clear that, though equally rich in innuendoes, they are void of these pederastic undertones. Conversely, a noticeable absence in the garden in the *Erōtes* are flowers, which in *L&C* constitute a *trait d’union* between gardens and play an important role in Clitophon’s description of Leucippe: a description of a meadow (λειμών) with flowers opens *L&C*, and at 1.19 is transferred onto Leucippe’s face. So if the gardens in *L&C* are a model for the gardens in the *Erōtes*, where have all the flowers gone? The only mention in the *Erōtes* of a meadow with flowers occurs in Charicles’ speech on the superiority of love for women, remarkably in the description of the face of a beautiful woman:

γυναικὶ δὲ ἀεὶ πάσῃ ἢ τοῦ χρώματος ἐπιστίλβει χάρις, καὶ δαψιλεῖς μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς βοστρύχων ἔλικες ὑακίνθοις τὸ καλὸν ἀνθοῦσιν ὅμοια πορφύροντες οἱ μὲν ἐπινώτιοι κέχυνται μεταφρένων κόσμος, οἱ δὲ παρ’ ὧτα καὶ κροτάφους πολὺ τῶν ἐν λειμῶνι οὐλότεροι σελίνων. τὸ δ’ ἄλλο σῶμα μηδ’ ἀκαρῇ τριχὸς αὐταῖς ὑποφουομένης ἡλέκτρον, φασίν, ἢ Σιδωνίας ὑέλου διαφεγγέστερον ἀπαστράπτει. *Erōtes* 26.

But ever does her attractive skin give radiance (τοῦ χρώματος ἐπιστίλβει) to every part of a woman, and her luxuriant ringlets of hair (βοστρύχων ἔλικες), hanging down from

her head, bloom with a dusky beauty that rivals the hyacinths, some of them streaming over her back to grace her shoulders, and others over her ears and temples, curlier by far than the celery in the meadow (λειμῶνι). But the rest of her person has not a hair growing on it and shines (ἀπαστράπτει) more pellucidly than amber, to quote the proverb, or Sidonian crystal.

The components of this description have little in common with the elements of the garden in the temple. Indeed, its natural details are closer to Clitophon's description of Leucippe's face in *L&C* than they are to anything in the *Erōtes*:

τὸ δὲ κάλλος ἀστράπτον τοῦ ταῶ ἦττον ἐδόκει μοι τοῦ Λευκίππης εἶναι προσώπου. τὸ γὰρ τοῦ σώματος κάλλος αὐτῆς πρὸς τὰ τοῦ λειμῶνος ἤριζεν ἄνθη. ναρκίσσου μὲν τὸ πρόσωπον ἔστιλβε χροιάν, ρόδον δὲ ἀνέτελλεν ἐκ τῆς παρειᾶς, ἴον δὲ ἡ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐμάρμαιρεν αὐγῇ, αἱ δὲ κόμαι βοστρυχούμεναι μᾶλλον εἰλίττοντο κιττοῦ· τοιοῦτος ἦν Λευκίππης ἐπὶ τῶν προσώπων ὁ λειμῶν. *L&C* 1.19.²⁸

The effulgent (ἀστράπτον) beauty of the peacock seemed to me a lesser thing than Leucippe's countenance, for the beauty of her form was vying with the flowers of the meadow (λειμῶνος): her face gleamed with the complexion (ἔστιλβε χροιάν) of narcissus, the rose bloomed forth from her cheeks, violet was the radiance that shone from her eyes, the clusters of her locks coiled (βοστρυχούμεναι... εἰλίττοντο) more than ivy. Thus was the brilliant meadow that lay on Leucippe's face.

Both women have a radiant skin (*Er.*: τοῦ χρώματος ἐπιστίλβει; *L&C*: ἔστιλβε χροιάν), curly hair (*Er.*: βοστρύχων ἔλικες; *L&C*: βοστρυχούμεναι... εἰλίττοντο), features that are compared to elements of a garden, and superior luminosity (*Er.*: ἀπαστράπτει; *L&C*: ἀστράπτον).²⁹ That the heterosexual connotation of a meadow with flowers in *L&C* is preserved in the *Erōtes* in the description of female beauty by the only heterosexual character further confirms the author's informed borrowings. All of this demonstrates that the author of the *Erōtes* knew well Achilles Tatius' use of descriptions of gardens in combination with a Phaedran setting for storytelling in order to amplify the eroticism of the story.³⁰ However, far from rewriting the story of *L&C*, he borrowed the methodology but reshuffled the data in order to promote a different agenda. The love debate in *L&C* ends without a verdict, but Clinias' and Menelaus' are the only two voices in favour of pederasty in a predominantly heterosexual cast of characters.³¹ The debate in the *Erōtes*, by contrast, ends with a clear victory of the speech in favour of pederasty (51). The sexualisation of the gardens can thus be argued to match the respective outcome of the contests, and indeed anticipate them.

Artworks

My second case concerns the author's display of artworks and the use of their ekphrasis to foreshadow the subsequent story. In *L&C* the three grand descriptions of the painting of Europa (1.1), the diptych of Andromeda and Prometheus (3.6-8), and the painting of Philomela and Procne (5.3-5), are part and parcel of the structure and themes of the novel, as well as of the plot. Moreover, they draw the reader into a hermeneutic activity that spans the whole novel.³² Although paintings are mentioned once in the *Erōtes*, the centre stage is taken by the statue of Aphrodite, whose

description is less likely to retain verbal echoes of the different iconographies displayed by Achilles Tatius. However, the statue does prefigure the structure and themes in the rest of the dialogue, and the details of its ekphrasis reverberate throughout. Moreover, the one episode involving paintings, which I will presently examine, taps directly into Achilles Tatius' methodology.

The scene takes place in Rhodes just before the encounter with Charicles and Callicratidas, and revolves around Lycinus' solo visit to the temple of Dionysus:

ἐκπεριῦὼν δὲ τὰς ἐν τῷ Διονυσίῳ στοὰς ἐκάστην γραφὴν κατώπτευον ἅμα τῷ τέρποντι τῆς ὄψεως ἡρωϊκοὺς μύθους ἀνανεούμενος· εὐθὺ γάρ μοι δύο' ἢ τρεῖς προσεπύρρυσαν ὀλίγου διαφόρου πᾶσαν ἱστορίαν ἀφηγούμενοι· τὰ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς εἰκασίᾳ προῦλάμβανον. *Erōtes* 8.

As I walked round (ἐκπεριῦὼν) the porticos in the temple of Dionysus, I examined each painting, not only delighting my eyes but also renewing my acquaintance with the tales (μύθους ἀνανεούμενος) of the heroes. For immediately two or three fellows rushed up to me, offering for a small fee to explain every story (ἱστορίαν) for me, though most of what they said I had already guessed for myself (εἰκασίᾳ προῦλάμβανον).

The motif of someone's arrival at a temple, featuring the observation of *anathemata* and the interaction with local exegetes, is well attested in ancient literature, including the novels, and Winkler suggests reading Lycinus' impatience precisely as "an educated person's reaction to a discourse that must have pitched at a fairly low common denominator of public credulity and ignorance".³³ But the visit to the temple in Rhodes is surely to be connected to the subsequent visit to the temple in Cnidus, where not only does Lycinus' educated interpretation of the stain on the

statue's thigh turn out to be entirely wrong, but the attendant's fairly lowbrow explanation is also more than welcomed by listeners. That the temple in Rhodes is an anticipation of Cnidus was noted by Schissel von Fleschenberg in a comparative study on the technique of introductory paintings in the *Erōtes*, Ps.-Cebes, Petronius, Lucian, Achilles Tatius, and Longus; the comparison also highlights that in the temple of Dionysus the contents of the paintings and their explanation are missing.³⁴ Thus, the scene in Rhodes plays with readers' expectations concerning encounters with artworks in temples, delivery of ekphrasis, and success at interpretation.

This resonates especially well with Achilles Tatius in light of the novel's systematic questioning, at the level of both characters and readers, of the reliability of the interpretation of paintings.³⁵ Moreover, *Erōtes* 8 activates relevant connections with *L&C*. Lycinus' visit (ἐκπεριῦδων) re-enacts the encounters with both the painting of Europa ("I undertook a tour (περιῦδων) of the rest of the city, and was browsing among the sacred dedications when I saw a votive picture", *L&C* 1.1.2) and the diptych of Andromeda and Prometheus ("We made a tour (περιήειμεν) of the temple. In the inner chamber of the temple we saw a painting", *L&C* 3.6.2-3). Noteworthy as well is Lycinus' experience as a spectator not in terms of his recognition of the stories in the paintings but of the renewal of the stories represented (μύθους ἀνανεούμενος). The latter refers to the process of recollecting as reliving in the mind but may also be read as a nod to the fact that much of *L&C* is constituted by the (twisted) renewal of the stories contained in the paintings. Furthermore, Lycinus uses μῦθος and ἱστορία to characterise the contents of the paintings. Μῦθος is the story at the time of vision, the moment of mental renewal and enjoyment ("renewing my acquaintance with the tales (μύθους) of the heroes"). Ἱστορία is the story at the time of interpretation, the subsequent moment when the μῦθος is explained ("offering for a small fee to explain every story (ἱστορίαν) for me"). We find a similar dichotomy in the passage in *L&C* which contains the crux of Achilles

Tatius' proleptic use of ekphrasis of paintings. This is a highly self-conscious moment which seems to give readers a solution they no longer need, only to deceive them again.³⁶

λέγουσι δὲ οἱ τῶν συμβόλων ἐξηγηταὶ σκοπεῖν τοὺς μύθους τῶν εἰκόνων, ἃν ἐξιοῦσιν
ἐπὶ πρᾶξιν ἡμῖν συντόχῳσι, καὶ ἐξομοιοῦν τὸ ἀποβησόμενον τῷ τῆς ἱστορίας λόγῳ. *L&C*
5.4.1.

Interpreters of signs say that if we encounter paintings as we set off to do something, we should ponder the myths (μύθους) narrated there, and conclude that the outcome for us will be comparable (ἐξομοιοῦν) to the story (ἱστορίας) they tell.

Mῦθος is used for the moment of vision (σκοπεῖν τοὺς μύθους), while ἱστορία is used for the later moment of interpretation of how events relate to the contents of the paintings. In both *L&C* and the *Erōtes*, ἱστορία is used only in this sense and only in relation to artwork.³⁷ Moreover, in both works, this second moment requires an elaboration which involves comparison and conjecture (εἰκασίᾳ in *Erōtes*, which can mean both, and ἐξομοιοῦν in *L&C*). Finally, Lycinus' interpretation is described as an anticipation of the contents of the paintings ("I had already guessed for myself"), which summarises well the mental gymnastics designed by Achilles Tatius for the readers of *L&C*. To sum up, the episode in Rhodes is neither just an incident to make characters meet in a plausible way, nor just a starter for the main dish in Cnidus. Confirming what I have already demonstrated about the representations of gardens, it shows the author's understanding of Achilles Tatius' methodology, to the point that it alludes to the passage of the novel where he formulates it. In turn,

readers of the *Erōtes* are alerted to the proleptic play with ekphrasis of artworks that will occur with the statue of Aphrodite, to which I now turn.

The second encounter with art changes some of the parameters of the first one and adds complexity (*Erōtes* 13-16): three spectators instead of one, a statue instead of paintings, three-dimensional access instead of the alignment on the walls of a portico, an ekphrasis to provide readers with the visual, and the temple's attendant's ἱστορία to explain the artwork further. Encounters with paintings become increasingly elaborate in *L&C* as well. The first painting is observed and described by one person, the primary narrator (1.1). Clitophon, independently, is there as well, but we are unaware of him until the description ends. The second painting is observed by two people together, Clitophon and Leucippe, and described by one, Clitophon (3.6-8). Leucippe's participation in the process is entirely ignored. The third painting is observed by three spectators, Clitophon, Leucippe, and Menelaus, described twice by Clitophon, and interpreted by Menelaus (5.3-5). The contents of the painting are unknown to Leucippe. This interest in amplifying spectatorship and observing how that complicates the mechanisms of description and interpretation is mirrored in the *Erōtes*, where the individual experiences of the viewers in front of Praxiteles' Aphrodite are reflected in a fractioned ekphrasis.

Lycinus goes first and provides an overview, paying special attention to material and blurring the lines between inanimate and animate (“the hard unyielding marble did justice to every limb”, *Erōtes* 13). Right on cue, Charicles makes no attempt to relate to the statue as one does to a work of art and runs over to kiss it, which does not contribute to the ongoing ekphrasis but anticipates the story of agalmatophilia which is soon to follow. The third section of the ekphrasis is undertaken by Callicratidas and prompted by the discovery that it is possible to go around the temple and enter it from the back in order to see the other side of the statue.³⁸ In Callicratidas' top-

to-bottom scan, technical observations on the proportions of the back and legs (εὐρυθμία; ῥυθμοί) are combined with a language and style that reflect his daze as he looks at the statue's buttocks ("how inexpressibly sweetly they smile!").³⁹ After noticing the stain on the statue's thigh Lycinus attempts an interpretation, recreating the situation at the temple in Rhodes (εἰκασίᾳ is used here again).⁴⁰ This time, however, the intervention of the temple's attendant proves his reading wide off the mark (*Erōtes* 15-16). Similarly to *L&C*, the addition of voices due to the change from solo to group experience highlights different subjective responses and exposes problems of narratorial reliability. Like Clitophon, the confident art connoisseur who repeatedly fails to heed the warning of the paintings, Lycinus at first creates a sense of reliability about himself, but then fails to live up to it.

The encounter with the statue of Aphrodite determines the structure and themes of the rest of the dialogue. From a structural point of view, the double take on the statue, from the front and the back, prefigures, obviously, the format of the following *agōn* between the two opposing arguments.⁴¹ Moreover, the order of the speakers of the description is mirrored by the order of speakers in the *agōn*: Lycinus opens and closes the contest (17-18; 50-51), Charicles speaks first while the other is silent (19-28), and Callicratidas speaks second while Charicles is silent (30-49). From a thematic point of view, the rest of the dialogue revolves around the main theme of responses to the statue, namely erotic desire. More specifically, the sexually-charged responses by both Charicles and Callicratidas, both confused between the inanimate and animate, anticipate the story of the young man who fell into the same predicament and put into practice what these two only imagine or try to do. Again, their different takes on the same statue, one appreciating the front, feminine side, the other the boy-like back, correspond first to a different understanding of the same story, one agreeing with the man's lust for Aphrodite, the other paying more attention to the fact

that he loved her as one does young boys, and then to the theses of heterosexuality and pederasty. Charicles, who tried to approach the statue physically, uses the pleasure of intercourse as one of his arguments (25-28). Conversely, Callicratidas, who controlled himself, promotes a chaste form of love for boys (45-46). Moreover, some exact details resurface in the contest. At *Erōtes* 46 Callicratidas' loving vision of the ideal young boy (αἱ τῶν ὀμμάτων βολαί; ἀπαντικρὺ τοῦ φίλου καθεύξεσθαι; ἡδὺ λαλοῦντος) recalls both the attendant's story of the young man ogling Aphrodite and his own description of the statue's buttocks (ἀπαντικρὺ τῆς θεοῦ καθεζόμενος; τὰς τῶν ὀμμάτων βολὰς; ὡς ἡδὺς ὁ γέλως, 14-15).⁴² Moreover, in the outer dialogue, at *Erōtes* 53, Theomnestus, inspired by Callicratidas' words, imagines a moment of petting with a young boy where he "lays hold of the abundance (ἀμφιλαφές) of the swollen belly", echoing the "abundant (ἀμφιλαφεῖς) flanks" of the statue. The images from *Erōtes* 13-16 also resurface *en bloc* in a pivotal passage of the love contest, leading to ramifications which I intend to explore in the next section. In conclusion, Achilles Tatius' emblematic narrative technique of blending ekphrasis and story via a complex network of associations was understood well by the author of the *Erōtes*. Indeed, he starts to spin a similar web as early as the programmatic encounter with the paintings in Rhodes and continues in Cnidus with the temple garden and statue. Structural, visual, and thematic aspects of the descriptions anticipate the discussions to come, and details are planted strategically in order to encourage intratextual connections. Thus, the imitation of *L&C* occurs at the level of form and content and, consequently, at the level of the intended relationship with the readers. Similarly to the readers of the novel, and especially if they have recognised its echoes, the readers of the *Erōtes* are invited to partake in a hermeneutic activity that spans the whole of the dialogue. What they gain from it is on the one hand the intellectual pleasure of a game of recognition, and on the other hand, as I will argue next, a stimulating reflection on the reception of the novel.

Modernity

Building on the analysis above, this last section considers what the *Erōtes* can tell us about the early reception of *L&C*. I argue that, unlike the judgments on the novels that are thought to be the earliest ones, the *Erōtes* offers a positive view of the genre. The basis for this claim, aside from the fact that imitation is a form of praise, is that the author thematises literary reception itself and articulates it within the dialogue. This emerges in the course of the love contest, as part of an argument in defence of pederasty as one of the merits of human progress. While this discourse can be associated with the statue and its story via the strategy observed above, at the same time it also reflects anti-primitivist arguments employed in rhetorical theory on imitation and the evolution of rhetoric. The recognition of these critical tools in the *Erōtes* allows us to assess the author's positioning of the novels and his own work in the succession of erotic narratives.

Between the composition of the novels and the Byzantine testimonies from the ninth century onwards parts of novels were sometimes quoted or reworked, but the novels were almost never discussed as literature. The few exceptions are significant, but, importantly, it is not certain that they are referring especially to novels. The fourth-century physician Theodorus Priscianus recommends *amatorias fabulas* as a cure for impotence, with an additional reference to Iamblichus (*Euporiston libri* 2.11.34). In the same century the emperor Julian (*Letters* 89b.347) and Basilios of Caesarea (*De legendis gentilium libris* 4.4-7) also talk about the effect of reading erotic fiction, but deem it a negative one.⁴³ It is remarkable that another (uncertain) testimony, Philostratus' letter to one Chariton, would not so much discuss the novel as expose problems about the very reading

of it.⁴⁴ It seems that Christian authors, moreover, while using uncredited material from novels,⁴⁵ felt the need to redeem the novelists from the blemish of their work by narrating their conversion and ecclesiastical career in later life.⁴⁶ Indeed, redemption was still at the core of the twelfth-century *Commentatio in Charicleam* by Philip the Philosopher, an alias for the monk and homilist Philagathus of Cerami,⁴⁷ in which the narrator defends the *Aithiopika* from detractors by means of an allegorical reading.⁴⁸ It is in this landscape that I propose to situate the *Erōtes* as a work which not only imitates Achilles Tatius but also problematises the reception of erotic fiction and offers a positive solution. This is articulated within the contest between heterosexuality and pederasty, which features *L&C* as well.

In the novel, the contest takes place at the end of Book Two and is promoted by Clitophon as a way to lift the group's morale (2.34-38). He and Menelaus, champions of heterosexuality and pederasty respectively, proceed by making a point and listening to the other's reply, and argue on either side of the ephemerality of beauty, the guidance of mythical examples, and bodies and physical interactions.⁴⁹ The book ends with Menelaus' description of the merits of boys' kisses, and the contest has no winner. Many similarities can be found between this exchange and the contest in the *Erōtes*: the spirit of light entertainment (cf. *Er.* 17); Ganymede and Tantalus as mythic parallels (cf. *Er.* 14 and 53); a tirade on make-up (cf. *Er.* 39-41); and a debate on vulgar and heavenly love (cf. *Er.* 23, 37, and 49). At certain points the contest in the *Erōtes* contains all of the elements of the one in *L&C* treated at greater length.⁵⁰ But it is also four times as long, and it is important to look at what the author has added compared to his predecessor.

Much of the love contest in the *Erōtes* is spent debating either side of human progress, inscribing sexual preferences in the history of mankind, which is instigated by Charicles. He tries to pitch the 'natural' argument: reproduction is good and necessary and it can only happen between

male and female. This natural order characterised earlier, more genuine times, but now mankind has experienced luxury and with it corruption, which has extended all the way to sexual preferences (*Erōtes* 19-21). Callicratidas holds the opposite view of history: instead of chipping away at an original happiness and perfection, the passing of time brings improvements, so pederasty is to sex preferences what woven clothes are to wearing animal skins or philosophy is to alphabetism (33-35). The fulcrum of Callicratidas' argument is at *Erōtes* 34:

καὶ σπήλυγγας ὀρύων κρύους καταδύσεις ἐπενόησαν ἢ παλαιῶν ῥιζῶν ἢ φυτῶν αἶα
κοιλώματα; τὴν δὲ ἀπὸ τούτων μίμησιν ἐπὶ τὸ κρεῖττον αἰεὶ μετὰγοντες ὕφηναν μὲν
ἑαυτοῖς χλανίδας, οἴκους δὲ ὤκισαντο, καὶ λεληθότως αἱ περὶ ταῦτα τέχναι τὸν χρόνον
λαβοῦσαι διδάσκαλον ἀντὶ μὲν λιτῆς ὕφης τὸ κάλλιον ἐποίκιλαν, ἀντὶ δὲ εὐτελεῶν
δωματίων ὕψηλὰ τέρεμνα καὶ λίθων πολυτέλειαν ἐμηχανήσαντο καὶ γυμνὴν τοίχων
ἀμορφίαν εὐανθέσι βαφαῖς χρωμάτων κατέγραψαν. πλὴν ἐκάστη γε τούτων τῶν τεχνῶν
καὶ ἐπιστημῶν ἄφρονος οὕσα καὶ βαθεῖαν ἐπιτεθειμένη λήθην ὥς ἀπὸ μακρᾶς δύσεως
κατὰ μικρὸν εἰς τὰς ἰδίας ἀνέτειλεν ἀκτῖνας. ἕκαστος γὰρ εὐρών τι παρεδίδου τῷ
μετ' αὐτόν· εἴθ' ἡ διαδοχὴ τῶν λαμβανόντων οἷς ἔμαθεν ἤδη προστιθεῖσα, τὸ ἐνδέον
ἐπλήρωσεν.

And as refuges against the cold they thought of mountain caves or the dry hollows afforded by old roots or trees. Then, ever improving the imitative skill that started thus, they wove themselves cloaks of wool and built themselves houses, and imperceptibly the crafts that concentrated on these things, being taught by time, replaced simple fabrics with ornate garments of greater beauty, and instead of cheap cottages they devised

sublime mansions of expensive marble, and painted the naked ugliness of their walls with the flowery dyes of colour. However, each of these crafts and accomplishments has, after being mute and plunged in deep forgetfulness, gradually risen, as it were, to its own bright zenith after long being set. For each man made some discovery to hand on to his successor. Then each successive recipient, by adding to what he had already learnt, made good any deficiencies.

The images run in the readers' minds as in a time-lapse, short but encompassing aeons, during which mankind goes from caves to palaces. "Ever-improving *mimēsis*" (μίμησιν ἐπὶ τὸ κρεῖττον ἅει) is the guiding principle of the sequence. It is *mimēsis* from nature that affords mankind both the first shelters and the latest commodities, like the flowery colours (εὐανθέσι βαφαῖς) used for frescoes. *Technē* in its turn projects the development of mankind on a cosmic scale: thanks to *technē* the recesses (καταδύσεις) used in early times have been abandoned, and after a long setting (ἀπὸ μακρᾶς δύσεως) human skill has reached its zenith like a star. The images used by Callicratidas are effective for his argument, but their deeper significance is unlocked when one recognises in them the resurfacing of the statue of Aphrodite and its story, *à la* Achilles Tatius. Take for instance the references to stone, both in its being worked preciously and its nakedness (λίθων πολυτέλειαν ἐμηχανήσαντο καὶ γυμνὴν τοίχων ἀμορφίαν...), similarly to the artwork (Παρίας δὲ λίθου δαίδαλμα κάλλιστον... γεγύμνεται, 13). Then the images of setting and rising (καταδύσεις... ἀπὸ μακρᾶς δύσεως),⁵¹ which elsewhere appear only in the timing of the young man's interactions with the statue (ἐκ τῆς ἐωθινῆς κοίτης πολὺ προλαμβάνων... μετὰ δύσιν, 15; ἐπὶ δύσιν, 16). Mankind's stonework (τοίχων... κατέγραψαν) echoes both the young man's writing on the wall (τοῖχος ἅπας ἐχαράσσετο, 16) and his mark on the statue (τῶν ἐρωτικῶν περιπλοκῶν ἵχνη, 16). Finally, the secretive characterisation of *technē*, unnoticed and voiceless (λεληθότως;

ἄφρωνος... λήθην), recalls the statue (λεληθότως, 13) and everything related to the young man, from his namelessness (ἄνώνυμον, 15), to his invisible presence (λαθὼν, 16), to his unheard words (κλεπτομένης λαλιᾶς, 15).

Links between *Erōtes* 34 and *Erōtes* 13-16 invite us to consider what the history of mankind according to Callicratidas and the statue's circumstances may have in common. The answer seems to be a sense of optimism concerning the transmission and subsequent transformation of what has come down from the past. Callicratidas expresses this clearly in his positive view of technological progress ("then each successive recipient, by adding to what he had already learnt, made good any deficiencies"), but his theory can illuminate certain aspects of the statue as well. Consider Lycinus' (wrong) interpretation of the stain on the statue's thigh and his subsequent praise of Praxiteles for overcoming the natural defect of the stone.⁵² But the actual explanation as well, which is told as a story of violation ("the goddess had the blemish to prove what she'd suffered", 16) but is received as one of love ("Women therefore inspire love even when made of stone", 17). While it is easy to see Praxiteles' work as an improvement on the stone it may seem awkward to see the young man's 'addition' to Praxiteles' work in the same positive light, but it should be noted that the trio never discusses it as vandalism either. In the end, the legacy of the young man is a mark left on the stone, which, *mutatis mutandis*, is also the culmination of human *technē* at *Erōtes* 34. The notion becomes less awkward if we take the two passages not at face value but as a commentary on literature and on the *Erōtes*' literary self-positioning.⁵³

That the language and imagery of *Erōtes* 34 double as a commentary on style, literary criticism, and reception, is confirmed by the activities chosen as markers of progress, namely house-building, which culminates in an act of drawing (κατέγραψαν), and weaving, which has a long history of allegorising writing. Weaving in particular gives Callicratidas the opportunity to employ vocabulary that can also be used to describe style, simple or embellished (λιτῆς...

ἐποίκιλαν).⁵⁴ Even the sublime mansions (ὕψηλὰ τέρεμνα) have literary value, with ὕψηλὰ doubly qualifying τέρεμνα because it also points to the fact that the word is a rare and researched echo of tragedy.⁵⁵ Human skills and knowledge are connected to their ability to have a voice (πλὴν... ἄφωνος οὐσα). Most prominently, *mimēsis*' function as the enabler of progress evokes one of the kernels of ancient aesthetics. These are no mere rhetorical buzzwords. Together they adumbrate the rhetorical discourse with which the author is engaging, anchoring the opposing views on pederasty to the ancient debates on rhetoric's relationship with its past as decline or progress. I will briefly outline three interconnected areas where the *Erōtes* and these debates meet: 1) primitivism and anti-primitivism, 2) masculinity, and 3) imitation. This is not meant to be an exhaustive survey of a topic as vast as the ancient perspectives on the history of rhetoric (and thus ancient literary criticism) and of the many relevant sources. Rather, I will look through some of the *loci classici* in order to isolate themes and images that feature in the *agōn* in the *Erōtes* as well. My main point is that self-reflexive rhetorical debates informed the theories expressed in the *Erōtes* and therefore justify a metaliterary reading of them.

Firstly, part of the *agōn* in the *Erōtes* revolves around the opposition between a primitivist narrative of a fall from an age of virtue into one of corruption (*Er.* 20-21), and an anti-primitivist narrative which values the progressive achievements of mankind (*Er.* 33-35). Variations of this discourse can be found across times and cultures,⁵⁶ and were a staple of ancient accounts of the history of rhetoric. *Laudatores temporis acti* would construct an idealised past in which eloquence was simple, natural, and necessary for the common good; they trace its fall all the way to a present rife with luxury and corruption.⁵⁷ Yet this concept of a 'Golden Age' lacks clear coordinates. Categories like 'the past' and 'the ancients' are porous and movable, depending at all times on the particular intersection of the viewpoint (Greek or Roman author) and the subject matter (Greek

and/or Roman rhetoric);⁵⁸ the most common decline story was the corruption of the heritage of fifth- and fourth-century Athenian oratory at the hands of Asianism.⁵⁹

The counterargument could exploit a number of pitfalls of this principle - like the lack of detail around who exactly the ancients are (cf. Tac., *Dial.* 16) or the anachronism of forced archaisms (cf. Lucian, *Lex.*) - and construct an altogether different vision of history. The anti-primitivist narrative considered rhetoric as an enabler of progress since a time before civilisation (cf. Cic., *Inv. Rhet.* 1.2), aligning it with other arts, like medicine or architecture, which also improved with time (cf. Quint., *Inst.*, 2.17. 9-11).⁶⁰ The self-evidently positive notion that skill moved humans from living in caves to buildings served Quintilian before Callicratidas: “Primitive men did not of course speak with our rules and standards of care. (...) But if no improvements were to be allowed, neither ought we to have exchanged huts for houses, skins for clothes, or mountains and woods for cities. What art has ever come into being in an instant?”⁶¹ Anti-primitivists thought in relative terms: any improvement is good proportionately with its time (cf. Cic., *Brut.* 70), and the present is the most recent stage but not the last (cf. Quint., *Inst.* 10.2.28; Ps. Longinus, *Subl.*, 14). Finally, it should be noted that it was not uncommon for arguments in support of the old ways and of the new to be pitched against each other in *agōnes*, as they are in the *Erōtes*.⁶²

Secondly, Charicles uses primitivism to highlight the decline from early, natural heterosexuality, led by virtue and aimed at reproduction, to a more modern and corrupt same-sex union aimed at pleasure only. In *Rhetorum praeceptor* Lucian outlines two roads and two guides to summit the mountain of rhetoric. One road is steep and difficult and follows the old and fading tracks of Demosthenes and Plato (*Rh. Pr.* 9). The old-fashioned (Κρονικὸς, 10) guide who takes the would-be orator there is “a vigorous man with hard muscles and a manly stride” (καρτερός τις ἀνὴρ, ὑπόσκληρος, ἀνδρώδης τὸ βάδισμα, 9, trans. Harmon 1925), a “hairy, unduly masculine fellow” (τῷ μὲν δασεῖ τούτῳ καὶ πέρα τοῦ μετρίου ἀνδρικῷ, 10). The second path is a pleasant

shortcut through flowery meadows (3) and the second, sweet-smiling guide teaches to throw modesty to the wind (15), and imitate women and be effeminate in every way (23). This student should abandon Isocrates, Demosthenes, and Plato, and focus on the more recent declamations (τοὺς τῶν ὀλίγων πρὸ ἡμῶν λόγους καὶ ἅς φασι ταύτας μελέτας, 17). Lucian jests, but the gendering of rhetoric occurs in rhetorical theory as well, and the decline of rhetoric could be exemplified by an erosion of masculinity.⁶³ For Quintilian, the strength of old orators is solid and masculine (*solida ac virilis*, *Inst.* 2.5.23; cf. also 9.4.3), and the debauched eloquence of the declamations is compared to eunuchs, monsters created for lust alone (*Inst.* 5.12.17-20). Charicles shares these preoccupations and also uses eunuchs as an example of “the lowest depth of hedonism” (τὰ τῆς ἡδονῆς... βάραθρα, *Er.* 20-21).⁶⁴

Lastly, and indeed underlying both previous points, *mimēsis* (or *imitatio*), presupposing as it does a relation between before and after, regulates rhetoric’s reflections on itself and its past at all times. It was a building block of education and composition, and also the object of inquiry.⁶⁵ Indeed the views of both ‘traditionalists’ and ‘modernists’ are equally predicated on *mimēsis*, they merely differ on the evaluation of the models. Two renowned passages are especially similar to Callicratidas’ speech at *Erōtes* 34. One is Ps.-Longinus’ section on *mimēsis*, especially where he states that *mimēsis* of the great writers and poets of the past (τῶν ἔμπροσθεν μεγάλων συγγραφέων καὶ ποιητῶν μίμησις τε καὶ ζήλωσις, *Subl.* 13.2) is the road to the sublime (ὁδὸς ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλὰ, *ibid.*). It is not a stretch of the imagination to see in Callicratidas’ *mimēsis* of ancient roots (παλαιῶν ῥιζῶν... τὴν δὲ ἀπὸ τούτων μίμησιν) which leads mankind to “sublime palaces” (ὑψηλὰ τέρεμνα) an echo of this principle.⁶⁶ The second passage is from the end of Quintilian’s section on *imitatio* and is worth quoting in full:

Qui vero etiam propria his bona adiecerit, ut suppleat quae deerant, circumcidat si quid redundabit, is erit quem quaerimus perfectus orator: quem nunc consummari potissimum oporteat, cum tanto plura exempla bene dicendi supersunt quam illis qui adhuc summi sunt contigerunt. Nam erit haec quoque laus eorum, ut priores superasse, posteros docuisse dicantur. Inst. 10.2.28, trans. Russell 2001.

But it is the man who also *adds his own good qualities to these* [authors], *making good the deficiencies* and cutting out any superfluities, who will be the perfect orator we are seeking; and it would be particularly appropriate that he should come to perfection in our time, when there are so many more models of good oratory to be found than were available to those who were the greatest masters in the past. These masters will acquire another glory too: that of being said to have surpassed their predecessors and taught their successors.” (my italics)

An important consequence of Quintilian’s evolutionary trajectory is that, at least theoretically, *imitatio* inserts the imitated in the literary canon, and, potentially, the imitator too, in a continuous succession.⁶⁷ Callicratidas’ description of the culmination of history of mankind could not be more similar: “each man made some discovery to hand on to his successor. Then each successive recipient (διαδοχή), by adding to what he had already learnt, made good any deficiencies.”

Having unlocked the rhetorical pedigree of the *agōn* in the *Erōtes*, and of Callicratidas’ speech in particular, we can now decode its literary message. If literature is inscribed into, and described with the terms of, the progress of mankind, it becomes neither an immutable body of knowledge nor something which belongs only to its practitioners in isolation, but something

authors receive, add to, and pass on.⁶⁸ Contrast Charicles' conservative use of διαδοχή as the goal of heterosexuality, which "preserves human life with immortal successions (διαδοχαῖς)" (19), and scorn of *technē*, which has only brought about instruments of corruption like dildos (ἀσελγῶν ὀργάνων, 28), with Callicratidas' progressive διαδοχή at *Erōtes* 34 and his idea of the instruments brought about by *technē*, that is, books, the "revered instruments (ὄργανα) of virtue" (44). Literature is an act of constant reception and improvement, and lamenting current literature is like lamenting having clothes on or a roof over one's head. But what literature is the *Erōtes* alluding to? The author put in Callicratidas' mouth an argument, namely the evolutionary theory of imitative arts, taken from rhetorical treatises where it served the cause of rhetoric. Caves and masculinity were metaphors for literary styles and models that were also named and discussed in the same treatises. The *Erōtes*, on the other hand, is not rhetorical theory and does not need to break the spell that it is talking about anything other than erotic desires, *erōtes*. In turn, to understand what literature the author is alluding to, we need to look no further than that.

Erōtes is both the container and the contents, the title of the booklet and its main theme. It refers to sexual activities and preferences in all of their different forms (with noticeably fewer occurrences on the heterosexual side),⁶⁹ but also to their status as narratives once they are recollected and recounted, and thus also to erotic literature. In this sense, from the start of the dialogue, the interlocutors have presented themselves as literary connoisseurs who are as rich in stories as they are capable of reflecting on the genres in the manner of which they tell them, as Lycinus' response to Theomnestus' stories demonstrates: "I almost thought I was Aristides being enchanted beyond measure by those Milesian Tales" (1).⁷⁰ In turn, and beyond the braggadocio, Theomnestus is perfectly aware that his 'Milesian Tales' are part of a continuous process of reception: "One Love has ever succeeded another (διάδοχοι ἔρωτες ἀλλήλων), and almost before I've ended earlier ones later Loves begin" (2). In a moment of metalepsis readers are invited to

realise that what they are holding in their hands, *this Erōtes*, is also but the latest arrival in the family of erotic narratives, its predecessors having been imitated and woven into the dialogue.⁷¹ The dialogic form is functional to the author's overall plan to insert his work in the discourse of erotic narrative. Some of his predecessors, like Plato and Aristides, are mentioned and quoted directly, while Achilles Tatius (together with Chariton) is alluded to and reworked extensively while remaining unmentioned. Nonetheless, through the lens of the continuous process of *mimēsis*, the author read Plato in Achilles Tatius, and by the same token wanted the novel in the *Erōtes* to be noted by his audience. So Lycinus' story, which imitates a novel both in plot (journeys, encounters with art, love contests) and narrative techniques (first-person narrative, proleptic ekphrasis), can be seen as a Greek novel in return for Theomnestus' Milesian Tales. True to the winning aesthetics of the dialogue, the author added "what was missing" (34), which includes, thematically, a stronger voice for something other than heterosexuality, in order to pass it on.

Conclusion

The arguments I have expounded in this article demonstrate that Achilles Tatius' *L&C* received literary attention closer to the time of its composition than usually thought. I have proposed that the author of the *Erōtes* was an attentive reader with in-depth knowledge of the novelist's technique of proleptic ekphrasis of gardens and artworks, which he imitated and adapted meticulously. This imitation at work is an integral part of the author's plan to talk about literary imitation, an aspect which is interlocked with the discourse on sexuality triggered by the vision of the statue of Aphrodite. The solution of this discourse hinges on an optimistic view of progress and modernity which is to be extended to the reception and writing of erotic narratives. Such a level of imitation of Achilles Tatius and subsequent reflection on the workings of novels is extraordinary for the time

when the *Erōtes* was written, be it the second century or the fourth, or any time in between. The novels in general, and *L&C* in our particular case, were very recent players in the field of erotic literature. What the *Erōtes* does, by inviting the recognition of, and reflecting on, this hypotext, is to insert it too in literary history, in a testament against conservatism.⁷²

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¹ See Garnaud 1991: xx-xxv, and Bowie 2002: 60-61 for dating. The most recent proposal is 131-138 C. E. (Whitmarsh 2020: 4-5).

² A list of testimonia of Achilles Tatius can be found in Vilborg 1955: 163-68. On testimonia of novels in general see Bowie 1993, Bowie 1996, Hunter 2008, and on circulation of papyri Stephens 1994. See Tissoni 2002 on the attribution of the epigram to Leo the Philosopher.

³ See Vilborg 1955: xxxii-xxxiv and Antoniou 1995.

⁴ Stephens 1994: 410.

⁵ For the time span before the Byzantine testimonia, see Lehmann 1910, with several lists of parallels between the novel and authors from the fourth and fifth centuries (note that he dates Achilles Tatius to the middle of the third century); Guida 2004 on Basilios of Caesarea; Frangoulis 2014 on Nonnus; Dümmler 2015 on Musaeus; Arnott 1982 on Aristaenetus; Trzaskoma 2014 on the *Historia Alexandri Magni*. Ps.-Eustathius' *Commentary to Hexameron* copies or paraphrases the descriptions of animals in *L&C* (cf. Vilborg 1955: xxxiii). The closest in time to Achilles Tatius

may have been Lucian: see Schwartz 1976 for parallels (note that he considers Achilles Tatius the imitator), and ní Mheallaigh 2014: 39-71.

⁶ See the analysis in Frangoulis 2014: 169-201. For Nonnus' imitation of other novelists see also Frangoulis 2006 and Frangoulis 2009.

⁷ If the *Erōtes* was written by Lucian, it may postdate Lucian's *Imagines* (163-4 C. E.), in which Lycinus anticipates his telling of the story of the Cnidian Aphrodite: "Well, have you also heard the story that the natives tell about it – that someone fell in love with the statue, was left behind unnoticed in the temple, and embraced it to the best of his endeavours? But this will make for another story." (*Imagines* 4, trans. Harmon 1925, adapted). If the *Erōtes* is the work of an imitator, its date should be pushed even later. Either possibility postdates *L&C*.

⁸ The strongest arguments for the rejection of Lucian's paternity are Lauer 1899 and Bloch 1907, both on stylistic grounds. Alternative dates put forward are the late second or early third century (Jones 1984: 180), late third (Bloch 1907), and early fourth (Klabunde 2001: 165n.1, with a summary of the debate). Others are inclined to welcome Lucian's paternity (cf. Elsner 2007: 119n.26), but only Jope 2011: 111-16 tackles the issue of style, rejecting Bloch's arguments convincingly. Once doubted paternity is never fully restored, and I do not aim to solve this problem. My argument does not depend on attribution and sits equally well with any dating from the second to the fourth century. Throughout I will be referring to the author as 'the author'.

⁹ Starting with Foucault 1984: 211-27. See Hubbard 2009 for the philosophical ancestry of such debates, and Jope 2011: 104-10 on not taking the philosophy in the *Erōtes* too seriously. Halperin 1992 makes the difference between Charicles and Callicratidas one of taste and style rather than gender preferences.

¹⁰ Havelock 1995: 10-11; Spivey 1996: 173-86; Borg 2004: 52-56; Haynes 2013. See also Beard and Henderson 2001; Elsner 2007: 117-20; and Squire 2011: 97-100.

¹¹ Goldhill 1995: 102-11. Along the lines of generic pastiche, see Mossman 2007 for the dialogue's intertextual relation with ancient drama, tracing the presences of Heracles and Prometheus.

¹² Goldhill 1995: 104. Plutarch's *Erōtikos*, which has a similar debate, no doubt seeped into both *L&C* and the *Erōtes*: see Foucault 1984: 193-210, Goldhill 1995: 144-61, and the more detailed synchronism in Klabunde 2001. The vicinity of these works overcomes generic boundaries and brings them together in a discourse on love and sex, but here I wish to focus on Achilles Tatius, so, for reasons of space, the role played by the *Erōtikos* in the *Erōtes* (starting from the title) must be set aside. There is another reason. The *Erōtikos* revolves around the entirely novelistic story of Ismenodora and Bacchon, yet this story takes place behind the scenes, as if the mundanities of love, with declarations, heartaches, and kidnaps, were less important than the philosophical reflections the educated might have on them (on which see Rist 2001). Spatially, in the *Erōtikos*, the novelistic storyworld is far away, reported indirectly, and unexplored, whereas the author of the *Erōtes* plunges right into it.

¹³ D'Alconzo (forthcoming). See also Hunter 1994: 173-76 and Hunter 2008: 270.

¹⁴ What follows aims to summarise the reader-oriented function of ekphrasis in the novel as analysed in Bartsch's seminal study (Bartsch 1989), and not to provide even a remotely comprehensive account of the richness and complexity of Achilles Tatius' use of ekphrasis. On plot-related functions see also Reeves 2007 and Guez 2012, and on the role of vision in the novel Morales 2004.

¹⁵ E.g. the enchainment, sacrifice, and disembowelment of Andromeda and Prometheus at 3.6-8 anticipate Leucippe's *Scheintod* at 3.15.

¹⁶ The novel is permeated by these, e.g. Perseus' 'double' sword at 3.8.8-9 is mirrored by the prop sword used for Leucippe's sacrifice at 3.21.3-5.

¹⁷ Cf. Bartsch 1989: 50-53. For Platonic connections see Morales 2004: 50-60 on the discourse on love and ní Mheallaigh 2007 on fiction. For a full analysis of the intratextual connections between the gardens see Martin 2002: 144-54.

¹⁸ Bartsch 1989: 50-55; Morales 2004: 50-60; Littlewood 1979.

¹⁹ De Temmerman 2014: 60-61.

²⁰ Platonic motifs like the idea of beauty as a stream that flows through the eyes (*Phdr.* 251b) and of seeing one's reflection in the beloved as if in a mirror (255d) are quoted almost word by word by Clinias.

²¹ It is clear that Clitophon's descriptions of Leucippe say much more about him and his erotic disposition than about her. See De Temmerman 2014: 194-202.

²² The Greek is taken from the edition of Macleod 1980, the translations are from Macleod 1967, with minor adaptations.

²³ ἐπεὶ δ' ἤκομεν εἰς τι συνηρεφὲς καὶ παλίνσκιον ὄρα θέρους ἀναπauστήριον, Ἡδύς, εἰπὼν, ὁ τόπος, ἐγώ, καὶ γὰρ οἱ κατὰ κορυφὴν λιγυρὸν ὑπηχοῦσι τέττιγες. *Erōtes* 18.

²⁴ *Phdr.* 229; 230a-c. See Trapp 1990: 155-64; Goldhill 1995: 103-04.

²⁵ Allusions to Plato's *Phaedrus* may take different forms. For instance, once proclaimed the winner, Callicratidas jumps around bright with joy (τῷ προσώπῳ φαιδρὸς, 52). The same pun can be found at *L&C* 2.10.5.

²⁶ For the most part at least. The luxuriousness of the garden's myrtle (δαψιλής, 12) is recalled by Charicles' description of a woman's hair (δαψιλεῖς, 26). There is also mingling of animals at *Erōtes*

22 (ἐπιμίγνυνται). These few examples of heteronormative imagery are outweighed by far by the examples of reuse of the elements of the garden's description in a pederastic key, and do not impede my argument.

²⁷ Charicles may be playing on, and twisting, this image in his later condemnation of eunuchs: "The bloom that has lingered with them in their youth makes them fade prematurely into old age. For at the same moment they are counted as boys and have become old without any interval of manhood." (τὸ δ' ἐν νεότητι παραμεῖναν ἄνθος εἰς γῆρας αὐτοὺς μαραίνειν πρόωρον. ἅμα γὰρ ἐν παισὶν ἀριθμοῦνται, καὶ γεγηράκασιν οὐδὲν ἀνδρῶν μεταίχμιον ἔχοντες, *Erōtes* 21)

²⁸ The Greek is taken from the edition of Garnaud 1991, translations are from Whitmarsh and Morales 2001, with minor adaptations. Musaeus too imitates Achilles Tatius' description of Leucippe's beauty; see Dümmler 2015: 420-22.

²⁹ Incidentally, both amber and a crystal appear in *L&C* as well (6.7.3; 2.3.1).

³⁰ Rachael Bird and Ian Repath alert me to similarities with Dionysophanes' garden in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* (4.2-3): cypresses, bays, plane trees, a temple, and city folks; the distinction between fruit and non-fruiting trees (καρπόφορα/ἄκαρπα); the only pederastic episode of the novel happening soon after (4.11); the fact that σφριγάω is also used for Daphnis when he has sex with Lykainion (3.18; noted by Goldhill 1995: 171n.97). My own findings, in addition to these: the verb ἀποβουκολέω (*Erōtes* 16) had by this time only appeared in Xenophon (*Cyr.* 1.4.13), Lucian (*Bis acc.* 13.21, *Nav.* 4.14), and Longus 1.27; almost all the animals mentioned by Charicles at *Erōtes* 22 as evidence for his 'natural' argument (a bull, cows, a ram, she-wolves, wolves, and birds) feature prominently in *Daphnis and Chloe*. With Longus' Dorkon and Lykainion episodes in mind (1.20 and 3.18), I suspect something could be made of the wolves mating with she-wolves. Although the presence of more novelistic material is entirely consonant with my view of the *Erōtes*, I do not distinguish a clear pattern of reception in these potential references.

³¹ Speaking of reshuffling of data from the novel, an additional detail is noteworthy. Though not an uncommon name, Charicles is also the name of none other than Clinias' beloved youth in *L&C* (1.7.3).

³² Bartsch 1989: 40-79.

³³ Winkler 1985: 235 (and 233-242 for the whole discussion on narrators in temples). *Anathemata* dedicated by the protagonists in a temple in Rhodes play an important role in Xenophon's *Ephesiaka* (5.10).

³⁴ Schissel von Fleschenberg 1913: 84-87.

³⁵ Bartsch 1989: 78-79.

³⁶ Bartsch 1989: 66-68.

³⁷ See also the attendant's explanation of the statue of Aphrodite: "a strange, incredible story (ἱστορίαν)... according to the popular story told (ἱστορεῖ)" at *Erōtes* 15-16.

³⁸ The innuendos are obvious. Haynes 2013: 78-79 recalls *L&C* 4.1.6-7, where Clitophon dreams of entering a temple, mirroring sexual penetration.

³⁹ "Heracles!" he exclaimed, "what a well-proportioned (εὐρυθμία) back! What generous flanks she has! How satisfying an armful to embrace (ἀγκάλισμα)! How delicately moulded the flesh on the buttocks, neither too thin and close to the bone, nor yet revealing too great an expanse of fat! And as for those precious parts sealed in on either side by the hips, how inexpressibly sweetly they smile! How perfect the proportions (ῥυθμοί) of the thighs and the shins as they stretch down in a straight line to the feet!" (Ἡράκλεις, ὅση μὲν τῶν μεταφρένων εὐρυθμία, πῶς δ' ἀμφιλαφεῖς αἱ λαγόνες, ἀγκάλισμα χειροπληθές· ὥς δ' εὐπερίγραφοι τῶν γλουτῶν αἱ σάρκες ἐπικυρτοῦνται μήτ' ἄγαν ἐλλιπεῖς αὐτοῖς ὀστέοις προσεσταλμένοι μήτε εἰς ὑπέρογκον ἐκκεχυμένοι πιότητα. τῶν δὲ τοῖς ἰσχίοις ἐνεσφραγισμένων ἐξ ἑκατέρων τύπων οὐκ ἂν εἴποι τις ὥς ἡδὺς ὁ γέλως· μηροῦ τε καὶ

κνήμης ἐπ’ εὐθὺ τεταμένης ἄχρι ποδὸς ἠκριβωμένοι ῥυθμοί. *Erōtes* 14). Note that the rare ἀγκάλισμα is used by Clitophon in the love contest (*L&C* 2.37.6).

⁴⁰ “I, therefore, hazarding a plausible guess (εἰκασία) about the truth of the matter, supposed that what we saw was a natural defect in the marble.” (ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν πιθανῇ τάληθές εἰκασία τοπάζων φύσιν ὄμην τοῦ λίθου τὸ βλεπόμενον εἶναι. *Erōtes* 15).

⁴¹ Haynes 2013 considers the function of the statue’s architectural framing in shaping view and the subsequent debates. Some of the following parallels are discussed at 87-91.

⁴² The hypotext behind the opposite seating positions and the sweet laughter is Sappho’s fragment 31.

⁴³ Whitmarsh 2005: 607-08 doubts that Julian is talking about novels. The reference in Basilus is noted by Guida 2004: 31-33.

⁴⁴ “To Chariton. You think that the Greeks will remember your words when you are dead; but those who are nobodies while they exist, what will they be when they exist not?” *Letters* 66, trans. Benner 1949.

⁴⁵ Possibly the very same Basilus of Caesarea in *Letters* 133.1, according to Guida 2004: 34-37, and certainly Ps.-Eustathius’ *Commentary to Hexameron*, to mention two examples.

⁴⁶ See Socrates Scholasticus on Heliodorus (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.22), and Suda on Achilles Tatius (s. v. Ἀχιλλεὺς Στάτιος), likely dependent on the former.

⁴⁷ The attribution to Philagathus has been questioned (see for instance Tarán 1992), but there seems to have been little point in doing so, especially after Cupane 1978. See Bianchi 2006: 7-67, which also contains the most recent edition.

⁴⁸ With the *Erōtes* in mind, the *Commentatio* is especially interesting because it too is framed as a Platonic dialogue and adapts a Phaedran setting: “Even Socrates the wise, who was contemplative

in every other respect, still, sitting in the shade of the chaste-tree with lovely Phaedrus, amused the young man with talk of love. Let us do it, both for our sakes and for the sake of truth herself!’ We went off and found our friends in a throng before the gates of the temple, waiting for us. After the appropriate prayers to the virgin goddess, I spoke to them, sitting in a low chair right next to the threshold of the temple gate.” (trans. Lambertson 1986: 307)

⁴⁹ Discussions in Goldhill 1995: 82-92 and Klabunde 2001: 24-66. The contest of 2.34-38 also looks back at a rant against marriage by Clinias at 1.8.

⁵⁰ See the list of parallels in Lehmann 1910: 56-59 (note that he thought Achilles Tatius the imitator of the *Erōtes*).

⁵¹ Of course in the context of the sentence καταδύσις means ‘hiding-place’ (LSJ *s. v.* καταδύσις), but the word can also refer to the setting of stars, which forms, at least conceptually, an apt prelude to the following ‘ἀπὸ μακρᾶς δύσεως’.

⁵² “I found in this too cause to admire Praxiteles for having hidden what was unsightly in the marble in the parts less able to be examined closely.” (κατὰ τοῦτο τοῦ Πραξιτέλους ἐθαύμαζον, ὅτι τοῦ λίθου τὸ δύσμορφον ἐν τοῖς ἥττον ἐλέγχεσθαι δυναμένοις μέρεσιν ἀπέκρυπεν. *Erōtes* 15).

⁵³ The self-positioning of the *Erōtes* is discussed by Goldhill 1995, but, to my knowledge, nobody has looked at this passage as a display of literary criticism. I am grateful to Karen ní Mheallaigh for a fruitful conversation on this passage of the *Erōtes*.

⁵⁴ Cf. Aristotle’s *Rhetorica* 1416b25 on epideictic style: “artful and not simple” (ποικίλος καὶ οὐ λιτός).

⁵⁵ See LSJ *s. v.* τέραμνον: “used especially by Euripides... almost only in lyrical passages”, which, incidentally, Lucian knows (cf. *Adversus Indoctum* 28).

⁵⁶ Sources in Lovejoy et al. 1997.

⁵⁷ Some relevant primary sources: Cic., *Brut.*; Dion. Hal., *Orat. Vett.* 1; Petron., *Sat.* 1-2; Tac., *Dial.* 12; and, more generally, Sall. *Cat.* 6-13.

⁵⁸ See Porter 2006a for a rich discussion of perspectives on the past. See also Russell 1981: 99-113 and Porter 2006b on ancient literary criticism.

⁵⁹ “The ancient and indigenous Attic Muse, deprived of her possessions, had lost her civic rank, while her antagonist, an upstart that had arrived only yesterday or the day before from some Asiatic death-hole, a Mysian or Phrygian or Carian creature, claimed the right to rule over Greek cities, expelling her rival from public life.” (ἡ μὲν Ἀττικὴ μοῦσα καὶ ἀρχαία καὶ αὐτόχθων ἄτιμον εἰλήφει σχῆμα, τῶν ἑαυτῆς ἐκπεσοῦσα ἀγαθῶν, ἡ δὲ ἔκ τινων βαράθρων τῆς Ἀσίας ἐχθρὸς καὶ πρῶην ἀφικομένη, Μυσὴ ἢ Φρυγία τις ἢ Καρικόν τι κακόν, Ἑλληνίδας ἡξίου διοικεῖν πόλεις ἀπελάσασα τῶν κοινῶν τὴν ἐτέραν. Dion. Hal., *Orat. Vett.* 1, trans. Usher 1985). On Dionysius, see de Jonge 2008: 9-20, Wiater 2011: 60-119, and Wiater 2019.

⁶⁰ This is not, of course, the same as saying that rhetoric can only ever know improvement (cf. Cic., *Inv. Rhet.* 1.3). On primitivism in Cicero, see Gombrich 1966; on literary history in the *Brutus*, see Van den Berg 2019. On Quintilian, see Fantham 1995 and Citroni 2017.

⁶¹ *Neque enim locuti sunt ad hanc regulam et diligentiam primi homines, (...) si fieri nihil melius licebat, ne domibus quidem casas aut vestibis pellium tegmina aut urbibus montes ac silvas mutari oportuit. Quae porro ars statim fuit?* (*Inst.* 9.4.5, trans. Russell 2001). Cf. also Cic., *Brut.* 71.

⁶² Examples similar to the *Erōtes* include Tacitus’ *Dialogus de oratoribus* and Lucian’s *Rhetorum praeceptor*, but the model is old (cf. Ar., *Nub.* 889-1111).

⁶³ See Connolly 2007.

⁶⁴ Possibly cf. the origin of Asianism ‘ἔκ τινων βαράθρων τῆς Ἀσίας’ in Dion. Hal., *Orat. Vett.* 1.

⁶⁵ See Morgan 1998: 251-55 on education (also relevant for the overview of *enkyklios paideia* at *Erōtes* 44-45). For literary criticism, see Russell 1981: 99-113 and Hunter 2009: 107-27.

⁶⁶ For imitative skill as the engine of mankind’s progress from caves to palaces, see also Vitruvius, *De arch.* 2.1, which is very similar to *Erōtes* 34.

⁶⁷ See Stachon 2016-2017 for a reading of this passage from the point of view of evolutionary theory.

⁶⁸ The discussion in Whitmarsh 2001: 41-89 is useful for the progressive *mimēsis* of the *Erōtes*. Without pressing on the paternity of the *Erōtes*, reflections on *mimēsis* are central to Lucian’s work (see ní Mheallaigh 2014: 1-38). Two more relevant points of connection can be perceived. Lucian’s *Toxaris* shows a rearrangement of episodes from Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, and Achilles Tatius, exposing and challenging some of their strategies, and at one point emphasising a homoerotic relationship (*Tox.* 19-21, see ní Mheallaigh 2014: 39-71). Lucian’s *De saltatione*, moreover, applies evolutionary theory to the imitative art of dance, the history of which is observed from its primordial origins to the present time: “Dance came into being contemporaneously with the primal origin of the universe, making her appearance together with Love—the love that is age-old. (...) Little by little she has grown in stature and has obtained from time to time added embellishments (κατ’ ὀλίγον δὲ αὐξανομένη καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸ βέλτιον ἀεὶ προσθήκης τυγχάνουσα), until now she would seem to have reached the very height of perfection and to have become a highly diversified, wholly harmonious, richly musical boon to mankind.” (*Salt.* 7 trans. Harmon 1936); “Those early forms were roots (ὥσπερ τινὲς ῥίζαι), so to speak, or initial stages, of the dance; but the flowering of it (τὸ δὲ ἄνθος αὐτῆς) and the consummate fruition, which precisely at this moment has been brought to the highest point of perfection—that is what our discussion treats of.” (34)

⁶⁹ See Theomnestus’ bisexuality (1, 2, 4), love of boys (9, 29, 31, 35, 51), love of men (35, 36), and lesbianism (28).

⁷⁰ ὥστ' ὀλίγου δεῖν Ἀριστείδης ἐνόμιζον εἶναι τοῖς Μιλησιακοῖς λόγοις ὑπερκεηλούμενος. Together with the prologue of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* this is one of the few places where information on this lost genre can be found; see Harrison 1998. On literary self-awareness, see Mossman 2007: 148 and n.15. Another example of this is Lycinus comparing Theomnestus' list of conquests to a Hesiodic catalogue at *Erōtes* 3.

⁷¹ Another self-conscious claim can be read in Callicratidas' appeal to mythical precedents for pederasty: "Nor will you find my love (ἔρωτες) for those who deserve it to be the first to write (χαράξουσιν) such things" (ταῦτα δ' οὐ πρῶτοι χαράξουσιν οἱ ἐμοὶ πρὸς τοὺς ἀξίους ἔρωτες, 47). Note that the only other occurrence of χαράσσω is in the description of the young man inscribing the name of Aphrodite on trees (16).

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