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Works of Art in Ancient Greek Novels

by

Nicolò D'Alconzo

Submitted to Swansea University in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

SWANSEA UNIVERSITY
2015



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SUMMARY

This thesis is a study on the use of works of art in Greek novels, based on the idea that the novelists understood it as one of the main features of their job. I recognise a coherent pattern whereby works of art are closely connected to protagonists and plot, which started already with first-century novels and continued throughout. Chapter One explores rhetorical theory of *ekphrasis* in order to provide technical information on it as well as to reassess the notion that descriptions of paintings in novels were entirely dependent on rhetoric. Chapter Two starts the analysis of the feature of works of art in the genre by examining Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus, and by making some considerations on the Ninus romance as well. It shows that works of art had a relevant role before the introduction of *ekphrasis* of paintings, and also that novelists showed a tendency to employ, and innovate on, the ideas of their predecessors. Through close textual analysis of the relevant passages, Chapter Three details how Achilles Tatius composed the *ekphraseis* of paintings from literary as well as figurative models, and shows how he explored their potential by experimenting on the connection between description and narration. In an appendix, it also examines a possible connection between Achilles Tatius and Lucian. I see Achilles Tatius' descriptions as a prelude to the reflection on the nature of *ekphrasis* of paintings that can be found in Longus, mostly in the prologue of his novel. Chapter Four is dedicated to this, and connects it to the development of *ekphrasis* of paintings as an autonomous genre in the third century. Finally, Chapter Five considers Heliodorus as the recipient of this tradition, by looking closely at how he used the story of the birth of his heroine, who is born from a painting, to talk about the birth of his novel. The novelists became progressively aware that art was the expedient through which they could talk about the nature of their work.

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

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STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where corrections services have been used, the extent and nature of the corrections are clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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INTRODUCTION

Artistic incipits

If a first-time reader of the novels could take a synoptic view of the way in which they begin, one of the elements that they would notice as common to all novels, besides, say, the introduction of the setting of the story, is the presence, at some point and in different forms, of a work of art.¹ Referring to Callirhoe, Chariton says that ‘she was a wonderful maiden, and the glory (*agalma*) of the whole of Sicily. Her beauty was not human but divine, and not that of a sea or a mountain-nymph, but that of Aphrodite Parthenos’ (1,1,1), where the ambivalence created by the use of *agalma*, which means both ‘glory’ and ‘statue in honour of a god’, paves the way for the comparison with Aphrodite. Chaereas is more explicitly connected to art, as he is ‘such as sculptors and painters represent Achilles, Nireus, Hippolytus and Alcibiades’ (1,1,3), and shortly after almost looks like a real statue, when the redness from the exercise in the gymnasium shines on his skin like gold on silver (1,1,5). Not much has actually been said about the appearance of the protagonists, their age or their personality, but already after a few lines since the beginning of the novel the readers have absorbed the notion that the two Syracusans have little in common with their fellow citizens, and instead belong with gods and heroes, and the vehicle that made this hyperbolic connotation possible is the comparison with works of art. One can almost see the beginning of a pattern when very similar elements are used in the introduction of Habrocomes and Anthia in the incipit of Xenophon of Ephesus’ *Ephesiaka*. Habrocomes is compared to a god, to the point of being the object of *proskynesis* (1,1,1), the practice of adoration reserved for the statue of a divinity, and it is precisely to the statue of a god (again, *agalma*) that he thinks himself to be superior in beauty and strength (1,1,6). Eventually, it is this *hybris* that leads to the start of his misfortunes. The heroine Anthia is given, to a lesser extent, the same treatment, as the narrator says that ‘the Ephesians knelt down before her (*prosekynēsan*) as in front of Artemis’ (1,2). Again, the work of art acts as a medium in the elevation of the protagonists to a quasi-divine stature, although, compared with Chariton, there seems to be a reversal of roles, for it is now the male protagonist, and not the female one, whose beauty is being exalted.

Achilles Tatius’ *Leucippe and Clitophon* starts with a reference to a work of art as well, though in a radically different way, since, a few lines after the beginning of the novel, the readers

¹ All the following instances are here only summarised, but bear important consequences both for the characterisation of the protagonists and for the narration, and some of them present textual complications that make their reading problematic. All of this will receive closer examination in the next chapters. The order followed in these opening paragraphs reflects the order in which the novels will be examined in the thesis.

are confronted with the description of a painting of the rape of Europa which is imposing both in length, as it occupies the rest of the chapter (from 1,1,1 to 1,1,13), and detail. This happens before the introduction of Clitophon, the male protagonist of the novel, and thus the work of art does not seem to show the comparative function observed in Chariton and Xenophon. However, when it is Leucippe's turn to be introduced, which takes place in Clitophon's narration, the young man says that she looked like a picture of Selene he once saw (1,4,3), which establishes the comparison with a mythical heroine, as well as activating the connection with a painting. Little needs to be said about Longus here, so famous is the case of the picture found by the narrator in a grove in Lesbos in the prologue of *Daphnis and Chloe*, which triggers the subsequent narration of the events depicted in it. Finally, Heliodorus too introduces the protagonists as works of art at the beginning of the novel. A group of brigands has been observing the desolation of a beach right after a battle has taken place on it, when their attention is caught by the even more impressive sight of a girl (*korê*) sitting on a rock, a bow held in her hand, and a young man (*ephêbon*), wounded, lying at her feet. The two figures are carefully described, but in a way that never specifies whether what the brigands are seeing are people or statues. They are introduced in very generic terms (*korê* and *ephêbon*) which might as well refer to sculptures, and, as they are motionless, the ambiguity is carried through for as long as possible, until they are seen breathing (the words used are *pneousa* for the girl and *pneuma* for the young men).² As subtle a reference to works of art as this is, the opinion of a second set of bandits that the girl looks like the statue of a goddess (*agalma*) stolen from a temple is reported a bit later (1,7), and it falls into the pattern set by Chariton and Xenophon. Moreover, towards the middle of the novel the readers discover that the protagonist takes her physical appearance from a painting of Andromeda that her mother happened to observe while conceiving her, and that it is because of this that her misfortune, as well as the subject matter for the narration, started (4,8).

Apart from these instances, objects of art are disseminated throughout the world where the novels are set. When in the course of their journeys the characters find themselves in a city, they observe its temples, the statues and the votive offerings, and they show knowledge of iconography that enables them to use works of art as terms of comparison, as, for example, when Callirhoe is regarded as similar to the *Sleeping Ariadne* (1,6,2) or the *Aphrodite Anadyomene* (8,6,11), or when Clitophon is compared to a painting of Achilles (6,1). This can be explained by saying that the novelists themselves lived in a world permeated by art which was seeing an increasing production of specific literature on the topic (for instance Pausanias' *Periegesis*, and part of Lucian's *Imagines* is nothing but two interlocutors discussing sightseeing). On the one hand, someone who wanted to

² In addition to this, her pose recalls well-known statues of Artemis. See Whitmarsh 2002, 116.

read tales of love, adventures, and travels, would also have liked to catch a glimpse of the marvels the world had to offer. On the other hand, as emerges from a quick survey of the way in which the novels start, art seems to occupy already from the first lines a position that is not purely ornamental and marginal, and to play a role closely connected either to the protagonists or the narrative. This thesis is a study on works of art in the Greek novels, and on the increasing relevance that they seem to have in the development of the genre. In very simple terms, it explores the process that started with a girl being compared to a statue of a goddess and ended with a girl being born from a painting.

Works of art in Greek novels have not been given a systematic treatment inclusive of all extant novels.³ Most of the attention has been paid by scholars to descriptions of paintings, as this is the form in which works of art manifest themselves more prominently in the novels, especially in the later ones and namely in Achilles Tatius and in the prologue of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*. A certain level of unity has been recognised in the use of this feature by the two novelists,⁴ but the evident differences that are also operating makes it so that in the majority of studies they are considered in isolation.⁵ As we will see, descriptions of paintings have an enormous importance for the later novels, and, starting shortly and further in the thesis, all due consideration will be given to them, but as much as focusing on them is crucial to the understanding of the respective novels, it leaves out both instances when artistic objects which are not paintings are being described, and instances where artistic objects are present but not described. To the first category belong for example the descriptions of an embroidered canopy in Xenophon of Ephesus (1,8), a crystal cup and a jewel in Achilles Tatius (2,3 and 2,11), and a belt and an engraved amethyst in Heliodorus (3,4 and 5,14). To the second category belong a number of occurrences of portraits of the protagonists in Chariton (represented through different forms of art: a ring, and statues), and, in Heliodorus, the painting of Andromeda from which Chariclea draws her appearance, of which everything we are

³ Farnoux 2001 is an archaeological approach to all artistic presences in the novels (including works of art like paintings and statues, jewellery like rings, necklaces, and precious stones, and artifacts like cups or tapestries), which concludes, rightly, that these objects are more important from a narrative point of view than a historical one.

⁴ Schissel von Fleschenberg 1913 is a study on the use of descriptions of paintings as opening devices which associates Achilles Tatius with Longus, as well as with Petronius, Ps.-Cebes, and Lucian. Billault 1979 looks at *ekphrasis* as a unifying factor between Achilles Tatius and Longus, and Billault 1990 adds Heliodorus.

⁵ To name a few differences: Longus' description is nowhere near as long, nor as detailed, as Achilles'; Achilles uses the same feature again at the beginning of Books Three and Five; the way in which Achilles connects the painting described and the main story differs in many ways from Longus. Further analysis of the connection between the beginning of the novels by Achilles Tatius and Longus at Chapter 4.1. Specific studies of works of art in Achilles' novel are Harlan 1965, Garson 1978, and Bartsch 1989, and see further bibliography at Chapter 3.3. The painting in Longus' prologue is so evidently and closely attached to the narrative that hardly a study on *Daphnis and Chloe* can be found that does not cover it at some point. See Mittelstadt 1967 for an artistic, rather than narrative, point of view, and the beginning of Chapter Four for further bibliography on the prologue of the novel. Dubel 1990 provides an overview of descriptions of objects of art in Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*, opting for the interpretation that they are ornamental.

told is that it showed Andromeda naked as Perseus helps her down the cliff (4,8).

In broad terms, the approach of this thesis is to read the novels and stop to comment when coming across a work of art. The choice of following the chronological order most scholars agree upon is not dictated by convenience alone, but also by the fact that, just like the novels developed in time, so did the use of works of art in them, and the understanding of the choices of one author becomes clearer after the scrutiny of the works of the predecessors.⁶ The close textual analysis of all the relevant passages constitutes a significant part of the thesis, and the space dedicated to it will increase according to how the novelists' use of art, and the reflection on it, became more sophisticated. In fact, there seems to be a hiatus between the first-century novels by Chariton and Xenophon and the other three, due to the introduction of detailed descriptions of paintings. Although this divide is less pronounced if one considers the fact that Chariton's use of the portraits of the protagonists is anything but simple, and that a detailed description of an artistic object can be found in the embroidered canopy in Xenophon 1,8, later novelists paid a different level of attention, and certainly devoted a much longer space of the narrative, to the presence of works of art, paintings in particular. As a result, the analysis of descriptions of paintings will have considerably more weight, in order to explain their composition and function and to interpret the numerous intertextual connections, which will bring to light the affinity between Achilles Tatius, Longus, and Heliodorus, in the use of paintings. The fact that later novelists seem to have put special emphasis not just on works of art in general but on paintings in particular will also be reflected in the subordinate role which will be given to the descriptions of other artistic objects: they (e.g. the jewel in Achilles Tatius 2,11 and the belt in Heliodorus 3,4) will be used in the discussion of specific issues, but will not themselves be the object of discussion.

Finally, the broader space occupied by the analysis of descriptions of painting is also the result of the fact that studying them requires the examination of ancient rhetorical texts which inform us on the theory of description. A survey of these texts is necessary not only to provide technical information useful to the understanding of how descriptions (of any subject and not works of art alone) were composed, but also to address the question of whether the rhetorical material should lead us into thinking that novelists who described paintings were simply repeating something they had learnt from rhetoric. This question needs to be answered both in order to recognise whence the novelists derived the feature and therefore better understand what they were doing with it, and because it was the starting point of the reflection of modern scholarship of Greek

⁶ The chronology of the novels that has been followed in this thesis does not depart from the 'canonical' one: middle of the first century AD for Chariton (Bowie 2002, 57), last quarter of the first century for Xenophon of Ephesus (*ibid.*), pre-160 AD for Achilles Tatius (*ibid.*, 60-1), second half of the second century or first half of the third century for Longus (Morgan 2004, 2). It is agreed that Heliodorus is the last of the list, and although his dating is still debated, a fourth-century dating seems more plausible than a third-century one (see, most recently, Ross 2015).

novels concerning the presence of works of art.

Although references to rhetoric will accompany the analysis of the novels throughout the thesis, and although Chapter Three begins with an investigation, functional to the analysis of Achilles Tatius, on the relation between narration and description in ancient rhetorical theory, most of rhetorical theory on description will be dealt with in Chapter One. This will allow us, starting from Chapter Two, to examine the Greek novels systematically in order to evaluate the role played by works of art in the genre. As will be clear, there is more to art in the novels than just descriptions of paintings, and, in addition to this, even descriptions of paintings need to be assessed with a new approach which explains their presence as well as their evolution. In doing this, this thesis will achieve two main aims. The first one is to provide a close reading of all relevant passages, including comparison with ample external material which will facilitate their contextualisation and interpretation. The second one is to build a unitary vision of the novelists' use of works of art in the novels, considering it as a feature of the genre which belonged to it since its beginning and evolved following a coherent pattern whereby novelists innovated on the work of their predecessors.

Ekphrasis of works of art and *Progymnasmata*

With regard to the theme of works of art in the novels, scholars, as already mentioned, have mostly been interested in the descriptions of paintings, and to a lesser extent of other artifacts, found in the later novels. This is certainly due to the fact that those are the most imposing displays of works of art in the genre, but also to the fact that they seemed to provide very patent, and convenient, links between novels and rhetoric, which were central to how the novels were understood by early scholarship, as we will shortly see. Another thing to notice is that the descriptions of paintings were considered on a par with the other detailed descriptions which occur often in later novels. To name a few: Achilles Tatius describes a garden, a storm, the city of Alexandria, the river Nile, and animals; Longus is particularly fond of naturalistic descriptions of landscapes but also of seasons, and Heliodorus does not spare words when it comes to describing pretty much anything encountered by the characters of his novel, from landscapes to battles, villages, caves, festivals, and animals. These descriptive digressions have a length that often appears to be disproportionate to the surrounding text, to the point that the passages constitute a pause in the sequence of events, and an obstacle to the reader's clear following of the story.¹ The appreciation of these descriptions is also complicated by the fact that it is sometimes difficult to understand *prima facie* their relevance. Moreover, they display a structure and a language that makes all of them rather similar, giving the impression of a standard formula used over and over only with different subjects, and at times even with the same ones. This view is strengthened by the fact that, as it is agreed, the novelists underwent rhetorical training, which included learning how to write a description (*ekphrasis*): both the technique and the subjects suggested by ancient rhetoricians match the examples found in the novels. It is easy to see how the consequent apparent lack of originality, coupled with the problematic abundance of narrative pauses, which frustrates the readers, resulted, in the eyes of early scholarship, in a loss of literary value.

Starting from this premise, this chapter begins with a review of how scholarship has treated *ekphrasis* of works of art in the novels, pointing out how its connection to rhetorical theory needs to be reassessed. It will then move on to a closer analysis of the theory of *ekphrasis*, and then of *ekphrasis* of works of art, in the *Progymnasmata*, in order first of all to learn its rules, and secondly to suggest that it was likely the practice of *ekphrasis* of paintings, exemplified by Achilles Tatius, Lucian, and later rhetoricians, that influenced rhetorical theory, and not the other way round.

¹ See Chapter 3.1 for more considerations on the relationship between description and narration. On speed of narrative, that is, the relationship between the duration of the story and the length of the text, and narrative pause see Genette 1972, 123 ff.

1.1. Greek novels and *ekphrasis* of works of art in the eyes of scholarship

German scholars of the nineteenth century recognised the influence of rhetoric in the novels and had no doubts in classifying them as products of the Second Sophistic, capitalising on descriptions as one of their most evident proofs.² Erwin Rohde drew a parallel between the activity of the sophist, eager to impress the audience with a superficial show of form to which no depth of content corresponded,³ and that of the novelist, and poured his negative judgement from the former onto the latter. He had in mind the sophists' declamations, especially those that contained *ekphrasis* of works of art,⁴ and, when analysing, for example, Achilles Tatius' descriptions, did not hesitate to ascribe them to the same kind of rhetorical ostentation,⁵ to the point that his view of *Leucippe and Clitophon* is that the story is just an excuse to display digressions.

From this point of view things did not change drastically even after the discovery of the fragments of the Ninus romance, which demonstrated that the Greek novel already existed before the period of the Second Sophistic, and thus to the identification of two distinct phases in its development, a pre-sophistic one, already containing all the constituent elements of the genre, and a sophistic one, which shows the introduction to the novels of a considerable mass of rhetorical material.⁶ Even in the eyes of Rohde's detractors, digressions were still a bulky remnant of the schools of rhetoric: 'Certain others [innovations], consisting mainly of digressions superimposed on the story, seem not to have any value for the development of the novel as such but to be carried over into it from the curricula of academic prose writing, the orientation of which in that age was scientific by pretension, or rhetorically epideictic.'⁷ Despite the major change in perspective, scholars of the novels maintained a firm view on the digressive inserts: Rohde may have got his chronology completely wrong, but there was no questioning his reconstruction of the rhetorical

² Even before Rohde's famous reconstruction, already in Nicolai 1867, 51: 'Sie waren Rhetoren und Sophisten. Zu demselben Schlusse führt die Betrachtung jenes gelehrten Beiwerks, das sich in den Romanen findet, und auf das schon oben hingedeutet wurde. Malerei, Gartenkunst, Grammatik, Kriegskunst, Philosophie, Geographie, Geschichte, Mythologie, Jurisprudenz, Naturgeschichte, Theologie, - fast alle Zweige des damaligen Wissens haben zu der gelehrten Ausstaffierung dieser Romane beitragen müssen'. Notice that the first two points (Malerei and Gartenkunst) are, in the novels, instances of descriptions. See also Norden 1898, 434 ff.

³ Rohde 1876³, 348: 'Freilich war diese Art empfindungsloser Schönrederei die notwendige Frucht einer bis zur höchsten Stufe der technischen Entwicklung getriebenen Redekunst, welche, von jedem substantiellen Hintergrund losgelöst, nun für sich allein souverän sein wollte. Die Redekunst als solche hat es –trotz aller Versicherungen der Rhetoren, daß nur der beste Mensch der beste Redner sein könne– mit Wahrheit des Inhalts, Aufrichtigkeit der Gesinnung, Echtheit der Empfindung durchaus nicht zu tun'.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 360.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 512: 'von sonstigen rhetorischen Prachtstücken, die mit der Erzählung selbst noch weniger zu tun haben: Beschreibungen von Bildern, Schilderungen aus der Naturgeschichte und dem Menschenleben, Erzählungen alter Mythen und äsopischer Fabeln usw'. Notice that the first element of the list of rhetorical borrowings is, as in Nicolai, the description of paintings.

⁶ Perry 1967, 108 ff. On the failure of Rohde's reconstruction see also Reardon 1991, 9 ff.

⁷ Perry 1967, 118.

frame of the later novels, and, subordinately, his opinion about it.⁸ Scholars of digressive inserts, and especially of *ekphrasis*, however, came to different conclusions.

In 1912 Paul Friedländer published the poems of the sixth-century poets John of Gaza and Paul the Silentiary, consisting of the *ekphrasis* of, respectively, a painting of the universe and the cathedral of Hagia Sophia. The introduction to this is a survey of the description of works of art in the main genres of ancient literature, which still constitutes an indispensable study on the subject.⁹ Already the order of Friedländer's chapters paints a different picture regarding descriptions of works of art in the novels: the novel is analysed after epic, drama, and historiography, and before epigram, letters, philosophical allegories, and rhetoric. Concerning the novels, Friedländer's idea is that rhetoric cannot be accounted as the sole (and not even as the major) factor responsible for the presence of *ekphrasis* of works of art.¹⁰ This must be considered the continuation of a feature that had been part of literature since Homer's description of the shield of Achilles and passed down through different genres,¹¹ and that in the novels shows the influence of epic, Alexandrian poetry, and periegesis in particular. Concerning function, Friedländer also noticed that the paintings described in Achilles Tatius act as anticipations of the events to come in the story, thus underlining their close connection with the text against the previously held opinion that they were marginal and purely ornamental. He ascribes to Hellenistic poetry this habit of producing descriptions of works of art that were important for the work as a whole. As for the schools of rhetoric, their contribution was merely stylistic: they provided refined linguistic tools for the descriptions, but not the substance.

The coordinates of the origin of the novels' use of *ekphrasis* of paintings are open to debate. Harlan agrees with Friedländer except on two points.¹² First of all, she takes the schools of rhetoric, whose influence Friedländer had greatly decreased, completely out of the equation, and distinguishes between rhetorical *ekphrasis* on the one hand (always digressional, and itself divided into two traditions, one coming from historiography, the other from literary descriptions of *loci amoeni*), and description of painting, which is always symbolic and never defined as *ekphrasis* (until the fourth century). Secondly, she sees the origin of descriptions of paintings in allegorical descriptions told by sophists for moralising purposes, a possibility which Friedländer had ruled

⁸ Bartsch has collected some of these opinions, showing that they persisted through the greater part of the last century. See Bartsch 1989, 4-5. To these one could add Garson's comment on the paintings in Achilles Tatius: 'Thematically these pictures are irrelevant to the plot and structurally they contribute nothing' (Garson 1978, 85).

⁹ 'Einleitung über die Beschreibung von Kunstwerken in der antiken Literatur', in Friedländer 1912, 1-103. A similar task was later undertaken by Palm 1965-66.

¹⁰ Friedländer 1912, 47-55.

¹¹ A tradition Rohde was obviously not unaware of (see Rohde 1876³, 360, n. 3), but whose influence he subordinated to that of the schools of rhetoric.

¹² For this see Chapters One and Two of Harlan 1965.

out.¹³ Palm is more cautious in tracing clear-cut origins, though the order in which he discusses literary genres is telling, especially if compared with Friedländer's: epic, drama, Hellenistic poetry, epigrams, philosophical allegories, rhetoric, periegesis, and then novels, followed only by Nonnus and Quintus Smyrnaeus. Concerning Achilles Tatius, he stresses the tourist-motif that introduces the descriptions of paintings and the activity of interpretation related to them, and connects them to Lucian and Philostratus.¹⁴

In spite of their differences, the studies by Harlan and Palm confirm something that Friedländer's work had underlined in contrast with previous scholars, that is, that different attention should be paid to *ekphrasis* of works of art and *ekphrasis* of any other subject. The former has a distinguished tradition and a particular connotation (which we will analyse later on) that isolate it from the latter, and give a more prominent position to it.¹⁵ This principle, which Friedländer and Palm used to outline the history of *ekphrasis*, is reflected in the novels. Achilles Tatius has many descriptions, but the descriptions of paintings are predominant in terms of position, length, and influence in the story. In a similar way, Longus abounds with descriptions of nature, but everything he describes in the novel is contained in the description of the painting found in the prologue. To a certain extent, we find this distinction also in the handbooks used in the educational programmes of the schools of rhetoric that formed the class of men of letters the novelists came from. The handbooks trained students in the description of places (like gardens, landscapes and cities), or of events (like a storm or a battle), or of people and animals, but they did not prescribe, at least until the handbook written by Nicolaus in the late fifth century (thus well after the last of the novelists), the description of works of art.¹⁶ As a consequence, there is no doubting the influence of rhetoric on the majority of instances of *ekphrasis* in the novels, but its influence on *ekphrasis* of works of art needs to be re-evaluated.¹⁷

To be more precise about the schools of rhetoric and the chronology of rhetorical *ekphrasis*, the handbooks referred to above are the *Progymnasmata*, the first extant example of which was written by Aelius Theon in the first century AD. Schools of rhetoric had obviously been around for much longer, as had the exercises employed in them, on which we possess little information and no organised handbook.¹⁸ An increasing number of references to a structured set of exercises can be

¹³ Harlan 1965, 17; Friedländer 1912, 77.

¹⁴ Palm 1965-66, 183 ff.

¹⁵ Cf. also Palm 1965-66, 117.

¹⁶ Friedländer 1912, 85, Harlan 1965, 9 ff., Webb 2009, 82.

¹⁷ This will be treated more extensively in the next chapter.

¹⁸ On this see Kennedy 1959.

found in Latin rhetorical treatises of the first century BC, but there is no mention of *ekphrasis*.¹⁹ The earliest occurrence of the word is uncertain.²⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first century BC) uses it in *On imitation* 3,8 when criticising the historian Philistos' descriptions, but since what we have of the treatise comes from a later epitome, the dating cannot be sure.²¹ Something similar can be said for the spurious treatise *Ars rhetorica*, which is attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus but likely dates from the late second or third century. It is interesting that both, regardless of their attribution, are instances of criticism. In *Ars rhetorica* 10,17 the author is complaining about the excesses of the declamations (*meletai*), and in particular about the extreme use of *ekphrasis*, which is just an empty show of words, completely out of place in a trial.²² He understands the origin of such practice to be the works of historians and poets whom students want to emulate, although he admits ignorance as to the reason why *ekphraseis* are in those works in the first place.

The reason can be that descriptions are in some degree present in every narrative, and they were certainly abundant in the texts of the Archaic and Classical periods (Homer, Thucydides, the orators, etc.) which were studied and learnt by heart in school. It is therefore important to distinguish the instances of description found in ancient literature and used as models (and defined as *ekphrasis* by teachers of rhetoric), from the rhetorical *ekphrasis* proper, which originated as an exercise in schools and found its way into declamations and into literary works of the Imperial age. The rhetors catalogued the former and inferred rules from it in order to teach it, which resulted in the latter being standardised and usable at will, with a corresponding loss of originality and significance. It is in this form that *ekphrasis* became very popular among rhetoricians (possibly, with Dionysius, as early as the first century BC, or, with Theon, in the first century AD) and, in the second and third century, especially among the exponents of the so-called Second Sophistic. *Ekphrasis* of works of art, as has already been said, had a different history. By studying ancient authors, students of rhetoric certainly came across the famous instances of descriptions of works of art, but there is no evidence that this kind of description underwent the same categorisation as the others, at least not until the fifth century.²³

¹⁹ Friedländer 1912, 84, Kennedy 2003, x-xii. Quintilian, living at roughly the same time as Theon, also mentions several exercises in *Institutio oratoria*, but description is not one of them.

²⁰ For the ancient use of the word '*ekphrasis*' see Harlan 1965, 45-51, and especially Webb 1999.

²¹ See Webb 2009, 39.

²² Similarly, Lucian criticises the historians of his times who make excessive and irrelevant use of *ekphrasis* in *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 19 ff.

²³ Descriptions like the shield of Achilles in Homer, the shield of Heracles in Hesiod, the pictures in the temple in Euripides' *Ion*, Jason's cloak in Apollonius, to name a few. To be sure, the shield of Achilles was a case study, but was always considered as a weapon and not a work of art. A more detailed analysis of the treatment of the shield in the *Progymnasmata* will follow in the next chapter.

The first rhetorical *ekphrasis* of a work of art cannot be dated with precision.²⁴ The *Suda* mentions that the rhetor Nicostratus wrote, among other equally lost works, *Eikones*. He is said to be a contemporary of Aelius Aristides and Dio Chrysostom (who were not, strictly speaking, contemporaries), which points to the second century, and he might well be the same Nicostratus mentioned by Philostratus in the *Lives of the Sophists* 2,31 (his *Eikones*, however, are not mentioned by Philostratus), which would strengthen the hypothesis of a second-century dating. Given the time in which it was written and its subject matter, Nicostratus' *Eikones* probably dealt with *ekphrasis*, but it is impossible to say whether the form it took was closer to Lucian's *Eikones*, Philostratus' *Eikones*, or something altogether different.²⁵ Friedländer indicates Lucian's *De domo* as the oldest extant rhetorical *ekphrasis* of a work of art, seeing in it almost the manifesto of what in the following century was to become an autonomous literary genre.²⁶ To name the most famous examples, after the *ekphraseis* of paintings in Lucian, often used as introduction to speeches (*prolaliai*), we have the third-century *Imagines* by The Elder and the Younger Philostratus, the fourth-century *Statuarum descriptiones* by Callistratus, the *ekphraseis* in Himerius' speeches, and those in Libanius' exercises.²⁷ Rohde read all of Achilles Tatius' *ekphraseis* as sophistic products, and since he dated him to the fifth century, he linked, reasonably enough, his *ekphraseis* of works of art to the kind written by the authors just mentioned. As is now widely believed, however, Achilles Tatius wrote in the second century, thus at the same time as Lucian, not only at a time when theory of rhetorical *ekphrasis* of works of art had not developed, but also when actual *ekphraseis* of works of art were only just starting to appear in declamations. If we add the fact that the dating of Lucian's dialogues is uncertain, and that there could be evidence that Lucian was aware of Achilles Tatius' descriptions of paintings, then it becomes difficult to find a rhetorical *ekphrasis* of a work of art that antedates the novelist's.²⁸ At the very least, Achilles Tatius wrote

²⁴ See Harlan 1965, 66.

²⁵ *Suda* also mentions a Pamphilus who wrote *Eikones kata stoikheion* (*Images in alphabetical order*) and *Peri graphikês kai zôgraphôn endoxôn* (*On painting and famous painters*). Uncertainty about his origin (Amphipolis, Sicyon, or Nicopolis), as well as other slightly incoherent information (he is said to be a philosopher, and the other works by him that are mentioned are a *Tekhnê grammatikê* and three books of *Geôrgika*), suggest that perhaps different figures merged into this entry in *Suda*. Therefore, it is possible that the author of *Eikones kata stoikheion* and *Peri graphikês kai zôgraphôn endoxôn* was the fourth-century BC painter Pamphilus of Amphipolis, teacher of Apelles and founder of the school of Sicyon (cf. Plin. *NH* 35,44). Judging by the early dating and the title, *Eikones kata stoikheion* is more likely to have been a list of famous paintings than a collection of *ekphraseis* in the Philostratean manner. Both Pamphilus and Nicostratus are reported by Matz as the forerunners of rhetorical *ekphrasis* of works of art. See Matz 1867, 8.

²⁶ Friedländer 1912, 87.

²⁷ See Bartsch 1989, 15-31 for a survey.

²⁸ The stress is on *rhetorical ekphrasis*. There is no doubt that we find the description of a painting in Pseudo-Cebes' *Tabula*. Even though its dating is uncertain, and estimates range from the fourth century BC to the second AD (Lucian mentions him twice in connection with the *Tabula*, in *De merc. cond.* 42, and *Rhet. praec.* 6), the use of paintings for philosophical purposes is reported by Cicero as well (*De finibus* 2,69). Matz (*op. cit.*, 5 ff.) and Rohde (*op. cit.*, 360, n.

before *ekphrasis* of works of art became a feature so popular that it had its own genre, and long before it became the ordinary, prearranged, ever-repeated practice that attracted Rohde's scorn, which should encourage us to look for creativity rather than cliché when reading his descriptions of paintings.

The appreciation of works of literature of the Imperial age, especially the novels, has changed radically since Rohde's times, as has the way in which products of the Sophistic are regarded, the complexity of which, as well as its exponents' cultivation, is beyond question. For instance, the opinion that Achilles Tatius' digressions are incoherently attached to the story and hinder its reading has been replaced by the opinion that very little in his novel is the product of borrowing due to lack of ideas or for ornamental purposes, and that the author was instead very careful in selecting his material and clever in modifying and arranging it in order to serve the narration. Most famously, the function of the descriptions of paintings has been reassessed by Bartsch, who researched the links between them and the story and highlighted the intricacy of the author's narrative strategy.²⁹ At the same time, the genre of *ekphrasis* of works of art has received wide attention,³⁰ as has, more recently, the study of *ekphrasis* from the point of view of rhetorical theory.³¹ What has not, however, is the relationship between the presence of *ekphrasis* of art in the novels and the tradition of rhetorical *ekphrasis* of art. Considering Achilles Tatius as one of the forerunners of this feature changes considerably the way in which we look at its whole development, and draws attention to the novels as possible important contributors to the general interest in art literature of the Imperial age.

Furthering this investigation, we will now take a closer look at the *Progymnasmata*, which have so far only been mentioned. The rest of the chapter will scrutinise their instructions on *ekphrasis* and on *ekphrasis* of works of art, setting a theoretical foundation for the rest of the thesis. This analysis will also point out, again and in greater detail, that there is no evidence that *ekphrasis* of paintings was an exercise at the time of the first *ekphrasis* of a painting in the genre novel.

3) agree that that isolated kind of allegorical description of a painting needs to be considered separately from rhetorical *ekphrasis*, on account of its lack of stylistic artifice, but see, *contra*, Harlan 1965, 52 ff., 67.

²⁹ Bartsch 1989.

³⁰ See for instance the works of Jaś Elsner (Elsner 2002, and Bartsch and Elsner 2007).

³¹ Especially Webb 1999 and 2009.

1.2. Nature and purpose of the *Progymnasmata*

What we know of rhetorical exercises comes from the *Progymnasmata*, the handbooks containing instructions on the parts of speech and how to strengthen one's skills in each of them.³² The surviving *Progymnasmata* are the works attributed to Aelius Theon (first century AD), Ps.-Hermogenes (third century), Aphthonius (second half of fourth century), and Nicolaus (second half of fifth century).³³ The *Progymnasmata* are divided into chapters, each dedicated to one exercise meant to improve single features of speech. The order of the exercises, which, apart from a few variations, is similar in all the handbooks, reflects an increase in the difficulty of the exercises, in order for the students to start with something easy and very approachable, and then move on to more serious compositions once the basics are acquired. So, for instance, the first exercise is usually (with the exception of Theon) a fable, a fictitious story in the style of Aesop containing a meaning, something simple to compose and with which the students would have been acquainted since childhood, while the last one is, without exception, the introduction of a law, an exercise with a very practical and more demanding purpose. This is the usual order of the exercises: *mythos* (fable), *diêgêma* (narrative, the exposition of something that has happened or as if it happened), *khreia* (recollection of a saying or an action referred to a person, with a meaning), *gnômê* (discussion of a maxim), *kataskeuê* and *anaskeuê* (confirmation or refutation of a matter), *koinos topos* (speech which amplifies an evil or a good deed), *enkômion* (exposition of good qualities) and its opposite, *psogos* (invective), *synkrisis* (comparison of similar or dissimilar things), *êthopoia* (delineation of a character), *ekphrasis* (descriptive language), *thesis* (discussion of a general question), and *nomou eisphora* (introduction of a law).

Some exercises, for example *enkômion*, could end up constituting a speech on their own, while most of them were intended to be parts the combination of which constituted the speech (a defensive plea in court for example would have used, among others, *diêgêma* and *êthopoia*). Moreover, and the rhetors are aware of this, there is often an overlap between different exercises, because of the impossibility of separating them entirely (the praise of something, for instance, will likely contain its description). Each exercise served one or more of the three genres into which rhetoric had, as a result of a long tradition, been divided: deliberative, judicial, and epideictic (Aristotle, *Ars rhetorica* 1358b). It is clear that an exercise such as *nomou eisphora* would have contributed on its own to a deliberative speech, whereas one such as *enkômion* would have

³² The most detailed studies on the *Progymnasmata* are those by Ruth Webb, who pays special attention to the role of *ekphrasis*. See Webb 1999, Webb 2001, Webb 2009. For a translation see Kennedy 2003.

³³ The are problems surrounding the dating and attribution of early *Progymnasmata*. See Patillon 1997, vii-xvi, for Aelius Theon, and Patillon 2008, 165-70, for Ps.-Hermogenes. See also Patillon 2008, 49-52, for the dating of Aphthonius.

constituted an autonomous demonstrative speech. Others would have applied to all kinds of rhetoric, but with different purposes in each case. *Symcrisis*, for example, ‘is useful in judicial speeches when we compare either wrongs to wrongs or good deeds to good deeds, and similarly in encomia when we contrast good deeds; its advantage for deliberative speeches is also very clear, for speeches of advisers are concerned with which policy is preferred’ (Theon 60,31-61,6, trans. Kennedy).

In order to exemplify the ideas involved in the exercises, the rhetors often recur to specimens taken from authors of the past (Homer is among the most preferred sources, together with historians and orators). The approach that the rhetors have to ancient texts is a very practical one: the examples are decontextualised in order to be analysed as cases of study, and literary value is rarely attached to the references. Apart from glimpses of stylistic appreciation of a Thucydides or a Demosthenes, ancient authors are used as a database of samples, and more often than not the same examples are used by different rhetors. The lack of appreciation is justified by the practical purpose and by no means undermines the fact that the rhetors viewed the works of the past as the peaks of literature of all times, and that the standards set by them were still the perfect models to be emulated.

As the final point of this brief survey, it is important to reflect on the function of the *Progymnasmata*. Since they are rhetorical exercises, they will be concerned with the same thing that rhetoric is concerned with, and that is persuasion, as stated very clearly by Aristotle (*Ars Rhetorica* 1355b).³⁴ The aim of a speech is to persuade the audience and bring it to your side, whether in the deliberative, where the purpose is to advise in favour or against a proposition, in the judicial, where the purpose is to defend or accuse in a trial, or in the epideictic, where the purpose is to praise or blame. Rhetoric provided the tools to be good at it, and the *Progymnasmata* provided exercises in order to practise and perfect those tools. The first reason why students would undergo such education (and the reason why their fathers would pay for it), was not to become good writers or to appreciate the glories of literature, but to become good lawyers, politicians, or men of public affairs, and make money out of it.³⁵ This background is fundamental in order to understand the reason why descriptions, otherwise usually related to literature, became a studied rhetorical technique with its own rules, the acquisition of which was vital to the rhetors.

³⁴ See also 1356a: διὰ δὲ τοῦ λόγου πιστεύουσιν, ὅταν ἀληθὲς ἢ φαινόμενον δείξωμεν ἐκ τῶν περὶ ἕκαστα πιθανῶν.

³⁵ On education in this period see Morgan 1998.

1.3. Nature and purpose of *ekphrasis*

Ekphrasis was but one of these exercises, though one of the more complicated. It is defined almost invariably as ‘λόγος περιηγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπ’ ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον’, a descriptive speech that brings what is shown clearly before the eyes.³⁶ Why would this be important for an orator? The authors of the *Progymnasmata*, at least the early ones, are not very keen on providing a reason for this. The closest thing to an indication of purpose to be found in Theon is in his introduction:

ὁ δὲ καλούμενος τόπος καὶ ἡ ἔκφρασις προφανῆ τὴν ὠφέλειαν ἔχουσι, πανταχοῦ τῶν παλαιῶν τῶν μὲν ἱστορικῶν πάντων ἐπὶ πλεῖστον τῇ ἐκφράσει, τῶν δὲ ῥητορικῶν τῷ τόπῳ κεχρημένων.

What is called *topos* and *ekphrasis* have very clear benefit, since the ancients have used these everywhere, all historical writers using *ekphrasis* very frequently and orators using *topos*.³⁷
(60,19-22)

Ekphrasis is useful because all the ancient historical writers use it everywhere. Nothing more specific will be said in the section dedicated to *ekphrasis*. Ps.-Hermogenes, a far more concise author than Theon and the others, says nothing about the purposes of *ekphrasis*, nor does Aphthonius. The first of the authors of the *Progymnasmata* to state why a rhetor should be well versed in descriptions is Nicolaus, but this means that in the handbooks we have no indication of this until the fifth century AD. This should not indicate that the teachers of rhetoric did not know what they were teaching and why, but, more likely, that it was already understood by all and did not need to be stated.

For us to understand it, it is necessary to refer to Quintilian in the *Institutio oratoria*, a work that has a higher aim than the *Progymnasmata*, but that at the same time shares and deepens some of their technical aspects. In 4,2,64 Quintilian explains the virtues of vividness (*evidentia*), called *enargeia* in Greek. As we will see, *enargeia* is the main engine of *ekphrasis*:

Evidentia in narratione, quantum ego intellego, est quidem magna virtus, cum quid

³⁶ Such is Theon's definition (118,7). The one given by other authors changes only in the order of the words. The only significant change can be found in Nicolaus (68 Felten), who defines it as λόγος ἀφηγηματικὸς. The implications of this will be considered shortly.

³⁷ The Greek text used for Theon is that established by Patillon 1997; as for the other authors of *Progymnasmata*, Patillon 2008 was used for Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius, Felten 1913 for Nicolaus, and Rabe 1926 for John of Sardis. Unless otherwise specified, all translations of passages from the *Progymnasmata* are taken from Kennedy 2003 and sometimes adapted.

veri non dicendum sed quodammodo etiam ostendendum est, sed subici perspicuitati potest.

As to vividness, it is, to my understanding, undoubtedly an important virtue of Narrative, when a truth requires not only to be told but in a sense to be presented to the sight.

(trans. Russell)

As specified further on in 6,2, a description powered by *enargeia* can turn the audience into spectators, which leads to them feeling part of the scene that is being described. The benefits, say in a trial for murder, of having the audience see the crime scene with the eyes of the defendant, are obviously many. Moreover, it can direct the audience and the judge's emotions, which is oratory's most important contribution:

ubi vero animis iudicum vis adferenda est et ab ipsa veri contemplatione abducenda mens, ibi proprium oratoris opus est.

But where force has to be brought to bear on the judge's feelings and their minds distracted from the truth, there the orator's true work begins.

(6,2,5, trans. Russell)

When at the beginning of *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* Lysias makes Euphiletos say to the judges that he will show them everything (ἐγὼ τοίνυν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὑμῖν ἅπαντα ἐπιδείξω τὰ ἑμαυτοῦ πράγματα, 1,5), and when shortly after that he starts describing the house where the adultery and the murder took place (Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν, ὦ ἄνδρες, δεῖ γὰρ καὶ ταῦθ' ὑμῖν διηγῆσασθαι οἰκίδιον ἔστι μοι διπλοῦν, 1,9), the aim is precisely that. When given the full perception of the event, the audience can almost become witnesses of it, and this is the very practical reason why students of oratory should master *ekphrasis*.³⁸

Compared with the *Progymnasmata* written by the others, those written by Nicolaus show, beside the practical information, a more theoretical approach to the subject. In the introduction he returns to the Aristotelian categories and points out the persuasive purpose clearly. In commenting on the definition of rhetoric written by a certain Diodorus,³⁹ Nicolaus says:

πρόσκειται δὲ “τῶν ἐνδεχομένων πιθανῶν ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ” διὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς ῥητορικῆς, ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο αὐτῆς τέλος τὸ πειστικῶς εἰπεῖν κατὰ τὸ

³⁸ Webb 2009, 88-90.

³⁹ 2 Felten: ῥητορικὴ ἐστὶ δύναμις εὐρετικὴ καὶ ἐρμηνευτικὴ μετὰ κόσμου τῶν ἐνδεχομένων πιθανῶν ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ, ‘rhetoric is a *dynamis* of invention and expression, with ornament, of the available means of persuasion in every discourse’. This Diodorus, or Theodorus, is not identified. His definition follows closely the one given by Aristotle in *Ars rhetorica* 1355b.

ἐνδεχόμενον.

The phrase “the available means of persuasion in every discourse” is added because of the end of rhetoric, since its end is to speak persuasively in accord with what is available.

(2 Felten)

The main aim of rhetoric is to be persuasive. He then moves on to the classical division of rhetoric into three genres (δικανικόν, συμβουλευτικόν, πανηγυρικόν),⁴⁰ and specifies the purpose of each.⁴¹ The aim of judicial speech is the just (τὸ δίκαιον), that of the deliberative is the advantageous (τὸ συμφέρον), and that of panegyric is the excellent (τὸ καλόν). Towards the end of the introduction, after dividing speech into its five parts, Nicolaus links once again the *Progymnasmata* with the aims of rhetoric:

Αὕτη δὲ ἡ διαίρεσις ἡμῖν γέγονε διὰ τὸ δηλωθῆναι τὸ ἐκ τῶν προγυμνασμάτων ὄφελος. τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἡμᾶς πρὸς τὸ δικανικόν γυμνάζει, τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὸ συμβουλευτικόν, τὰ δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὸ τρίτον, τὸ πανηγυρικόν.

We have made this division of the subject to clarify the advantage coming from progymnasmata. Some of them practice us for judicial speech, some for deliberative, and some for the third, the panegyrical.

(5 Felten)

After this foreword it is no wonder that when it comes to the individual exercises Nicolaus will always go back to the main purposes and establish the relationship to them. When discussing *ekphrasis* he says that descriptions are useful for all three species of rhetoric, and explains why.⁴² According to Nicolaus, *ekphrasis* is useful for all three kinds of rhetoric. In deliberative rhetoric, best exemplified by the proposal of a new law, or of measures in war, and the like, *ekphrasis* will be

⁴⁰ The only difference from Aristotle (*Ars rhetorica* 1358b: συμβουλευτικόν, δικανικόν, ἐπιδεικτικόν) is in the term used by the latter to define demonstrative rhetoric.

⁴¹ 4 Felten: καὶ ἔστι τοῦ μὲν δικανικοῦ ἴδιον πᾶν τὸ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ καὶ ἀπολογίᾳ, τέλος δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ δίκαιον· τοῦ δὲ συμβουλευτικοῦ προτροπή καὶ ἀποτροπή, τέλος δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ συμφέρον· τοῦ δὲ πανηγυρικοῦ τὸ ἐγκωμιαστικόν καὶ ψεκτικόν, τὸ καὶ ἐπιδεικτικόν, τέλος δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ καλόν, ‘everything in accusation and defense is specific to judicial rhetoric, and its end is the just; exhortation and dissuasion belong to deliberative, and its end is the advantageous; of panegyric, also (called) epideictic, the forms are the encomiastic and invective, and its objective is the excellent. Cf. *Ars rhetorica* 1358b, where Aristotle adds for each positive aim its negative counterpart.

⁴² 70 Felten: Τριῶν δὲ ὄντων εἰδῶν, τοῦ τε δικανικοῦ λέγω καὶ πανηγυρικοῦ καὶ συμβουλευτικοῦ, ἐν πᾶσιν ἡ χρεία τοῦ προγυμνάσματος τούτου εὔρεθήσεται· καὶ γὰρ συμβουλευόντες πολλάκις ἀνάγκην ἔχομεν ἐκφράσαι τοῦτο, περὶ οὗ ποιούμεθα τοὺς λόγους, ἵνα μᾶλλον πείσωμεν, καὶ κατηγοροῦντες ἢ ἀπολογούμενοι δεόμεθα τῆς ἐκ τοῦ ἐκφράζειν ἀξήσεως, καὶ μέντοι καὶ ἐν πανηγυρικαῖς ὑποθέσεσιν ἰκανὸν τὸ τῆς ἐκφράσεως ἡδονὴν ἐμποιῆσαι τοῖς ἐν θεάτροις καθημένοις, ‘There being three kinds of rhetoric, I mean judicial and panegyric and deliberative, this progymnasma will be found useful for all; for in deliberative speaking we often encounter a necessity to describe the thing about which we are making the speech, in order to be more persuasive, and in prosecuting or defending we need the amplification that comes from making an ecphrasis, and, of course, in panegyric subjects the element of ecphrasis is capable of producing pleasure in theatre-audiences’.

needed in order to describe to the audience what the situation would be like in case the proposal is voted or not, thus contributing to convincing them. In judicial rhetoric one will need to amplify (τῆς ἐκ τοῦ ἐκφράζειν ἀυξήσεως) the accusational or defensive speeches in order to win the trial. And finally, in panegyric rhetoric, the *ekphrasis* of the object described will enhance the praise and produce pleasure (τῆς ἐκφράσεως ἡδονῆν). A commentary to Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata* attributed to John of Sardis (ninth century AD) provides similar information.⁴³

Now that the purposes of *ekphrasis* as they are expressed in the *Progymnasmata* have been outlined, let us examine the constituent elements of *ekphrasis*, starting from its subjects.⁴⁴ All the authors of *Progymnasmata* include among the subjects of *ekphrasis*: *prosōpa* (people), *pragmata* (actions, events), *topoi* (places), and *khronoi* (periods of time). Individual authors add *tropoi* (ways in which objects are made, in Theon), *kairoi* (occasions, in Ps.-Hermogenes) or *panêgureis* (festivals, in Nicolaus), or even *aloga zōa* and *phyta* (dumb animals and plants, in Aphthonius), but the four main recognised categories already speak for an almost all-inclusive range of possible subjects for *ekphrasis*.

As to the order in which things should be described, students are advised to proceed part by part, according to the nature of the subject described. In case of *pragmata*, an *ekphrasis* should describe what happened before them, what was included in them, and what resulted from them (Theon, Ps.-Hermogenes, and Aphthonius all agree on this). In case of *topoi*, *khronoi*, and *prosōpa* (to which Theon adds *tropoi*), Theon and Ps.-Hermogenes say that *ekphrasis* should extract material from the narration (διήγησις) of what needs to be described and start from what is excellent (ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ), useful (ἐκ τοῦ χρησίμου), and pleasant (ἐκ τοῦ ἡδέος, but Ps.-Hermogenes substitutes this with παραδόξου, 'what is strange') about it. Aphthonius says that the subjects of these *ekphraseis* should be described from first thing to last, from head to feet in case of *prosōpa*, from surroundings (ἐκ τῶν περιεχόντων) and contents (ἐν αὐτοῖς ὑπαρχόντων) in case of *kairoi* and *topoi*. The only discordant note comes from Nicolaus, who takes into consideration entirely different subjects and adds interesting perspectives to the first-thing-to-last formula:

⁴³ 215 Rabe: Χρησιμώταται δὲ αἱ ἐκφράσεις εἰσὶν εἰς τὰ τρία εἶδη τῆς ῥητορικῆς· ἐκφράσεις γὰρ ἐν ἐγκωμίοις ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν δημιουργηθέντας τόπους, λιμένας, στοὰς καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα· ἐν δίκαις ὁμοίως τόπους, περὶ οὓς ἡ δίκη καὶ περὶ ὧν δεῖξαι τι κατεπίγει τοῖς δικασταῖς· ὡσαύτως καὶ ἐν συμβολαῖς· καὶ γὰρ συμβουλευόντες πολλάκις ἀνάγκη ἔχομεν ἐκφράσαι τοῦτο, περὶ οὗ ποιοῦμεθα τοὺς λόγους, ἵνα μᾶλλον πείσωμεν, 'Ecphrases are most useful for all three species of rhetoric; for in encomia you will describe the places, harbours, stoas, and such things built by men; in judicial speeches, similarly, the places with which the trial is concerned and which you are impelled to make known to the judges. Much the same in deliberations; for in deliberative speeches we often must describe what we are talking about in order to be more persuasive'.

⁴⁴ On this see Webb 2009, 61 ff., and the useful chart at 213-14.

Δεῖ δὲ, ἡνίκα ἂν ἐκφράζωμεν καὶ μάλιστα ἀγάλματα τυχὸν ἢ εἰκόνας ἢ εἴ τι ἄλλο τοιοῦτον, πειρᾶσθαι λογισμοῦς προστιθέναι τοῦ τοιοῦδε ἢ τοιοῦδε παρὰ τοῦ γραφέως ἢ πλάστου σχήματος.

We must, particularly when we describe statues for example, or paintings or things of this sort, try to add reasons (*logismoî*) why the painter or sculptor depicted things in certain ways.

(69 Felten, trans. Webb 2009, 203)

The other subjects of *ekphrasis* are summarised quite briefly by Nicolaus, whose list (*topoi, khronoi, prosôpa, panêgureis, pragmata*) follows the canonical one and only adds festivals (*panêgureis*). Unlike the other authors, Nicolaus does not explain how to compose the *ekphrasis* of a battle or a person, but instead considers a category omitted in previous *Progymnasmata*, that is, works of art.

1.4. *Ekphrasis* of works of art

1.4.1. The shield of Achilles in the *Progymnasmata*

The very notion of *ekphrasis* is usually associated by modern scholars with works of art, which is corroborated by the fact that what is considered to be the first *ekphrasis* of Greek literature, and therefore the mother of all *ekphraseis*, is the description of a work of art, the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*. That the fact that we understand *ekphrasis* to be the description of a work of art reflects the modern view much more than the ancient one has been well shown by Ruth Webb.⁴⁵ As a proof of this, the *Progymnasmata* do not pay much attention to works of art in general, nor to the shield of Achilles in particular.⁴⁶ Theon mentions it as a possible object of the description of *tropoi*.⁴⁷ Theon means *tropos* as the way in which an object is made, and an *ekphrasis* of such a thing will inevitably include the description of the object itself, and it is according to this principle that Theon

⁴⁵ See especially Webb 1999, 11.

⁴⁶ Harlan 1965, 22.

⁴⁷ One might notice the absence of the shield in the preliminary part of the work, where Theon lists a series of examples for each exercise (65 ff.). The brief list of examples of *ekphraseis* (πολλὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκπέφρασται..., 68,7ff.) starts with the plague in Athens described by Thucydides and ends with Philistius' description of the preparations of Dionysius of Syracuse against the Carthaginians, including the making of weapons (τῶν ὀπλῶν... τὴν ποίησιν, 68,20). Belonging to the same category, the shield of Achilles would undoubtedly have made a good example, but here Theon is considering only the Attic historians and philosophers of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, as stated at the beginning of the short survey: Πρῶτον μὲν ἀπάντων χρητῶν τὸν διδάσκαλον ἐκάστου γυμνάσματος εὖ ἔχοντα παραδείγματα ἐκ τῶν παλαιῶν συγγραμμάτων ἀναλεγόμενον προστάττειν τοῖς νέοις ἐκμανθάνειν, 'first of all, the teacher should collect good examples of each exercise from ancient prose works and assign them to the young to be learned by heart' (65,30-66,2).

mentions the making of the shield of Achilles (παρὰ μὲν Ὀμήρῳ ἢ Ὀπλοποιία).⁴⁸ The interest here is definitely more on the military than on the artistic side of the Homeric passage, as shown by the premise (ὅποῖαι τῶν σκευῶν καὶ τῶν ὄπλων καὶ τῶν μηχανημάτων) and also by the fact that the following examples are all taken from historians, like the preparation of a siege engine in Thucydides.

A little below, when, as seen, Theon explains the order in which to describe *topoi*, *khronoi*, or *prosôpa*, he says that one should start from what is beautiful, useful, and pleasant. Here he mentions again the shield of Achilles, because Homer started that description by stating that the hero's weapons were beautiful and strong and astounding to see to his allies, but frightening to his enemies.⁴⁹ Theon might be thinking about the lines that precede the description proper,⁵⁰ but what is sure is that he does not seem to be taking into consideration what we would refer to as the artistic core of Homer's description, that is the contents engraved on the shield and the way in which they are arranged by the author. Strange as it may seem, this perspective is confirmed by the fact that in the majority of *Progymnasmata* the *hoplopoiia*, which we consider the proto-*ekphrasis*, is mentioned more often as an example of narrative than of description.⁵¹

In the *Progymnasmata*, *diêgêma* (narrative) is one of the first exercises, always after *mythos*. Theon gives a definition that is kept almost identical in the other *Progymnasmata*: Διήγημά ἐστι λόγος ἐκθετικὸς πραγμάτων γεγονότων ἢ ὡς γεγονότων, 'Narrative is speech descriptive of things that have happened or as though they had happened' (78,16-7). *Diêgêma* (narrative) and *diêgêsis* (narration) seem to be used interchangeably by Theon, but the later authors opted for a distinction, specifying that 'a narrative (*diêgêma*) differs from a narration (*diêgêsis*) as a piece of

⁴⁸ 118,22-6: αἱ δὲ καὶ τρόπων εἰσὶν ἐκφράσεις, ὅποῖαι τῶν σκευῶν καὶ τῶν ὄπλων καὶ τῶν μηχανημάτων, ὃν τρόπον ἕκαστον παρεσκευάσθη, ὡς παρὰ μὲν Ὀμήρῳ ἢ Ὀπλοποιία, παρὰ Θουκυδίδῃ δὲ ὁ περιτειχισμὸς τῶν Πλαταιέων καὶ ἡ τῶν μηχανημάτων κατασκευὴ, 'there are also ephrases of objects, such as implements and weapons and siege engines, describing how each was made, as the making of the arms (of Achilles) in Homer, and in Thucydides the circumvallation of the Plateans and the preparation of the siege engines'. It is interesting to observe how old is the notion, later to become a debated milestone in the studies on description, that what Homer does is not to describe the shield, but to narrate its making.

⁴⁹ 119,24-30: ἐὰν δὲ τόπους ἢ χρόνους ἢ πρόσωπα ἐκφράζωμεν, μετὰ τῆς περὶ αὐτῶν διηγήσεως ἀφορμὰς ἔξομεν λόγων καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ χρησίμου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ἡδέος, οἷον Ὀμηρὸς ἐπὶ τῶν Ἀχιλλέως ὄπλων ἐποίησεν, εἰπὼν ὅτι καὶ καλὰ ἦν καὶ ἰσχυρὰ καὶ ἰδεῖν τοῖς μὲν συμμάχοις ἐκπληκτικά, τοῖς δὲ πολεμίοις φοβερὰ, 'if, on the other hand, we are describing places or times or objects or persons, drawing on the narrative account around them we shall have starting points for what to say from the excellent and the useful and the pleasant, as Homer did on the subject of the arms of Achilles, saying that they were excellent and strong and remarkable to his fellow fighters to look at and objects of fear to the enemy'.

⁵⁰ II. 18,466-467: ὡς οἱ τεύχεα καλὰ παρέσσειται, οἷά τις αὐτε | ἀνθρώπων πολέων θαυμάσσειται, ὅς κεν ἴδῃται, 'as he will have a beautiful armor, such as anyone in the world will marvel at, whoever sees it'.

⁵¹ Some doubts on the clear distinction between narration and description are already raised by Theon's observation that *ekphrasis* of *topoi*, *khronoi*, and *prosôpa*, should start from the narrative account of the objects (μετὰ τῆς περὶ αὐτῶν διηγήσεως), paralleled by Ps.-Hermogenes: Ἐὰν δὲ τόπους ἐκφράζωμεν ἢ χρόνους ἢ πρόσωπα, ἔξομέν τινα καὶ ἐκ τῆς διηγήσεως καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ ἢ χρησίμου ἢ παραδόξου λόγον, 'But if we are describing places or seasons or persons we shall take material from narration and from the excellent or useful or unexpected' (10,5 Patillon).

poetry (*poiēma*) differs from a poetical work (*poiēsis*). A *poiēma* and a *diêgēma* are concerned with one thing, a *poiēsis* and a *diêgēsis* with many' (Ps.-Hermogenes 2,1 Patillon).⁵² It is here that the shield of Achilles comes into play, for it provides an example of such a distinction. 'For example', continues Ps.-Hermogenes, 'the *Iliad* is a *poiēsis* and the *Odyssey* is a *poiēsis*, while the "Making of the Shield" and "Descent into the Underworld" and "Killing the Suitors" are *poiēmata*. Again, the *History* of Herodotus is a *diêgēsis*, as is that of Thucydides, but the story of Arion or of Alcmeon is a *diêgēma*' (Ps.-Hermogenes 2,2 Patillon).⁵³ A double meaning lies in Ps.-Hermogenes' treatment of the making of the shield of Achilles. On the one hand the shield is obviously a *poiēma* in itself, because it is the product of Hephaestus' *poiēsis*. On the other hand, the narration of its making is a *poiēma* because, from the rhetorical point of view, it is part of a bigger *poiēsis* (the *Iliad*) and it is concerned with only one of the many things that constitute the whole. What is more important, however, is that according to this distinction the shield of Achilles is the poetical equivalent of narrative (*diêgēma*), and is therefore not exclusively linked to *ekphrasis*. Ps.-Hermogenes, Aphthonius (2,1 Patillon), and Nicolaus (12 Felten) use the same example, and none of them mentions the shield in their treatments of *ekphrasis*. In the sections dedicated to *ekphrasis* by these three authors, the only references to Homer are to the description of Thersites (Ps.-Hermogenes and Nicolaus) and Eurybates (Aphthonius). Even Nicolaus, who specifically discusses descriptions of works of art, does not mention the shield under the heading '*ekphrasis*'.

Two factors contribute to the misconception that descriptions of works of art had been taken into consideration by the authors of *Progymnasmata* since the beginning: the fact that we consider the *hoplopoiia* in the *Iliad* to be the *ekphrasis* of a work of art, and the fact that it features in all *Progymnasmata*. However, in fact, most authors mention the making of the shield of Achilles under the heading '*diêgēma*', and Theon, the only one who puts it among the examples of *ekphrasis*, seems not to regard it as art (in the figurative sense) but only as a piece of weaponry. For the authors of *Progymnasmata* not only was the proto-*ekphrasis* of a work of art not the mother of all *ekphraseis*, but it did not even describe a work of art. As a result, it appears that in the *Progymnasmata* works of art were not taken effectively into consideration as objects of description until the fifth-century work by Nicolaus.⁵⁴

⁵² Διαφέρει δὲ διήγημα διηγήσεως, ὡς ποίημα ποιήσεως· ποίημα μὲν γὰρ καὶ διήγημα περὶ πρᾶγμα ἓν, ποιήσις δὲ καὶ διήγησις περὶ πλείονα. Aphthonius and Nicolaus maintain the same distinction.

⁵³ οἷον ποιήσις ἢ Ἰλιάς καὶ ποιήσις ἢ Ὀδύσεια, ποιήματα δὲ ἀσπίδοποιία, νεκυομαντεία, μνηστροφονία. καὶ πάλιν διήγησις μὲν ἢ ἱστορία Ἡροδότου, ἢ συγγραφή Θουκυδίδου, διήγημα δὲ τὸ κατὰ Ἀρίωνα, τὸ κατὰ Ἀλκμαίωνα.

⁵⁴ To be more precise, the original text from Nicolaus' *Progymnasmata* ends after the exercise of *enkômion* and *psogos*. For the remaining exercises (including *ekphrasis*) editors have used citations from Byzantine commentaries (Kennedy 2003, 129-30). This makes the attribution to Nicolaus of the passage on *ekphrasis* less certain, but does not change the

1.4.2. *Ekphrasis* of works of art in Nicolaus

When Nicolaus explains how an *ekphrasis* should proceed, he breaks with tradition, introduces a new subject, and defines new rules. To begin with, although except for the addition of *panêgureis* he includes the canonical list of subjects,⁵⁵ he disregards all of them and instead considers only works of art:

Δεῖ δὲ, ἡνίκα ἂν ἐκφράζωμεν καὶ μάλιστα ἀγάλματα τυχὸν ἢ εἰκόνας ἢ εἴ τι ἄλλο τοιοῦτον, πειράσθαι λογισμοὺς προστιθέναι τοῦ τοιοῦδε ἢ τοιοῦδε παρὰ τοῦ γραφέως ἢ πλάστου σχήματος, οἷον τυχὸν ἢ ὅτι ὀργιζόμενον ἔγραψε διὰ τήνδε τὴν αἰτίαν ἢ ἡδόμενον, ἢ ἄλλο τι πάθος ἐρουῦμεν συμβαῖνον τῇ περὶ τοῦ ἐκφραζομένου ἱστορίᾳ· καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων δὲ ὁμοίως πλεῖστα οἱ λογισμοὶ συντελοῦσιν εἰς ἐνάργειαν.

We must, particularly when we describe statues for example, or paintings or things of this sort, try to add reasons (*logismoi*) why the painter or sculptor depicted things in certain shapes, such as, for example, that he depicted the character as angry from such and such a cause (*aitia*) or happy, or we will mention some other emotion resulting from the story about the person being described. Reasons contribute greatly to *enargeia* in other types of *ekphrasis* too.

(69 Felten, trans. Webb 2009, 203)

Another important change takes place in Nicolaus' treatment of *ekphrasis* together with the appearance and immediate predominance of works of art among its subjects. The position of a temporal (in case of *pragmata*) or spatial (in the other cases) order of arguments is preceded by another principle, that is, that in an *ekphrasis* the rhetor should try to give an explanation for what the artist has shaped: why the figure painted or moulded is angry and why, or why it is pleased, and say which emotion (πάθος) is being experienced in the story described. Such an angle had never before been given to *ekphrasis*. First of all, the usual examples are put aside. Thucydides, whose name features in the section about *ekphrasis* of all other *Progymnasmata*, is, if not neglected, alluded to only indirectly and from a very general point of view.⁵⁶ Secondly, the fact that art is now at stake gives *ekphrasis* greater depth. The other treatments of *ekphrasis* instruct in giving a detailed

fact that early *Progymnasmata* did not contemplate descriptions of works of art, adding instead the possibility that instructions on how to describe works of art might have appeared for the first time even later than the fifth century.

⁵⁵ 68 Felten: ἐκφράζωμεν δὲ τόπους, χρόνους, πρόσωπα, πανηγύρεις, πράγματα.

⁵⁶ Theon mentions the plague, a siege, naval battles and cavalry battles (68,8-11), and again a siege, a siege engine, and a night battle (118,25-6; 119,4); the night battle is also in Ps.-Hermogenes (10,3 Patillon); battles, a harbour, and the night battle are mentioned by Aphthonius (12,1 Patillon). Nicolaus does not mention his name or any passage, but only says: οἷον διηγῆσεως μὲν ἐστὶ τὸ εἰπεῖν· ἐπολέμησαν Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ Πελοποννήσιοι· ἐκφράσεως δὲ, ὅτι τοιαῦτα καὶ τοιαῦτα ἐκάτεροι παρασκευῇ ἐχρήσαντο καὶ τῶδε τῶ τρόπῳ τῆς ὀπλίσεως, 'for example, it belongs to a narration to say "The Athenians and Peloponnesians fought a war," and to *ekphrasis* to say that each side made this and that preparation and used this manner of arms' (68 Felten).

account of the subject, describing everything which is seen in order to reproduce the scene, but nothing more than that. Thus Theon says that ‘in ecphrasis there is only a plain description of the subject’ (ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐκφράσει ψιλὴ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπαγγελία, 119,14-5), and the other rhetors do not add much to deepen this plainness of ekphrasis.⁵⁷ In Nicolaus, however, we read the attempt to add reasons (λογισμοὺς προστιθέναι) in order to explain what is not seen, that is, the intentions of the artist (παρὰ τοῦ γραφέως ἢ πλάστου) behind the expressions of the figures considering the emotions involved in the story.

This attention to interpretation as a rule comes even before the instructions for an exact and detailed *ekphrasis*, which will be expressed shortly after and follow the spatial order seen in other *Progymnasmata*:

Ἀρξόμεθα δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων, καὶ οὕτως ἐπὶ τὰ τελευταῖα ἤξομεν· οἷον εἰ ἄνθρωπον χαλκοῦν ἢ ἐν γραφαῖς ἢ ὅπως οὖν ἔχομεν ἐν τῇ ἐκφράσει ὑποκείμενον, ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς τὴν ἀρχὴν ποιησάμενοι βαδιοῦμεν ἐπὶ τὰ κατὰ μέρος· οὕτω γὰρ πανταχόθεν ἔμψυχος ὁ λόγος γίνεται.

We shall begin with the first things and thus come to the last; for example, if the subject of ekphrasis is a man represented in bronze or in a picture or some such way, after beginning with a description of his head we shall move on to the rest, part by part. In this way the speech becomes alive throughout.
(69 Felten)

The order to be followed is from first thing to last, so from head to feet in case of a figure of a man, with focus on every part (ἐπὶ τὰ κατὰ μέρος).⁵⁸ Whereas this represents the application of the usual method to the new subject of works of art, what is said before changes some parameters of *ekphrasis*. Against Theon’s statement that ‘in *ekphrasis* there is only the plain description of the subject’ (ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐκφράσει ψιλὴ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπαγγελία) Nicolaus replies with the exact opposite, stating that *ekphrasis* does more than a mere description (πλὴν ὅσον οὐ ψιλὴν ἀφήγησιν ποιούμενη, 70 Felten), and the lifeless subjects of *ekphrasis* mentioned by previous authors (like Theon in 119,10-1: ἡ δὲ ἔκφρασις τὰ πολλὰ περὶ τῶν ἀψύχων καὶ ἀπροαιρέτων γίνεται, ‘ecphrasis is, for the most part, about lifeless things and those without choice’) are, in Nicolaus’ words, resuscitated and become part of a living speech (οὕτω γὰρ πανταχόθεν ἔμψυχος ὁ λόγος γίνεται, 69 Felten). In all likelihood, three centuries separated Theon, the earliest author of *Progymnasmata*, and Nicolaus. It seems that during this period the exercise of

⁵⁷ Compare to this Lucian’s words in *De domo* 21, when speaking against the *ekphrasis* of works of art: ψιλὴ γὰρ τις ἢ γραφὴ τῶν λόγων, ‘word-painting is a plain thing’.

⁵⁸ Similarly Aphthonius 12,1 Patillon about people: Ἐκφράζειν δὲ δεῖ πρόσωπα μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπὶ τὰ τελευταῖα, τουτέστιν ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς ἐπὶ πόδας, ‘One should make the ecphrasis of a person from first things to last, that is, from head to feet’.

ekphrasis changed its shape. It went from having little or no mention of works of art to having works of art as its main example, and from being treated as a bare description to becoming a powerful means of recreating life through speech. Nicolaus' change in the treatment of *ekphrasis* is an uncommon phenomenon in the *Progymnasmata*, for the handbooks usually show a tendency to conservatism. All their authors often seem to be explaining and expanding what others said before, quoting previous rhetors, proposing the same definitions, and providing the same examples. Nicolaus himself does not escape this tendency in respect of other exercises, but there is no antecedent, in rhetorical theory, for his peculiar instructions on how to describe paintings and statues. Such a transformation can be explained only as the result of the process that, starting from the second century, saw the emergence of rhetorical descriptions of paintings first in works of literature and then as an autonomous genre.

It is important here to make a distinction between the theory of *ekphrasis* of works of art and the practice of it. By theory of *ekphrasis* of works of art we mean instances of rhetorical theory of *ekphrasis* where works of art are considered as the subjects of description. Practice refers instead to examples of rhetorical *ekphrasis* applied to works of art, regardless of the context (be it a work of literature or a rhetorical one). The latter, as we have said, began to flourish in the second century. In the course of the second century Achilles Tatius included in his novel three long descriptions of paintings;⁵⁹ in the second half of the same century Lucian wrote several descriptions of paintings as introductory parts of his speeches; between the late second and early third century Longus used the description of a painting as a feature of *Daphnis and Chloe*,⁶⁰ and Philostratus the Elder composed a book that consisted uniquely of descriptions of paintings. His example was followed by his grandson Philostratus the Younger later in the third century, and later again by Callistratus, who described statues; finally, in the fourth century, we find descriptions of works of art in the declamations of rhetors like Himerius and Libanius.⁶¹

It is generally assumed that theory of *ekphrasis* of works of art was commonly taught in the schools of rhetoric, taking the form of exercises that were repeatedly practised by the students, and that the occurrence of similar passages in works of literature (like those written by the authors just mentioned) was nothing but the reproduction of stock material, which would account for the lack of originality of such works. This might be true for other subjects of *ekphrasis*, but when it comes to works of art, it seems that practice came long before theory. It is true that in the fourth century (therefore roughly one century before Nicolaus) Libanius wrote *Progymnasmata* which contained

⁵⁹ Possibly before AD 160, see Bowie 2002, 60-1.

⁶⁰ See Morgan 2004, 1-2 on the dating of the novel.

⁶¹ This is a cursory, and by no means exhaustive, list of the main names associated with *ekphrasis* of works of art. The different stages of its development will be analysed in due course, with emphasis on the contribution that novelists made both from a practical and a theoretical point of view.

ekphraseis of works of art, but this work is quite different from the *Progymnasmata* considered so far, as it consists not of instructions on what to write and how to write it, but of a collection of model exercises, possibly to be used by his students as examples.⁶² Seventeen of the thirty *ekphraseis* contained there have works of art (paintings and, mostly, statues) as their subject, but no discussion of *ekphrasis* itself can be found in Libanius, who, to our knowledge, never wrote a handbook.⁶³ It should also be noted that, together with other exercises in Libanius' *Progymnasmata*, many of the *ekphraseis* under his name are believed to be spurious, and to have entered his *corpus* as the result of a later act of collection.⁶⁴ Moreover, several of the spurious descriptions containing works of art have been attributed to Nicolaus as well, strengthening the idea that Nicolaus had an uncommon interest both in the theory and in the practice of *ekphrasis* of works of art.⁶⁵ The scholastic, repetitive nature of the descriptions in Libanius' *Progymnasmata* places them in the period when *ekphrasis* of works of art became standard material for rhetors in training (even later, if they were written by Nicolaus), but this was a late stage in the development of rhetorical *ekphrasis* of works of art, and certainly one that came after the above-mentioned authors of the second and third century.

The small number of *Progymnasmata*, their time span lasting over five centuries, and the uncertainties in dating and attribution do not help in understanding how the development of *ekphrasis* took place. The earliest author of *Progymnasmata*, Theon, who lived in the first century AD, wrote before the *ekphrasis* of works of art became a recurrent feature of literary works. Ps.-Hermogenes, who wrote after Achilles Tatius and Lucian and perhaps in the same century as Longus and the Philostrati, still makes no mention of it. Aphthonius' handbook dates from the second half of the fourth century, therefore at the same time or after Heliodorus, Callistratus, and Libanius, all of whom made use of the feature. It seems that it was only with Nicolaus in the fifth century, after *ekphrasis* of works of art had become common practice (e.g. with Libanius), that the need was felt to include it in rhetorical theory.

The handbooks that survived were surely the most popular ones, but others might have been circulating. Considering the gap of one century which separates Ps.-Hermogenes and Aphthonius, and of another one between the latter and Nicolaus, it is not entirely improbable that Nicolaus was drawing inspiration from someone who at some point, in a lost *Progymnasma*, had made the same,

⁶² Gibson 2008, xix.

⁶³ Even Aphthonius, who, as a pupil of Libanius, followed the master's example and was the first to include a practical demonstration next to the definition of each exercise, never considered works of art in the treatment of *ekphrasis* in his *Progymnasmata*.

⁶⁴ See Gibson 2008, xxiii-xxv and 427-9.

⁶⁵ Descriptions 8-30 are thought to be spurious; eleven of these (18-28) were attributed to Nicolaus by Walz; eight of these (18-20, 22-3, 26-8) are descriptions of works of art.

or, at least, some, considerations about *ekphrasis* of works of art. At the same time, it is not improbable that, by the fifth century, other lost examples of *ekphrasis* of works of art influenced its treatment in rhetorical theory. However, it is overwhelmingly likely that Nicolaus' inspiration came from what we have rather than what we do not have, that is, from the examples provided by the authors mentioned above, especially because direct influence of these examples can be found in Nicolaus, if we recall the beginning of his treatment of *ekphrasis* of works of art, which focused on the painters' intentions and the emotions of the characters in connection to their stories.⁶⁶ We will analyse second- and third-century authors of *ekphrasis* in greater detail, but suffice it to say, for now, that one of the features of the *ekphrasis* by Achilles Tatius and Lucian is the identification of the emotions conveyed in the subjects portrayed, and that in the prologue of the *Imagines* Philostratus the Elder sets out to do nothing but exegesis of paintings, which he accomplishes by describing the paintings as well as by examining the stories behind the images depicted. One can easily see how these principles are recalled in Nicolaus, and even his reference to the speech becoming alive (ἔμψυχος ὁ λόγος γίνεται, 69 Felten) can be compared with any of the numerous instances when Philostratus the Elder underlines the effects of the paintings coming to life in the gallery in Naples. Finally, Nicolaus' statement that 'for the most part, this exercise is one of those which are used as parts [of a speech], but nothing would prevent it from sometimes being made sufficient in itself for a complete subject',⁶⁷ seems to reflect the fact that *ekphrasis* of works of art (unlike any other kind of *ekphrasis*) had by Nicolaus' time become an autonomous genre and was therefore not necessarily studied, as it had been in previous authors of *Progymnasmata*, only as part of a bigger speech.

1.4.3. *Ekphrasis* of works of art in John of Sardis

Nicolaus' treatment of *ekphrasis* of works of art is a rarity among the authors of *Progymnasmata*. It would be an entirely isolated case, were it not for the fact that some four centuries later, in a commentary on Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata* attributed to John of Sardis (ninth century), we read:

Ἰστέον δέ, ὅτι ἀρίστη τῶν ἐκφράσεων μεταχειρίσις τὸ ἐπινοεῖν αἰτίας ἐκάστῳ
μέρει τοῦ καλῶς τοῦτον ἔχειν τὸν τρόπον ἢ οὕτως ἔχειν τὴν θέσιν· εὐρήσεις δὲ

⁶⁶ 'We must, particularly when we describe statues for example, or paintings or things of this sort, try to add reasons (*logismoi*) why the painter or sculptor depicted things in certain shapes, such as, for example, that he depicted the character as angry from such and such a cause (*aitia*) or happy, or we will mention some other emotion resulting from the story about the person being described. Reasons contribute greatly to *enargeia* in other types of *ekphrasis* too.' (69 Felten, trans. Webb 2009, 203).

⁶⁷ Ἔστι δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ τοῦτο τὸ προγύμνασμα τῶν ὡς μερῶν παραλαμβανομένων· οὐδὲν δὲ ἴσως ἂν καλῶι καὶ ὡς ἀρκουσίαν ποτε αὐτὴν πρὸς ὄλην ὑπόθεσιν ἐργάσασθαι (70 Felten, trans. Webb 2009, 204).

τὰς αἰτίας ἐκ τῶν παρακολουθούντων τοῖς ἐκφραζομένοις. Ἐντυγχάνων δὲ ταῖς τῶν εὐδοκίμων σοφιστῶν ἐκφράσεσιν ὠφελήθησιν· πολλαὶ δὲ εἰσὶν Ἐπαγάθου καὶ Καλλινίκου καὶ Προαιρεσίου καὶ τοῦ πολυμαθεστάτου τῶν σοφῶν Ἱμερίου καὶ ἄλλων εἰσὶ· καὶ αἱ Φιλοστράτου δὲ Εἰκόνες οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ ἐκφρασὶν ἔχουσιν.

You should know that the best treatment of ecphrases includes reflecting in each part of the description on the reasons why the thing is described in that manner or has a particular placement. You will draw these reasons from the attributes of the things described. You will be helped by getting to know the ecphrases of famous sophists. There are many by Epagathus and Callinicus and Prohaeresius and Himerius, the most learned of the wise, and others. And the *Eikones* of Philostratus contain nothing other than ecphrasis.

(215 Rabe)

Works of art in John of Sardis are not given the same prominent attention they were given in Nicolaus, as they are listed, and not even explicitly, as one among many types of *ekphrasis*. However, when John explains the general descriptive procedure, he seems to have especially in mind the indications given by Nicolaus on the description of works of art, rather than those given by the other authors of *Progymnasmata*, particularly when he talks about proceeding part by part (ἐκάστῳ μέρει) and paying attention to the causes (αἰτίας).

That the careful description of something should start from the division of the subject into parts and then move on to the consideration of all the single parts seems to be a fairly obvious method. It is the procedure that comes more immediately to mind when composing a well-ordered speech, and in one way or another all authors of *Progymnasmata* have something similar in mind, regardless of the subject.⁶⁸ When, for instance, they mention *pragmata* as an example, they recommend describing what came before them, what happened in them, and what happened after them.⁶⁹ Nicolaus insists on the same principle (ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων, καὶ οὕτως ἐπὶ τὰ τελευταῖα), but is the only one who then more precisely states that one should describe things part by part (ἐπὶ τὰ κατὰ μέρος),⁷⁰ and he has descriptions of paintings and statues in mind when he

⁶⁸ Cf. Aphthonius 12,1 Patillon: Ἐκφράζειν δὲ δεῖ πρόσωπα μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπὶ τὰ τελευταῖα, τουτέστιν ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς ἐπὶ πόδας, ‘One should make the ecphrasis of a person from first things to last, that is, from head to feet’..

⁶⁹ Cf. Theon 119,16-8: ἐπιχειρήσομεν δὲ τὰ μὲν πράγματα ἐκφράζοντες ἕκ τε τῶν προγεγονότων, καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς γινομένων, καὶ ἐκ τῶν συμβαινόντων τούτοις, ‘when composing an ecphrasis we shall treat events both from the point of view of what has gone before, what was included within them, and what results from them’; the same principle is repeated in Aphthonius 12,1 Patillon (πράγματα δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν πρὸ αὐτῶν τε καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ὅσα ἐκ τούτων ἐκβαίνειν φιλεῖ) and almost verbatim in Ps.-Hermogenes 10,4 Patillon (Ἐπιχειρήσομεν δὲ τὰ μὲν πράγματα ἐκφράζοντες ἀπὸ τῶν προγεγονότων καὶ ἐν αὐτοῖς γινομένων καὶ ἐπισυμβαίνοντων).

⁷⁰ Ἀρξόμεθα δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων, καὶ οὕτως ἐπὶ τὰ τελευταῖα ἴξομεν· οἷον εἰ ἄνθρωπον χαλκοῦν ἢ ἐν γραφαῖς ἢ ὅπως οὖν ἔχομεν ἐν τῇ ἐκφράσει ὑποκείμενον, ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς τὴν ἀρχὴν ποιησάμενοι βαδιοῦμεν ἐπὶ τὰ κατὰ μέρος, ‘We shall begin with the first things and thus come to the last; for example, if the subject of ecphrasis is a man represented in bronze or in a picture or some such way, after beginning with a description of his head we shall

does that.

The same goes for the causes. When mentioning war as an example, the early authors of *Progymnasmata* recommend describing the preparations, the development, and the consequences of it (based on the first-thing-to-last principle), and, although no one uses the word αἰτία, the causes of the war must have been included in the section ‘what comes before the war’. Again, Nicolaus resumes the usual example of the treatment of war,⁷¹ but is the only one who, a little below, explicitly recommends looking for the causes (διὰ τήνδε τὴν αἰτίαν) of the emotions of painted figures.⁷² So when John of Sardis says that ‘the best treatment of ecphrases includes considering in each part (ἐκάστῳ μέρει) of the description the reason (αἰτίας) why the thing described takes the form it does or has a particular placement’, he seems to have Nicolaus in mind, and the fact that a few lines below he finishes the list of useful examples of *ekphraseis* from the past by mentioning Philostratus’ *Imagines* seems to confirm this.⁷³

Both Nicolaus and John of Sardis show interest in *ekphrasis* not as plain description but as interpretation of what is being described, and both do it in a manner that is indebted to the works of the second, third, and fourth centuries that are dedicated to art. Nicolaus does not mention names, but by talking about the fact that *ekphrasis* should render the emotions conveyed by the artist in the stone or the painting he follows the line traced by Lucian, Achilles Tatius, Philostratus, and the others. In John of Sardis art is never mentioned as a distinct category of *ekphrasis*, and he never explains how to write the *ekphrasis* of a work of art in Nicolaus’ manner. As a matter of fact, he considers art as a sub-category that can be related to the major ones, meaning that the *ekphraseis* of *prosôpa*, *pragmata*, *topoi*, and *khronoi*, are equivalent to the *ekphraseis* of paintings and statues that reproduce the same things.⁷⁴ However, in the general explanation on how to write *ekphrasis*, John of Sardis employs a principle very similar to the one used by Nicolaus about works of art, and then mentions Philostratus’ *Imagines* as an example of it (thus providing us with the second, and, at least

move on to the rest, part by part’ (69 Felten). Cf. also the difference between *diêgêsis* and *ekphrasis* according to Nicolaus: διαφέρει δὲ καὶ κατ’ ἐκεῖνο τῆς διηγήσεως, ὅτι ἢ μὲν τὰ καθόλου, ἢ δὲ τὰ κατὰ μέρος ἐξετάζει, ‘It differs from narration in that the latter examines things as a whole, the former part by part’ (68 Felten).

⁷¹ 69 Felten: ἐκφράσεως δέ, ὅτι τοιαῦδε καὶ τοιαῦδε ἐκάτεροι παρασκευῆ ἔχρησαντο καὶ τῶδε τῶ τρόπῳ τῆς ὀπλίσεως, ‘(it belongs) to ecphrasis to say that each side made this or that preparation and used this manner of arms’.

⁷² 69 Felten: οἷον τυχὸν ἢ ὅτι ὀργιζόμενον ἔγραψε διὰ τήνδε τὴν αἰτίαν ἢ ἠδόμενον, ‘for example, that he painted the figure as angry for this reason, or as pleased’. See also Webb 2009, 82-83.

⁷³ Rabe indicates Nicolaus 69 Felten in the *loci paralleli* of this section.

⁷⁴ 219 Rabe: ἀναφέρονται δὲ εἰς τὰ πρόσωπα οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ τὰ ζῶα ἀλλὰ καὶ αἱ τούτων εἰκόνες, οἷον ἔκφρασις ἀνδριάντος ἢ τοῦ δουρείου ἵππου ἢ τινος ἄλλου ἐζωγραφημένου, ‘not only animals, but images of animals can be considered as *prosôpa* as well, like the *ekphrasis* of the statue of a man, or of the wooden horse, or of any other depicted figure’ (my translation); the same is extended, a few lines below, to other categories of *ekphrasis*: τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων λέγομεν καὶ τόπων καὶ χρόνων· καὶ γὰρ αἱ τούτων γραφαὶ εἰς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἀντ’ αὐτῶν ἀναφέρονται, ‘the same goes for *pragmata*, *topoi*, and *khronoi*; for paintings of these things are brought into account in each category in the place of the objects themselves’ (219 Rabe, my translation).

in late antiquity, last definition of Philostratus' work as a collection of *ekphraseis*);⁷⁵ this would indicate that, despite the fact that he did not focus exclusively on art as Nicolaus did, he was informed about works containing *ekphraseis* of paintings, and, possibly, that he recognised their influence on his predecessor's treatise.

1.4.4. *Ekphrasis* of works of art in epideictic speech

Although these passages in Nicolaus and John of Sardis display pretty much all the extant technical information on how to write an *ekphrasis* of a work of art,⁷⁶ more indications on the use of this feature, and the occasions suitable for it, can be found outside the *Progymnasmata*. The *Progymnasmata* were but a step, and one of the earliest, in the rhetorical training of late antiquity. Further programmes involved studies on more difficult subjects (e.g. *stasis* theory, invention, ideas, method), and manuals on these subjects were written, sometimes by the same authors who wrote *Progymnasmata*, or by rhetors who commented on them.⁷⁷ *Ekphrasis*, the discussion of which was not the purpose of these treatises, is mentioned rarely and as an ability taken for granted, assuming that the students who had made it to this stage would by then have refined skills in the art of description and need no further information. Among passages that briefly refer to the training in *ekphrasis* as functional to speech alongside that in *diêgêsis*, probably the most interesting contribution to our study is to be found in the two treatises written by Menander of Laodicea (late third/early fourth century).⁷⁸

These treatises dwell on one of the three genres into which rhetoric was divided, the epideictic. According to Aristotle, epideictic is concerned with praise and blame (τὸ μὲν ἔπαινος τὸ δὲ ψόγος), with the situation at hand (ὁ παρών), and its aims are either the excellent or the reproachful (ἢ καλὸν ἢ αἰσχρὸν).⁷⁹ Not being concerned with political or judicial matters, and therefore not exercising immediate influence on the life of the city, the epideictic, though including renowned examples such as Pericles' funeral oration in Thucydides, is by far the most neglected of the three genres. The authors of *Progymnasmata* who pay attention to the division of rhetoric include the epideictic among the genres that will be benefitted by the exercises, but seem to have

⁷⁵ The first being the one provided by Philostratus the Younger in the prologue of his *Imagines*, about his grandfather's work: ἐσπούδασταί τις γραφικῆς ἔργων ἔκφρασις τῷ μῶ ὁμωνύμῳ τε καὶ μητροπάτορι λίαν ἄττικῶς τῆς γλώττης ἔχουσα ξὺν ὥρᾳ τε προηγμένη καὶ τόνῳ, 'a certain description (*ekphrasis*) of works in the field of painting was written with much learning by one whose name I bear, my mother's father, in very pure Attic Greek and with extreme beauty and force' (trans. Fairbanks).

⁷⁶ In other parts of his commentary, however, John of Sardis provides useful information concerning art theory, to which we will turn in due course.

⁷⁷ For a general survey see Kennedy 1983, 73 ff.

⁷⁸ *Diairesis tōn epideiktikōn* and *Peri epideiktikōn*. See Russell-Wilson 1981.

⁷⁹ *Ars rhetorica* 1358b.

difficulty in justifying such an aim to their students. It is one thing to prepare oneself for the useful (τὸ συμφέρον, the aim of the political speech) and the just (τὸ δίκαιον, the aim of the forensic speech), another to practice for the excellent (τὸ καλὸν). The importance of the epideictic speech in imperial times is best shown by its two extreme examples. On the one hand Aelius Aristides' letter on the ruins of Smyrna moved the emperor to tears and helped in obtaining aid for the reconstruction of the city after the earthquake. On the other hand Lucian, revealing the mechanisms of rhetoric and showing that they can apply to any subject, composed *Muscae encomium*, a praise of the fly. Epideictic oratory could therefore still have political relevance and directly affect the life of the city, or be entirely useless, mostly harmless, and solely dedicated to the entertainment of an audience. The first kind is the one Menander most wishes for, the second is what he calls *laliai*, informal talks.

Menander divides epideictic speeches according to the circumstances that call for them. We will have, for example, the *basilikos logos* (the imperial oration, an encomium of the emperor), the *epibatêrios* (arrival speech, by a rhetor just arrived in a city), the *epithalamios* (wedding speech), the *epitaphios* (funeral speech), the *klêtikos* (speech of invitation, to invite a governor to a city, a festival, and the like), and so on. Since they often concerned praise (of the city, or the governor, or the married couple, etc.), epideictic speeches were constituted for the most part by *enkômia*, one of the exercises included in the *Progymnasmata*, to the point that terminology is at times overlapping. For instance, Nicolaus lists *epibatêrios*, *epithalamios*, *epitaphios*, and the rest, as typologies of *enkômia* (47 Felten), considering that an *enkômion* can be part of a speech (e.g. when praising what needs to be done in a deliberative speech), or a whole speech in itself (when praise is the object of the entire speech). Unlike most exercises (*mythos*, *koinos topos*, etc.), meant to contribute to a broader speech (whichever the genre, deliberative, judicial, or epideictic), *enkômion* 'contains a complete and full hypothesis',⁸⁰ and it is for the most part a prerogative of only one genre, the epideictic.⁸¹

It appears almost anything could become the subject of an *enkômion*, and Lucian's *Muscae*

⁸⁰ John of Sardis, 116 Rabe: τὸ δὲ ἐγκώμιον αὐτοτελὴ καὶ πλήρη τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἔχει.

⁸¹ Cf. Nicolaus, 47 Felten: Καὶ πρῶτόν γε ἐκεῖνο ἐζήτηται, διὰ τί τριῶν ὄντων, ὡς ἐν γένει εἰπεῖν, τῶν τῆς ῥητορικῆς μερῶν ἢ εἰδῶν ἢ ὅπως τις ἐθέλοι καλεῖν, τοῦ τε συμβουλευτικοῦ καὶ δικανικοῦ καὶ πανηγυρικοῦ, τὸ τρίτον μέρος, λέγω δὴ προγυμνάσμασι τέτακται. εἰ γὰρ ἕκαστον τῶν ἄλλων προγυμνασμάτων εὗρηται διὰ τὸ εἰς ἓν τι τῶν τελείων ὑποθέσεων ἡμᾶς γυμνάζειν, ὅτου χάριν τοῦτο τέλειον ὄν ἐν τοῖς μέρεσι παρελήπται; φαμέν οὖν πρὸς τοῦτο, ὅ τι ἤδη πρότερον εἰρήκαμεν, ὅτι τῶν προγυμνασμάτων τὰ μὲν ἔστι μέρη, τὰ δὲ μέρη καὶ ὅλα, 'Since, generically speaking, there are three parts or species, or whatever one wants to call them, of rhetoric –deliberative and judicial and panegyric-, the first thing that has been considered (by teachers) is why the third –I mean this panegyric part, to which encomion belongs- has been put among the progymnasmata. For if each of the other progymnasmata was invented in order to exercise us for one of the complete hypotheses, why bring in this part, which is complete? We say in reply what we have said earlier, that some progymnasmata are parts, some parts and wholes'. In the same way, the exercise of *nomou eisphora*, the introduction of a law, was solely, and for obvious reasons, aimed at deliberative speeches.

encomium shows an extreme case. In the early *Progymnasmata* the main subject of *enkōmia* are people, but the all-round praise of a man cannot disregard the telling of his origins and his deeds, and so the *enkōmion* of the man becomes the *enkōmion* of his city (*topos*), his actions (*pragmata*), and so on. Already Ps.-Hermogenes lists, among the subjects of *enkōmia*, justice, dumb animals, plants, mountains, and rivers.⁸² Very similarly, Aphthonius includes ‘persons and things, both occasions and places, dumb animals and plants as well’.⁸³ It is easy to see that in the handbooks *enkōmion* and *ekphrasis* share exactly the same subjects.⁸⁴ After all, the praise of, say, a city, will necessarily have to mention at some point the features that make the city worth praising, and even the details of Lucian’s fly are told, and to describe these things is the realm of *ekphrasis*. It is with this perspective in mind that the mention of *ekphrasis* in Menander’s treatise is to be read.

In speeches of invitation of a governor, one should add *ekphraseis* of the city and the festival that creates the occasion for the visit (426 Spengel). The same goes for speeches of arrival (379 Spengel) or leave-taking (433 Spengel), where Menander recommends adorning the speech with *ekphraseis* of the country the rhetor has approached or left. In an imperial oration one should describe the emperor’s deeds, his battles, his armour (373 Spengel). It is in one of these occasions, when talking about the speech in praise of Apollo, that we find Menander’s only reference to the practice of *ekphrasis* of works of art:⁸⁵

ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐκφράσεις τὸ ἄγαλμα τοῦ θεοῦ παραβάλλον τῷ Ὀλυμπίῳ Διί, καὶ Ἀθηνᾶ τῇ ἐν ἀκροπόλει τῶν Ἀθηναίων. εἶτα ἐπάξεις, ποῖος Φειδίας, τίς Δαίδαλος τοσοῦτον ἐδημιούργησε ξόανον; τάχα που ἐξ οὐρανοῦ τὸ ἄγαλμα τοῦτ’ ἐρρύη. καὶ ὅτι ἐστεφάνωται δάφναις, φυτῷ προσήκοντι τῷ θεῷ κατὰ Δελφούς. καὶ τὸ ἄλλος ἐκφράσεις καὶ ποταμούς τοὺς ἐγγὺς καὶ τὰς πηγὰς.

In addition to these (aspects of the temple), you will describe the statue of the god, comparing it with the statue of the Olympic Zeus and that of Athena in the acropolis in Athens. Then you will add which Phidias, which Daedalus created such an image, and perhaps how this statue fell from the skies, and that it is crowned with laurel, the plant that befits the god in Delphi. You will describe the sacred grove, the rivers close by, and the founts.

(445 Spengel, my translation)

⁸² 7,1 Patillon: Ἐγκωμιάζομεν δὲ καὶ πράγματα οἷον δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἄλογα ζῶα οἷον ἵππον, ἤδη δὲ καὶ φυτὰ καὶ ὄρη καὶ ποταμούς, ‘We also praise things; for example, justice, and dumb animals, for example, a horse; and there have been encomia of plants and mountains and rivers’.

⁸³ 7,2 Patillon: πρόσωπά τε καὶ πράγματα, καιρούς τε καὶ τόπους, ἄλογα ζῶα, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις φυτὰ.

⁸⁴ Noticeably, Aphthonius receives from Ps.-Hermogenes the addition of animals and plants and includes them with the same formula in the treatments of both *enkōmion* (see previous footnote) and *ekphrasis* (Ἐκφραστῆον δὲ πρόσωπά τε καὶ πράγματα, καιρούς τε καὶ τόπους, ἄλογα ζῶα καὶ πρὸς τούτοις φυτὰ, ‘One should describe both persons and things, occasions and places, dumb animals and, in addition, growing things’ (12,1 Patillon)).

⁸⁵ There are references to the presence of works of art in cities as a means of glorifying the emperor or a governor (e.g. 377), but not to their description.

According to the author, one should include in the praise of the god the description of the country blessed by him, his festival, his temples and statue, his grove, rivers, and springs. However, no advice is given on how to conduct the *ekphrasis*. It is not Menander's purpose, which is instead to show how to direct the *ekphrasis* towards the praise, which he does through a series of hyperbolic statements (ποῖος Φειδίας, τίς Δαίδαλος...). When he says that 'in addition to these, you will describe (ἐκφράσεις) the statue of the god', he expects his addressees to know how to compose the *ekphrasis* of a statue.

Menander was writing in the late third or early fourth century, therefore, like Nicolaus, after authors like Philostratus the Elder, whose *Imagines* he mentions (390 Spengel). Menander's passage confirms something already noticed, namely that theoretical treatments of *ekphrasis* of works of art were preceded and not followed by practical applications, and sheds a light on something new, that is that the rhetorical genre most apt to include *ekphraseis* of works of art was the epideictic. As a matter of fact, it is in epideictic speeches that oratory had by then seen some of the famous examples of artistic *ekphrasis* at work, in Lucian's *laliai* and *prolaliai*.⁸⁶ Menander only mentions this when talking about the praise of Apollo, but it is likely that something similar was intended to fit in other speeches. For instance, a *klêtikos logos* that aimed at enticing a governor into visiting a city might easily have included descriptions of the statues or paintings the city was proud of.

We find an application of Menander's indications in some of the orations composed by Himerius, a sophist who taught in Athens in the fourth century.⁸⁷ Himerius' work can be dated to the middle of the fourth century, therefore a little after Menander's, but not enough to be sure that he read the work on epideictic. Be that as it may, Himerius follows very closely the theory behind Menander, if not his precise work. For instance, the *Epithalamium in Severum* (or. 9) includes, among other inevitable passages such as the *diêgêmata* of famous mythical marriages, or the *enkômia* of both families, the *ekphrasis* of the bride.⁸⁸ Concerning *ekphrasis* of works of art, Himerius provides us with a few interesting cases. The first is the description of the statue of Kairos by Lysippus, at the beginning of a protreptic oration (or. 13) meant to prompt the students to make the best of their time in school.⁸⁹ Oration 4, a *meletê* (a full declamation for the sake of practice) on the accusation of a rich man by a poor one, presents an unusual case of *ekphrasis* of a work of art, since it is part of a judicial speech and since it describes an imaginary painting representing the

⁸⁶ It is precisely when talking about the style required in *laliai* that Menander mentions Philostratus' *Imagines*.

⁸⁷ On Himerius see the translation and commentary by Penella 2007.

⁸⁸ Menander's instructions on how to compose an epithalamium can be found in *Peri epideiktikôn* 399 ff. Spengel. In particular, he prescribes exactly the parts that constitute Himerius' epithalamium: *diêgêmata* of mythical marriages (401 Spengel), *enkômia* of families (402 Spengel), *ekphrasis* of the bride (404 Spengel).

⁸⁹ The theme of the oration is unknown, but such is Penella's reconstruction. See Penella 2007, 73.

story of the case at trial, including the crime scene.⁹⁰ However, the best example of *ekphrasis* of a work of art is found in oration 12, a *propemptikos logos* addressed to a certain Flavianus, an officer appointed proconsul in Asia Minor. In the first part of the oration, in order to find a comparison for the journey of the proconsul to the eastern provinces, the sophist describes a painting of Alexander crossing the Hellespont for the conquest of Asia. Unlike the imaginary painting in oration 4, the painting described here is verisimilar. Most of all, it shows that the use of *ekphrasis* of works of art in practical oratory is best applied to epideictic speeches.

Final remarks

This is about as far as ancient rhetorical theory takes us regarding the subject of descriptions of works of art. What we can gather from almost one millennium of rhetorical works, from Theon to the Byzantine rhetors, is one indication of practical application (as part of an epideictic speech, in Menander), and one technical indication of composition (in Nicolaus, later resumed by John of Sardis). The least one can deduce is that *ekphrasis* of works of art was not one of the main priorities of rhetorical training. Moreover, the fact that these texts postdate the age when *ekphrasis* of works of art flourished seems to indicate that the authors who developed it acted on their own initiative and not because they had been told to do so in schools. To our knowledge, until the fifth century no *Progymnasmata* suggested that one should describe works of art in the first place. Of course, even in earlier centuries the training undergone had provided the students with tools that enabled them to write an *ekphrasis* of virtually anything, including works of art. However, it was not until this feature had grown to the point of becoming a genre in its own right that the need was felt to add it to the rhetorical curriculum, but it appears, from a theoretical viewpoint, that even after that it remained a minor topic.

Having excluded rhetorical theory as the source of second-century *ekphrasis* of works of art, and having instead shown that it was second-century literary practice of *ekphrasis* of paintings (and its third-century continuation) that influenced it, what is left is to assess the authors who first wrote rhetorical *ekphrasis* of works of art. The two most relevant names here are Lucian and Achilles Tatius, who should not be seen as followers of an established feature, but as its forerunners. The chapter on Achilles Tatius will analyse more closely the relationship between these two authors with regard to descriptions of art, but for the moment it is safe enough to consider them as

⁹⁰ A literal development of the idea, seen in Quintilian, that *ekphrasis* in judicial speeches needs to make the jury witness the scene.

contemporaries.⁹¹ Harlan, as has been noted, distinguishes between rhetorical *ekphrasis* and pictorial description,⁹² but there seems to be no need for such a distinction. It would mean that, for example, from the point of view of prose composition, Achilles Tatius and Lucian used one technique when describing paintings and another one when describing gardens or anything else. Instead, the fact that Achilles Tatius describes paintings, a garden, a storm and a crocodile (*et alia*) with exactly the same style (and Lucian paintings, processions, landscapes, buildings, a fly, a peacock, *et alia*), points in another direction. It seems more likely that they had learnt one technique of *ekphrasis* in the schools of rhetoric and from the *Progymnasmata*, and then decided to apply it to a subject previously not considered, paintings.

Neither Achilles Tatius nor Lucian invented the description of works of art. It seems correct to side with Friedländer in crediting rhetoric with providing style alone, and to look for the motifs in examples from previous literature. Rhetorical theory had not recognised it as part of what needed to be learnt, but a tradition of descriptions of objects of art, in the broadest sense, had belonged to literature since Homer, passing through Hesiod, Euripides, Apollonius Rodius, Theocritus, Moschus, Vergil, and other poets and historians. It is towards this tradition that Achilles Tatius and Lucian were looking, continuing it and elaborating on it with the relatively newly-crafted tools acquired in the schools of rhetoric. As the paintings are found in the course of travels in foreign countries (both in Achilles Tatius and Lucian), it is probable that historiography and periegesis played a role. Descriptions of paintings are generally less frequent than those of statues or other objects of art, at least until Hellenistic poetry, which was particularly interested in paintings and in the processes triggered by the combination of reading and seeing.⁹³ The first of Achilles Tatius' descriptions is of a painting of Europa which includes a garden, which certainly looks back at Moschus' *Europa* (where, however, the work of art in question was a basket), and, just like Moschus, the novelist gives to the work of art an important function for the story to come. The influence of texts where paintings are used as philosophical allegories is, as seen, debated. However, Lucian mentions Cebes' *Tabula*, and a few of his descriptions of paintings are meant for a similar allegorical meaning, so Cebes might be behind some of Lucian's descriptions, and an allegorical function can be found behind the painting's in Achilles Tatius as well.⁹⁴ None of these

⁹¹ Friedländer 1912, 87, defines Lucian's *De domo* as the first ever example of rhetorical *ekphrasis* of a painting, but one should be cautious in pointing to a *protos eures*. Lucian's dating, and the dating of his works, is approximate at best and for the most part coincides with Achilles Tatius'.

⁹² Harlan 1965, 17. She does that, among other reasons, on the basis that, unlike other subjects of description, it was not defined *ekphrasis* by the ancients.

⁹³ On this see Goldhill 1994.

⁹⁴ Mention of Cebes in *De merc. cond.* 42, and *Rhet. praec.* 6; the paintings described in *Hercules*, *Zeuxis*, and *Calumniarum non temere credendum* are allegorical, the last one especially following Cebes' manner. For Achilles Tatius see Whitmarsh 2011, 80, n. 48.

models, however, was the rhetorical *ekphrasis* of a painting. Conversely, the descriptions of works of art that followed Achilles Tattius and Lucian always took the form of rhetorical *ekphrasis*.

It is difficult to trace the origin of literary features with absolute certainty, for it hardly follows one single path. Especially when it comes to Greek novels, there is rarely one definitive answer, but rather a plurality of influences, a 'polifonia', as Fusillo put it.⁹⁵ Thus, in the coming chapters which deal with the use of *ekphrasis* of paintings in the novels (especially Chapters Three and Four), attention will be paid to the models which were certainly in the hands of the novelists. As already mentioned, the fact that Moschus in his *Europa* included the description of a basket representing the story of Io will be taken into consideration, together with other sources, when discussing Achilles Tattius' description of a painting of Europa.⁹⁶ In a similar way, Theocritus' *Idyll* 1, which contains the description of a cup with a pastoral subject engraved on it, which prompts a shepherd to sing a pastoral song, will be considered in relation to Longus' prologue, where the vision of a painting with pastoral contents stimulates the narration of the events there depicted.⁹⁷ However, a less frequented road will also be travelled, that is, to consider the influence that these novelists received from within the genre novel. As Chapter Two will make clear, works of art had a well-defined role already in the early phases of the Greek novel, before the detailed descriptions of paintings became a prominent feature, which will allow us to suggest that later novelists were inspired not only by the long tradition of celebrated descriptions of works of art, but also by the artistic seeds planted by the novelists that came before them.

⁹⁵ Fusillo 1989.

⁹⁶ See *infra* p. 118 ff.

⁹⁷ See *infra* p. 194-5.

The use of works of art in the early novels

2.1. Images in the Ninus romance

Works of art entered the ancient Greek novels at an early stage, and never left them. They feature in Chariton, the author of the novel that is considered the oldest among the extant ones, and there is a chance that they constituted an element in the oldest Greek novel that we currently know of, the romance of Ninus. The fragments of the Ninus romance that we possess make no mention of works of art (nor do the fragments of other novels), but the famous mosaic from Antioch-on-the-Orontes may testify to the fact that a work of art played a role in the story.¹ On the left hand side of the mosaic we see a man lying on a bed, contemplating the portrait of a woman held in his right hand. Without him noticing, a woman is approaching from the right hand side of the mosaic. In another mosaic found in Alexandretta, a similar man holding a similar picture has the name 'Ninus' inscribed over his head (though the clothes are different and he is not lying on the bed), which facilitated the identification of the man in the Antioch mosaic as Ninus.² As Doro Levi correctly suggested, there is a number of reasons to believe that this Ninus is the protagonist of the lost novel.

To begin with, Levi rejects the hypothesis, formulated, according to him, by Seyrig, that the mosaic shows Ninus mourning over the death of Semiramis, the reason for the rejection being that both the Semiramis that we know of from legends (wife of Ninus, founder of Nineveh) and historiography (wife of a ninth-century Assyrian king) are known for having survived their husbands.³ Excluding, consequently, the death of Semiramis as the cause for Ninus' condition, Levi ascribes his grief to a current separation of the lovers, with Ninus longing for the beloved while holding her portrait, an image that obviously leads us to think of a novelistic situation. At any rate, one does not need to exclude the death of Semiramis as a possibility. Notwithstanding the axiom that the protagonists of the novels do not die, their fake deaths, or the belief of one of the protagonists that the partner is dead, are everyday matters. The most conclusive evidence that the iconography is derived from the novel comes, however, from the fact that the mosaic from the adjoining room in the same house of Antioch shows two characters with their names, Parthenope and Metiochus, clearly inscribed over their figures, and these are famously the names of the

¹ On this mosaic see Campbell 1938, Levi 1944, and Quet 1992. For the fragments see Stephens and Winkler 1995.

² Campbell 1938, 213 gives credit to Seyrig for noticing the similarities between the two mosaics.

³ Levi 1944, 423. To be fair, Seyrig, and Campbell with him, merely determined the connection between the mosaic from Antioch and the one from Alexandretta and noticed, as it quite clearly appears in the image, that Ninus is grieving over the portrait, without really advancing suggestions towards the possible cause for grief or the literary sources for the image.

protagonists of another lost novel, now existing in three fragments.⁴ The house in Antioch must have belonged to a lover of literature, and of Greek novels in particular, who manifested his passion for these texts by commissioning a series of mosaics representing scenes taken from the stories.⁵

An alternative interpretation sees in the object held by Ninus a mirror in which his own image is reflected. It was proposed by Glanville Downey in a paper that aimed at establishing parallels between the recently found mosaics in Antioch and philosophical currents of the same times. Our mosaic is mentioned very briefly and interpreted *a priori* as a representation of the Plotinian doctrine on souls and mirrors.⁶ Since the the mosaic's *tesserae* do not allow a perfect recognition of the bust shown in the square object held by Ninus, an identification with Ninus' own image is not implausible, thus making the object a mirror.⁷ Against this view one might say that the orientation and inclination of the mirror does not match Ninus' face perfectly, but perhaps perfect proportions cannot be expected, especially in an artist whose sense of space-rendering seems to be lacking.⁸ But Downey, who gives no reason for his statement that the object is a mirror, does not reckon with the fact that the scene is taken from a novel and provides no answers to the questions that this poses. How are we to explain the existence of such a scene in the course of the novel? And how could the significance of a scene with Ninus looking at himself in a mirror be so relevant to the novel to be the only image to be extrapolated from the text to a work of art?⁹ There is plenty of room for possible suggestions, but fortunately Levi's good arguments clear the way from the proliferation of speculations that are bound to arise from fragmentary mosaics of a fragmentary novel. He notices that the frames of mirrors, despite presenting at times a squared shape, never show crossed corners, which are on the other hand evident in both mosaics and consistent with the wooden frame of a *pinax*.¹⁰

As for the contextualisation of the scene within the novel, it is prudent not to venture beyond the observation that it represents a moment of separation and consequent contemplation of the

⁴ Levi 1944, 424. For the fragments of Metiochus see Hägg and Utas 2003.

⁵ An often quoted passage from Lucian (*Pseudolog.* 25) testifies to the connected fame of Ninus and Metiochus. Weitzmann 1959, 102 suggests that this lover of literature provided the mosaicist with model-images contained in illustrated papyri.

⁶ Downey 1941, 374. Downey's suggestion has recently been considered and elaborated by Helen Morales in her interpretation of the mosaic. See Morales 2004, 13 ff.

⁷ The possibility of Ninus looking at a portrait of himself and not a reflection is highly unlikely.

⁸ See Levi 1944, 422. It should be noticed that the same hypotheses and consequent problems can be referred to the Alexandretta mosaic as well, in which the mirror is parallel to Ninus' head, but on a lower level, directly facing the area of his chest and not his face. As far as we can tell from the orientation of the mirror in the Antioch mosaic, it might well be reflecting not Ninus, but the woman approaching from the right hand side of the mosaic.

⁹ Judging by the mosaic of Metiochos and Parthenope in the adjacent room, the tastes of the owner of the house in Antioch in relation to Greek novels seem to incline more towards representations of the protagonists as a couple, than towards the narcissistic self-reflection of one character.

¹⁰ Levi 1944, 426, n. 18; p. 426-427 for evidence of images of *pinakes*. Quet too, in her detailed analysis, dismisses the hypothesis of a mirror. See Quet 1992, 131 and related note.

beloved's image, possibly with the addition of another element, that is, the temptation constituted by another woman.¹¹ Generally speaking, the occurrence of moments of separation in the novels is so frequent that the scene represented in our image might have fitted at almost any point of the original story. The scene could have taken place during the military campaign recounted in fragment B of the novel, also considering that in fragment A Ninus points out to Derkeia, Semiramis' mother, the fact that he remained faithful to Semiramis despite the chances offered by the war of taking advantage of his status and satisfying his desires. The contents of fragment C, with Ninus surviving a shipwreck and lamenting the change in his fortune, point in another direction, that is, that the scene took place during a separation that followed the narration of the war.¹²

The ease of imagining potential settings for the scene,¹³ and the acceptability of the suggestions, derives first and foremost from our knowledge of the extant complete novels, that provides us with a stock of equally plausible situations that we instinctively apply to the mosaics as well as the fragments of the Ninus romance. Although perfect matches are not to be expected (variations on the same theme are common among different novels), it appears that among the five extant novels *Chaereas and Callirhoe* offers the best comparison for what might be happening in the mosaic and therefore in the novel. Chariton's novel (together with Xenophon's *Ephesiaca*) is the one where the separation of the protagonists is prolonged for the longest time, and the one where this separation is given a particularly interesting treatment. The reason for this is that throughout the entire novel the protagonists, constantly divided between the hope of finding each other and the fear that the beloved is dead, often come across each other's image and are able to find comfort in it.¹⁴ A similar pattern could have taken place in the Ninus romance, at least in one scene, and the chronological vicinity of the two novels might even suggest that this could have been a feature of early Greek novels. The use of portraits in Chariton will be given a separate and more detailed analysis, but before moving on to that let us highlight a few conclusions that the mosaic allows us to draw with regard to the lost novel of Ninus.

We know of only two works of art derived from the Ninus romance, the mosaic in Antioch and the one in Alexandretta, both showing Ninus contemplating a portrait of Semiramis. They are not identical (Ninus lies on a bed in Antioch, whereas in Alexandretta he is sitting on a chair; the woman is absent in Alexandretta, but her image could have been in the missing part of the mosaic),

¹¹ One of the two possibilities suggested by Levi 1944, 424. The other one is that the mosaic shows a farewell scene where Semiramis gives to Ninus her portrait as a token of her faith.

¹² Perry 1967, 358-359, n. 18. It should be noted that Levi wrote before the publication of fragment C.

¹³ Quet 1992, 132 offers a survey of the hypotheses proposed by scholars.

¹⁴ For example in 1,14 and 2,11.

but the differences can be easily explained either by saying that one of the two artists developed a variation on the standard iconography, or that the mosaics represent two slightly different scenes from the novel, thus indicating that the contemplation of the portrait was a recurrent activity of Ninus in the course of the story, or perhaps that it took place in an extended scene where some action occurred. At the risk of sounding obvious, let us point out the very simple fact that the parts of a story that art represents are unlikely to be marginal ones but instead those deemed to be more important. Thus, from a statistical point of view, the most represented image of a story is bound to derive from a very popular, if not the most famous, scene of the story. Narcissus is mostly portrayed while glancing on the water,¹⁵ Andromeda while hanging from the cliff.¹⁶ A more complex myth, say Heracles' labours, will offer more choices, but still some scenes (e.g. the Nemean lion) will be represented more often than others (e.g. the Augean stables).¹⁷ Now, the Ninus romance was not as popular, nor as represented, as Heracles' labours, but the fact that the totality of the images that we have of it shows only one iconography probably indicates that that scene was well known, and possibly important. The scarcity of the specimens in our possession can redimension the scale of this statement, but this does not change the importance of the scene for the novel. Out of the range of varied scenes necessarily presented by the novel, the only one that made it to works of art cannot possibly have been a marginal one. If Daphne is the one who runs and is turned into laurel, if Marsyas is the one playing the flute and then hanging from the tree by his arms, then the novelistic Ninus is the one staring at the portrait of Semiramis.

2.2. The use of works of art in Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*

Chariton's is the only extant novel featuring portraits of the protagonists, which already speaks for a certain attention that the author must have had towards the way in which the characters are represented.¹⁸ This attention, it is worth specifying, is more narrative than artistic. The portraits, as well as other works of art, are never described, their making never praised, their makers never

¹⁵ LIMC *s.v.* Narkossos shows that apart from a few examples with Narcissus in hunting attire, the vast majority of his representations show him near the spring, in different poses and with or without other characters.

¹⁶ LIMC *s.v.* Andromeda counts some sixty representations of Andromeda hanging from the cliff against less than half showing her liberation, and fewer still showing other scenes.

¹⁷ LIMC *s.v.* Herakles counts more than seven hundred examples of the first one, and only in Attic vase-painting, against some twenty representations of the stables, unless they appear in compositions together with the rest of the labours.

¹⁸ For the present purpose it suffices to date Chariton to the first century AD, which is now more or less unanimously agreed upon. On the dating of Chariton's novel see Perry 1967, 96 ff. The question of Chariton's dating has been resumed recently by Tilg, who summarises the evidence and its discussion, and places Chariton not only before any other extant novel, but also before the fragments, recognising him as the inventor of the love novel (see Tilg 2010, 36 ff.). One need not be so categorical. From our perspective, so long as both *Chaereas and Callirhoe* and the romance of Ninus allow us to identify a trend of the early novels, it matters little which one was written first.

mentioned. They are important because of whom they represent, and it is only with regard to this that they are functional to the story. In order to understand their role, the portraits of the protagonists (as well as another statue and a few references to works of art) will be observed starting from their first appearance. Their presence and the effects it produces fill the novel from the first paragraph to the last, which alone indicates that Chariton had devised for them a special part to play.¹⁹ Much of this section is a reading of *Chaereas and Callirhoe* that follows the trail of the works of art that are found in it.

A scene where one of the protagonists contemplates the portrait of the beloved, similarly to the mosaic of Ninus, takes place towards the end of Book One. The scene is in Miletus, where the ship of Theron the bandit has landed with a precious cargo: Callirhoe. It is worth recalling a few facts that precede the events taking place in Miletus. The happiness of the newly-wed couple of young Syracusans, who, at least apparently, seem to fulfil their destiny right at the beginning of the novel, is indeed bound to last for a very short time, since the unrequited suitors, out of jealousy, manage to carry out a scheme that leads to Callirhoe's (apparent) death at the hands of Chaereas. The buried-alive Callirhoe comes back to her senses when her tomb is being plundered by the band of brigands led by Theron, and she is consequently taken to be sold overseas. Meanwhile, far from being recovered from grief and death wishes, Chaereas sets sails with his ever-loyal friend Polycharmus, in order to recover at least the remains of his beloved wife. Little does he know that Callirhoe is alive, thus making their separation, from his point of view, all the more intense: between him and Callirhoe lie not only the geographical distances of the Mediterranean sea, but also the insurmountable ones that separate this and the after world. Theron, understanding that it will not be long before someone from Syracuse comes to reclaim the booty (both Callirhoe and the rich offerings buried with her), aims at selling the girl as a slave as soon as possible, and, once he has arrived in Miletus, seals the deal with Leonas, who happens to be the right-hand man of the newly-widowed Dionysius, the first among the Ionians. About to be sold, Callirhoe is asked which offerings she would like to take with her, to which she replies:

Χρήσασθαι δὲ τοῖς ἔνταφίοις δυσσοιώνιστον ὑπολαμβάνω. Πάντα μοι
φυλάξατε καλῶς· ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀρκεῖ δακτυλίδιον μικρόν, ὃ εἶχον καὶ νεκρά.

¹⁹ Images have been recognised as an important part of Callirhoe's story (Auger 1983, Dubel 1999, Zeitlin 2002, Schmeling 2005; DeTemmerman 2007 and 2014 on characterisation), both from the point of view of how they define her character and how they establish love triangles, whereas less attention has been paid to the fact that Chaereas' story, too, is closely followed by the story of his images.

I think it would bring bad luck if I made use of the funeral offerings. Take good care of everything for me. I am content with a little ring I wore even as a corpse.²⁰
(1,13,11)

The reason why the small ring is so special to her is explained shortly after, when she is left to herself and her thoughts and is finally able to mourn over the series of dramatic events that have changed her life in such a short time.

Κόπτουσα δὲ τῇ χειρὶ τὸ στήθος εἶδεν ἐν τῷ δακτυλίῳ τὴν εἰκόνα τὴν Χαιρέου καὶ καταφιλοῦσα, “ Ἀληθῶς ἀπόλωλά σοι, Χαιρέα” φησί, “ τοσοῦτῳ διαζευχθεῖσα πάθει. Καὶ σὺ μὲν πενθεῖς καὶ μετανοεῖς καὶ τάφῳ κενῷ παρακάθησαι, μετὰ θάνατόν μοι τὴν σωφροσύνην μαρτυρῶν, ἐγὼ δὲ ἡ Ἑρμοκράτους θυγάτηρ, ἢ σὴ γυνή, δεσπότη σήμερον ἐπράθην.” Τοιαῦτα ὀδυρομένη μόλις ὕπνος ἐπήλθεν αὐτῇ.

As she beat her breast with her hand, she saw Chaereas' portrait on her ring. She kissed it and said: “Truly I am lost to you, Chaereas, separated from you by so great a misfortune! You are mourning for me and repenting and sitting by an empty tomb, proclaiming my chastity now that I am dead; and I, Hermocrates's daughter, your wife, have been sold this day to a master! As she uttered this lament, sleep finally came to her.”
(1,14,9-10)

The ring, we now learn, carries the image of Chaereas, and it is on this object that we shall focus a little, before following Callirhoe's scene in Miletus.

2.2.1. Images of Chaereas

Chariton does not say much regarding the origin of the ring with the image of Chaereas, for Callirhoe's words are less than explanatory. ‘Χρήσασθαι δὲ τοῖς ἐνταφίοις δυσσιώνιστον ὑπολαμβάνω. Πάντα μοι φυλάξατε καλῶς· ἐμοὶ δὲ ἄρκει δακτυλίδιον μικρόν, ὃ εἶχον καὶ νεκρά’ can mean either that she had had the ring when she was alive in Syracuse (which is not specified) as well as when she was presumed dead (καὶ νεκρά), or that she has had it throughout the journey on the bandits' ship as well as when she was presumed dead (καὶ νεκρά). The first option would indicate that the ring was a gift, either given on the occasion of the engagement or the wedding, which Chaereas saw fit to leave with his wife in her tomb as a funeral offering (following the practice of adorning the dead for the final journey with objects that were dear to them in life),

²⁰ The Greek text for Chariton is taken from the 2004 Teubner edition by B. P. Reardon. Unless specified, translations of Chariton are taken from Reardon 1989.

the second, that the ring was first given to Callirhoe as a funeral offering.²¹ Either way, it was meant as an offering from husband to wife, a token of Chaereas' love that would accompany Callirhoe, lest she be alone in whatever awaited her in the afterlife.

The presence of the ring among the funerary offerings is not secondary. Normally, a similar object would have led to a situation that is common to many a story (possibly including the scene in the Ninus romance), that is, the presence of the portrait of the beloved when a couple suffers separation.²² Intuitively, such a basic triangle (lover-loved-image) originates from the will to make the absent present by creating a substitute of the original in order to fill in the void caused by the separation. As we will see, the ring with the image of Chaereas performs this precise function, but the fact that it follows Callirhoe in the tomb gives it a significantly different connotation, because, whatever the original intention behind it (an engagement or wedding ring, or a funerary offering), it is meant to accompany the lover not through a temporary separation in this world (although it will, given the fact that Callirhoe is alive), but through a permanent one in the other. This is unusual, because it is the image of the dead that should stay with the living and not vice versa. Vernant has described the ancient Greek practice of erecting *kolossoi*, immobile pillar-statues that constitute a physical representation of the departed's double, the equivalent in stone of his *psychê*.²³ The beneficiaries of this practice are always the living, who find consolation for the loss in the symbolic substitute for the dead. Hence we would expect Chaereas to mourn Callirhoe's death over her funerary statue, but there is no such thing in Syracuse. Instead, Chaereas gives Callirhoe his own image, for her to carry in the netherworld, thus reversing the ritual: not the memory of a deceased surviving among the living through its double, but the image of a living person entering the gates of Hades. Whether it is a conscious choice of Chaereas, who is not particularly keen on living anyway, as shown by his vote for his own death sentence at the trial and by the many attempts at suicide to follow, or not, this dreadful perspective will not be without consequences for the young Syracusan.

²¹ There is, however, no reference to the fact that a ring was given either at the engagement or at the wedding, and one should also take into consideration that a ring carrying the image of the beloved acquires more significance when both lovers have one, and Chaereas does not have a ring with the image of Callirhoe. Engagement rings did exist in the ancient world, especially in Rome, but they were usually simple rings made of iron (Pliny *NH* 33,4); Pliny says that rings engraved with effigies were a recent luxury of his times, and that they mostly represented gods or, later, emperors (*Ibid.* 33,12). See also Pulinas 1958. This is to say that making the dead Callirhoe wear a ring with the image of Chaereas on it does not exactly correspond to any attested practice in use either at the time of the story (nor was the use of engagement rings) or during Chariton's times. At the same time, none of it is implausible: the readers would have perceived it as an unusual detail worthy of consideration. As a matter of fact, as we will see, it is not an ornament added for its own sake, but an expedient of the novelist meant to perform precise functions in the story.

²² A treatment of this topic can be found in Bettini 1992. The author considers the story of Chaereas and Callirhoe at pp. 228-229.

²³ J. P. Vernant 1983, 305-320. In Rome the funerary mask portraying the face of the deceased (described by Polybius, 6,53) had a similar function. That statues preserve the spirit of those they represent is shown by a few anecdotes. Aristotle (*Poetica* 1452a) and Plutarch (*De sera numinis vindicta* 553d) tell the story of the statue of Mityls, which falls and kills Mityls' killer. Lucian, in a dialogue meant to ridicule superstitious beliefs, tells the story of the statue of Pelichus, which walks, sings, takes baths, and punishes thieves (*Philopseudes* 18-20).

A small textual problem occurring when Callirhoe is holding the ring, that is precisely after the fact that the ring carries the image of Chaereas has been revealed, allows us to observe some early possible effects of these facts. The words in question are part of Callirhoe's speech (1,14,9-10). Modern editors read 'ἀπόλωλά σοι, Χαίρεα ... τοσοῦτω διαζευχθεῖσα πάθει' 'I am lost to you, Chaereas, separated by so great a pain'. However, the reading of the only extant manuscript of Chariton's text (codex Florentinus Laurentianus Conventi Soppresi 627) is 'ἀπόλωλας, ᾧ Χαίρεα ... τοσοῦτω διαζευχθεῖς πάθει' 'You are dead, Chaereas, separated by so great a pain'. The correction first occurred to Hirschig, who emended 'ἀπόλωλας' with 'ἀπόλωλα', and consequently 'διαζευχθεῖς' with 'διαζευχθεῖσα'.²⁴ Zimmermann defended Hirschig's correction and added a further one: 'ἀπόλωλά σοι' for 'ἀπόλωλας, ᾧ'. According to him, the transmitted reading 'ἀπόλωλας' is untenable, since Callirhoe has no reason to believe that Chaereas is dead, whereas the opposite is certainly true.²⁵ Both the Loeb and Teubner editions (by Goold and Reardon, respectively) retain this final correction, whereas Molinié in the Budé proclaims the corrections inconclusive.²⁶ As legitimate as the reason for the correction seems to be, the original words of the manuscript offer an interesting nuance that is particularly appropriate to the object at stake. In fact, if the erection of images in the funerary ritual has been reversed, and if instead of an image that connects the dead Callirhoe to the world of the living we have an image that connects the living Chaereas to the world of the dead, it would not be unreasonable that the first thing that is said after the first appearance of Chaereas' portrait is: 'You are lost, Chaereas'. It is true that Callirhoe has no reason to believe that Chaereas is physically dead, but she might at the same time have realised that what she is holding could be (and indeed will become) his funerary image. Be that as it may, from now on Chaereas' belonging to the world of the living will be often questioned.

In Book Three, after Callirhoe has married Dionysius in order to save the child she conceived in Syracuse, Chaereas, who, after the fortuitous capture of Theron, has learnt that Callirhoe is alive, lands in Ionia with Polycharmus and the other members of the recovery expedition. In the temple of Aphrodite he sees the golden image of Callirhoe ('εἰκόνα Καλλιρρόης χρυσην' 3,6,3) a votive offering from Dionysius as a sign of gratitude to the goddess for having been able to marry Callirhoe. So far Chaereas has acquired two not equally positive pieces of

²⁴ Hirschig 1856.

²⁵ Zimmermann 1925. He compares this passage to one in 2,4,7 where Dionysius, talking to Leonas, says: ἀπόλωλά σοι, ᾧ Λεωνᾶ.

²⁶ Leaving to Callirhoe the freedom to address Chaereas in whichever way is to her liking at any given time, a brief survey shows that the Vocative Χαίρεα is preceded by ᾧ a minority of times. Of fourteen overall occurrences of the Vocative Χαίρεα, ᾧ is used only twice, both times in 1,4 and coming from the mouth of the man who is acting on behalf of the suitors in order to deceive Chaereas into believing that Callirhoe is unfaithful to him. Callirhoe calls to Chaereas (whether he is there or not) in the Vocative amount to nine, and she never uses ᾧ, which would make of 1,14,9 an isolated case.

information: that Callirhoe is alive, and that she has married another man. He is given little time to ponder the situation, because as soon as he returns to the ship, the whole crew is attacked by a group of Persian soldiers. This is the machination of Phocas, one of Dionysius' men, who, having learnt where the ship was from and who was on it, and guessing that they had come to demand his master's new wife, had told the soldiers that a pirate ship had just landed. Most of the crew is slain, and the survivors (including Chaereas and Polycharmus) are taken as slaves (3,7,1 ff.). That same night Callirhoe is visited by a dream where she sees Chaereas in chains, and immediately shouts his name, thus letting Dionysius learn for the first time of the existence of her first husband. When Callirhoe explains her dream to Dionysius she has no doubt that it signifies that Chaereas is dead (ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν, ἄθλιε, τέθνηκας ζητῶν ἐμὲ (δηλοῖ γὰρ θάνατόν σου τὰ δεσμά), 'o my poor husband, in looking for me you have found death –it is your death that the chains signify-'),²⁷ though shortly after she still shows signs of hope (ἐλπίς τοῦ τάχα ζῆν ἐκείνον καὶ ψευδόνειρον αὐτὴν γεγονέναι, 'hope that perhaps Chaereas was alive and her dream had been a deceptive one').

After what appears to be an ellipsis that covers the uneventful seven months during which the pregnant Callirhoe believes Chaereas is dead (as does Dionysius) and Chaereas is in slavery, the action resumes with the birth of the child and the consequent celebrations proclaimed by Dionysius as a thanksgiving to Aphrodite.²⁸ Here Callirhoe, while praying to Aphrodite in the temple, is informed of the visit of the young Syracusan men to the very same temple that took place in 3,6,3, and putting two and two together learns that Chaereas is alive. Dionysius, made aware of this and scared that Chaereas might actually be alive, questions Phocas about the attack of the soldiers, only to find out that some of the members of the crew survived the attack. Anyway, he keeps this piece of information to himself, and, wanting to put Callirhoe's past once and for all behind her, informs her of the attack and, lying, of the fact that all the Syracusans had died in it, including Chaereas. Finally, he orders the erection of a *taphos* for Chaereas, knowing that the solidity of a grave will bring Callirhoe to a definitive acceptance of the loss and will allow him to stop worrying. During this funeral the image of Chaereas is displayed: ἐπόμπευε δ' εἶδωλον Χαϊρέου πρὸς τὴν ἐν τῷ δακτυλίῳ σφραγίδα διατυπωθέν, 'At the head of the procession was an image of Chaereas, modeled from the seal of Callirhoe's ring' (4,1,10). Contrarily to what had happened to Callirhoe's funeral in Syracuse, Chaereas is given a proper *eidolon*, the funerary *kolossos* that normally accompanies the ritual, and this statue happens to be modelled after the image on the ring.

²⁷ Possibly, but not necessarily, 'τέθνηκας' here might parallel 'ἀπόλωλας' in 1,14,9 as the second instance when Callirhoe considers her first husband to be dead.

²⁸ 3,7,7. More on the chronology of these events will be said later.

The halo of death that this object held since its appearance has borne fruit: the ring that created the connection between Chaereas and the underworld has ultimately led to the erection of his funerary *kolossos*, his double in death.²⁹ Far from being a simple ornament, the ring with the image of Chaereas has since its first appearance had an active role in the plot. It highlights the reversal of the habitual use of funerary images that took place during Callirhoe's funeral, thus introducing Chaereas to the world of the dead. It triggers an alternation of opinions concerning the life or death of the Syracusan, built on fears, hopes, missing pieces of knowledge, and half lies. The image on the ring starts the development of these doubts by first attaching a deathly nuance to Chaereas, and fulfils its role by ending up being precisely his funerary image. In view of this, reading 1,14,9 with or without the emendation does not seem to make a major difference, since the anomaly that anticipates Chaereas' funeral is already contained in his image being a funeral offering. However, following the manuscript's reading 'ἀπόλωλας, ὦ Χαίρέα' would function well on two levels, as Callirhoe's personal and sad realisation that her husband is connected with the underworld, and as striking warning for the reader.³⁰ Ultimately, the reversal of the ritual mirrors an important reversal in the plot: gradually, the situation where Chaereas believes to be dead a completely alive Callirhoe has changed into a situation where Callirhoe believes to be dead a completely alive Chaereas. Though symmetrical, their associations with death present at least one remarkable difference: Callirhoe's dead body is seen, but no funerary *eidolon* of her is erected, whereas Chaereas' death is only heard of, but his funerary image is well established. Perhaps this can account for the fact that the characters' reactions to Callirhoe's resuscitation are very rational and matter-of-fact, whereas Chaereas' return to life is long, filled with tribulations, and met with disbelief. Unlike Chaereas, in fact, Callirhoe was never bound to the underworld by her *kolossos*, her double in death.

Stories about the death of the beloved and the problems that arise in connection with their images are in the background of Chaereas' situation. Greek mythology taught that there could be something very sinister, even menacing, about the image-double of a dead person, for the bridge that it opens between this world and the other can be crossed both ways.³¹ In the famous case of Protesilaus and Laodamia, for instance, consorting with the statue of the dead husband inevitably leads Laodamia to death, regardless of the love that united them when he was alive. Similarly,

²⁹ On the dangers of the bond between a *kolossos* and a living person see Brillante 1988, 21-22.

³⁰ Notice also the fact that Callirhoe's interactions with the two images (the ring and the *eidolon*) are identical, for in both cases she kisses and speaks to them: compare 1,14,9 (εἶδεν ἐν τῷ δακτυλίῳ τὴν εἰκόνα τὴν Χαίρέου καὶ καταφιλοῦσα) with 4,1,11 (ἡ Καλλιρρόη Χαίρέα περιεχύθη καὶ καταφιλοῦσα τὴν εἰκόνα).

³¹ Vernant 1983; Bettini 1992, 64 ff. For the deathly aspect of the images in Chariton see Auger 1983, 45-48.

Admetus proposes to build a statue of his generous wife Alcestis and live with it after her death.³² Admetus is lucky enough to have Heracles bring Alcestis back from the dead, but the final reunion is a sweet-and-sour rather than a happy ending. As she does not speak, he is not sure whether she is real or a ghost, and consequently even accuses Heracles of being a necromancer.³³ Chaereas' return will be met with a similar attitude. It comes at the end of a climax of courtroom excitement, where Dionysius' last speech (5,6,5 ff.) lays great stress on the Syracusan's oscillation between life and death. Chariton underlines Chaereas' situation by exploiting precisely those myths that deal with difficulties emerging in the interaction of living and dead, as can be seen by the reactions of Callirhoe and Dionysius. Just like Admetus, in 5,9,4 Callirhoe will wonder whether the person she saw was a ghost, brought back by a Persian mage:

ἐκεῖνος ἦν Χαίρεας ὁ ἐμός, ἢ καὶ τοῦτο πεπλάνημα; τάχα γὰρ Μιθριδάτης διὰ τὴν δίκην εἶδωλον ἔπεμψε· λέγουσι γὰρ ἐν Πέρσῃς εἶναι μάγους.

Was that my Chaereas? Or is that too an illusion? Perhaps Mithridates called up a spirit for the trial; they say there are magicians in Persia.

Similarly, Dionysius will ask himself in 5,10,1:

ποῖος οὗτος ἐπ' ἐμοῦ Προτεσίλεως ἀνεβίω; τίνα τῶν ὑποχθονίων θεῶν ἠσέβησα, ἵνα εὕρω μοι νεκρὸν ἀντερασστὴν, οὗ τάφον ἔχω;

What Protesilaos is this who has come back to life to plague me? What god of hell have I offended that I should find a rival in a dead man –dead, and buried on my land?

The stories of Laodamia and Admetus tell us that there is no real happy return from the dead, and that even images of dead people can be dangerous and lead to death, inasmuch as they constitute a connection between the two worlds. A return such as that of Alcestis in the eponymous tragedy and Chaereas in 5,8, unexpected and given from above, almost as a gift, leaves more doubts than joyful reunification. Chaereas' first return is, as a matter of fact, a failure. Not only does it not put an end to the couple's separation, but it also has no effect with regard to its original *raison d'être*, that is, serving as the major witness for the solution of the trial. The trial, far from being decided, is at first prolonged due to the King's infatuation for Callirhoe, and then suspended due to the Egyptian rebellion starting in 6,8. After Chaereas' appearance almost three more books will be needed before the definitive reunion with Callirhoe (8,1). This gives Chariton the opportunity to extend the

³² Eur. *Al.* 348 ff. The story of Aegialeus and the mummy of his late wife at the beginning of Book Five of Xenophon's *Ephesiaca* repropose in a grotesque way the same dynamics. See later in this chapter.

³³ Eur. *Al.* 1119 ff. On the strangeness provoked by Alcestis' return to life see Brillante 1988, 29.

narrative through the description of the war and to finally portray the military prowess of a Chaereas with nothing more to lose, but it also gives Callirhoe the time that she needs to reflect on the fact that Chaereas is real again, and not an image of death. And, as a sign that the images, their implications, and the deception that they have produced in the past have been left behind once and for all, the recognition scene rejects the use of sight.

Chaereas, currently serving as a military leader for the Egyptian army, is led to see a woman who has been taken prisoner and is threatening to let herself starve to death.³⁴ Polycharmus, hoping to direct the friend towards a new marriage (not unlike Heracles with Admetus in Eur. *Al.* 1085 ff.), encourages him to go and see the woman. Once in the room, Chaereas cannot see the woman, for she is veiled (not unlike Alcestis), but is nonetheless shaken by something about her: εὐθὺς ἐκ τῆς ἀναπνοῆς καὶ τοῦ σχήματος ἔταράχθη τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ μετέωρος ἐγένετο, ‘he felt his heart stirred at once by the way she breathed and the look of her, and felt a thrill of excitement’ (8,1,7). It is her breath, before anything else, that attracts his attention. As the scene proceeds, Chaereas addresses the still unknown woman, promising she will not be hurt. At this point, with Chaereas still talking, the woman recognises his voice, unveils herself, showing him the long-awaited face of his wife Callirhoe, and shouts his name:

Ἔτι λέγοντος ἡ Καλλιρρόη γνωρίσασα τὴν φωνὴν ἀπεκαλύψατο καὶ ἀμφότεροι συνεβόησαν· “Χαιρέα – Καλλιρρόη”

Before he had finished speaking, Callirhoe recognized his voice and threw the covering from her face. They both cried out at the same time: “Chaereas!”
“Callirhoe!”

Unlike Admetus’ difficult recognition of Alcestis, due also to the fact that the wife cannot speak (and will not be able to do so for three days), the recognition of Chaereas and Callirhoe is triggered by sounds and hearing, her breathing for him, and his voice for her. To Montiglio’s reasons for a voice-based recognition rather than a sight-based one (interest in voice and its erotic power in the rest of the novel; underlining of the immediate occurrence of the recognition in opposition to Admetus and Alcestis),³⁵ we could add another one: for the entire novel sight and images of the beloved are signs of separation; therefore, they cannot be means of reunification. The failure of the trial and of Chaereas’ first appearance is entailed by the drawbacks of his image-double: even after seeing him in the flesh she says: παρόντα Χαιρέαν οὐ βλέπω, ‘Chaereas is near me and I cannot

³⁴ An detailed analysis of the recognition scene in Montiglio 2013, 16 ff.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 27 ff.

see him' (6,7,9). The final and definitive recognition cannot be hesitant or unsure but needs to be genuine and instant, and whereas sight has proven to be unreliable, voice and hearing accomplish it.

Having observed the rise of problems derived from the deathly implications of Callirhoe's ring, and their resolution, let us consider another use of Chaereas' image. Callirhoe is alone in Miletus. In a very short time she went from being the first girl of Syracuse to being sold as a slave in a completely different part of the Mediterranean. So far, nothing too divergent from the path of a novel's heroine. Heroines usually deal with pirates and delinquents who pose a threat to their virginity, they endure pain and hardships and sometimes, though rarely, take part in fights. Callirhoe has her fair amount of exciting misfortunes, but the most serious problems she is made to face are on a completely different scale from those experienced by her counterparts. Unlike other heroines, whose experience of relationships rarely goes beyond the few fixed aspects of unconditional love, occasional jealousy, and constant longing for the other, Callirhoe becomes a married woman quite soon in the novel, and is then confronted with critical realistic decisions: whether or not she should terminate her pregnancy, and the choice of getting married a second time.³⁶ In view of this, the psychological stress under which the young Syracusan is put far surpasses that of any other heroine of a Greek novel. It is in this respect that the image on the ring plays an important role in compensating for the absence of the real Chaereas.

After having been sold as a slave, Callirhoe's days in Miletus proceed rather quietly, with the population getting to know her and her beauty and with Dionysius falling deeply in love with her. The event that disturbs this situation and forces things to take the most complicated path is Callirhoe's discovery that she is pregnant (2,8,4). Given her condition, she takes into consideration whether it would not be best to terminate the pregnancy. She ponders on the one hand the fact that she does not want Hermocrates' descendant to be born a slave, and on the other her maternal feeling towards the child (μήτηρ ἀποκτείνει τὸν ἐκ τάφου σωθέντα καὶ ληστῶν; 'he has escaped from the tomb, from pirates –shall his mother kill him?' 2,9,4). That same night she is visited by her husband, and this dream will take care of directing her towards a decision otherwise difficult to make:

ταῦτα λογιζομένη δι' ὅλης νυκτὸς ὕπνος ἐπῆλθε πρὸς ὀλίγον. ἐπέστη δὲ αὐτῇ εἰκὼν Χαιρέου πάντα αὐτῷ ὁμοία, μέγεθός τε καὶ ὄμματα κάλ' εἰκυῖα, καὶ φωνήν, καὶ τοῖα περὶ χροῖ εἴματα ἔστο. ἔστως δὲ "παρατίθεμαί σοι" φησίν, "ὦ γυναῖ, τὸν υἱόν." ἔτι δὲ βουλομένου λέγειν ἀνέθορεν ἡ Καλλιρόη, θέλουσα αὐτῷ περιπλακῆναι. σύμβουλον οὖν τὸν ἄνδρα νομίσασα θρέψαι τὸ παιδίον ἔκρινε.

³⁶ These events mark a significant growth in Callirhoe, against the view that protagonists of novels are idealised but have relatively flat characters. The most recent analysis of Callirhoe's monologues and decisions is De Temmerman 2014, 61 ff.

All night long she pursued these thoughts; and as she did so, sleep stole over her momentarily, and a vision of Chaereas stood over her, like him in every way, *like to him in stature and fair looks and voice, and wearing just such clothes*. As he stood there, he said, “I entrust our son to you, my wife.” He wanted to say yet more, but Callirhoe jumped up and tried to embrace him. So on her husband’s advice, as she thought, she decided to rear her child.

(2,9,6)

Behind the most excruciating decision lies the presence of an image of Chaereas, this time in a dream.³⁷ Chaereas’ *eikôn*, first in the ring and then in the dream, is not there for Callirhoe to be a heart-rending memento of the past, but instead constitutes a form of consolation as well as an active presence that influences the future. The child of Chaereas and Callirhoe will live, but not without consequences for its mother.

Since Dionysius, in love with her, will never allow her to raise another man’s child in his house, Callirhoe decides to follow Plangon’s plan (who is trying to solve both her master’s wishes and the girl’s situation) and marry Dionysius and tell him that the child is his (only two months have passed since conception). The choice between her virtue and her child is not an easy one, and her resolution wavers. In the blackest night, alone in her room, she resorts again to Chaereas’ image:

ἀνελθοῦσα δὲ εἰς τὸ ὑπερῶν ἢ Καλλιρρόη καὶ συγκλείσασα τὰς θύρας τὴν εἰκόνα Χαιρέου τῇ γαστρὶ προσέθηκε καὶ “Ἴδού” φησι “τρῆς γεγόναμεν, ἀνὴρ καὶ γυνὴ καὶ τέκνον. Βουλευσώμεθα περὶ τοῦ κοινῆ συμφέροντος.”

Callirhoe went up to her room and shut the door. She held Chaereas’s picture to her womb. “Here are the three of us,” she said “husband, wife, and child; let us decide what is best for us all.”

(2,11,1)

Regardless of the current state of her almost non-existent family, Callirhoe here is still able to assemble everyone in a peculiar domestic reunion, constituted by herself, Chaereas’ image on the ring she is wearing, and the unborn child in her womb. Each of the three participants is entitled one vote. To Callirhoe staying loyal to Chaereas is more important than anything else, even than the child, but the child goes obviously against her, as does Chaereas, who in the dream had said ‘παρατίθεμαί σοι τὸν υἱόν’, and the decision is taken: Callirhoe will marry Dionysius for the sake of the child, with the blessing of her husband’s image.

³⁷ See Guidorizzi 1988 on dreams in Greek culture and MacAlister 1996 for dreams in the novels. On the use and function of dreams in Chariton see Auger 1983.

Chaereas' images, be it on the ring or in the dream, contributed equivalently in their function of substituting the real Chaereas in times of great distress.³⁸ His images not only evoke his memory, but also give him an active role at a time when he is completely absent both as a husband and as a character.³⁹ His active presence can be felt in the gradual shifts in Callirhoe's attitude towards the child, from doubt, to hope, and finally to certainty. The night of the dream, before falling asleep and being visited by Chaereas' image, she dwells on the child's possible future, if it will have any at all: τί δ' ἄν υἱὸς ἦ; τί δ' ἄν ὅμοιος τῷ πατρί; 'What if it is a son? What if he is like his father?' (2,9,4). At the end of Book Two, however, after Chaereas' appearance in the dream and while she is holding his image on her belly, therefore nearest to the child, these precise questions are turned into affirmative statements: πέπεισμαι γὰρ ὅτι ὅμοιον σε τέξομαι τῷ πατρί, 'I am sure I shall bring you into the world in the likeness of your father' (2,11,2). The close contact of the image with the child has assured her with regard to its sex and resemblance to the father. The final step is reached after the child is born, when, during the ceremony announced by Dionysius as a thanksgiving to Aphrodite, Callirhoe asks for a moment of private prayer with the goddess:

ὦ δέσποινα, γινώσκω τὴν χάριν· ὑπὲρ ἑμαυτῆς γὰρ οὐκ οἶδα. τότ' ἄν σοι καὶ περὶ ἑμαυτῆς ἠπιστάμην χάριν, εἴ μοι Χαιρέαν ἐτήρησας. πλὴν εἰκόνα μοι δέδωκας ἀνδρὸς φιλτάτου καὶ ὅλον οὐκ ἀφείλω μου Χαιρέαν.

I am grateful to you, mistress. On my own behalf I am not sure. I should be grateful to you for myself as well if you had watched over Chaereas for me. But you have given me an image of my dear husband; you have not taken Chaereas from me altogether.
(3,8,7-8)

The child has now become the *eikôn* of Chaereas, as if the *eikôn* of Chaereas has now fulfilled its role of transmitting resemblance and consolidating the family unit.⁴⁰

Playing on the theme of the portrait substituting the lover during times of separation, Chariton attributes to the image of Chaereas an active presence in the story. Its role is not simply to be observed and be the object of longing. It is consulted in times of trouble, and helps in making important decisions that change both characters and plot. As a substitute for Chaereas, it has a

³⁸ Auger 1983, 46.

³⁹ After Callirhoe's funeral (1,6) the narration follows the heroine to Miletus until after the wedding (3,2), which means that almost two books go by before Chaereas' story is resumed.

⁴⁰ Bettini 1992, 229; Zeitlin 2003, 73-74. Although it is difficult to draw a precise parallel between Chariton and Heliodorus, the fact that a story of resemblance transmitted by an image will play a crucial role in the *Aethiopica* cannot pass unnoticed.

remarkable impact on Callirhoe's state of mind, and it is so effective that it seems almost to consolidate the child's resemblance to his father. In addition to this, Chariton does not forget that the ring belongs to funerary offerings, and exploits the potential of this situation, which culminates in the erection of Chaereas' *kolossos*. Whatever the value attached to the image when it was given as a gift, its funerary calling prevails. This fact is not forgotten, and it influences the way in which the characters who have seen the *kolossos* react to Chaereas' return. Chariton is able to overcome this difficulty by letting time go by and allowing the deathly double of Chaereas to be replaced by the original. The ring with the image of Chaereas is not an ornament; it is a recurrent and evolving presence that contributes to the development of characters and plot. Far from being mentioned and then left to its own destiny, all of its aspects and their repercussions are followed throughout the story until its end. As a signal that this was meant to be a constituent trait of the novel, very similar dynamics can be observed, to an even greater extent, for the images of Callirhoe.

2.2.2. Images of Callirhoe

If the images of Chaereas are connected for the most part with the sphere of private and domestic life, those of Callirhoe are characterised by a display that is not just public, but known to the masses. This can be traced from the very beginning of the novel, when Callirhoe is defined, deliberately ambiguously, as θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα παρθένου καὶ ἄγαλμα τῆς ὅλης Σικελίας, 'a wonderful girl, the pride of all Sicily'. The vicinity to the divine sphere suggested by the word *agalma* is confirmed in the words that follow,⁴¹ where her beauty is compared to that of a deity.⁴² Now, resorting to the divine as the only term of comparison fit to convey an idea of majesty that goes beyond comprehension and finds no parallels among humans is no original trait, for it has accompanied heroes and heroines from the *Iliad* onwards.⁴³ In this sense, Chariton, as well as the other novelists, exploits this ancient feature to the extreme.⁴⁴

Quite often, the assimilation to mythical characters is not direct, but mediated by the artistic representations of them, in order to provide a well-known and shared referent.⁴⁵ This is clearly the case of what is said about Chaereas shortly after:

⁴¹ The word *agalma* bears both the original meaning 'ornament, glory' and the derived one 'offering that glorifies the gods, cult statue'. See Zeitlin 2003, 80 n. 24.

⁴² ἦν γὰρ τὸ κάλλος οὐκ ἀνθρώπινον ἀλλὰ θεῖον, οὐδὲ Νηρηίδος ἢ Νύμφης τῶν ὄρειων ἀλλ' αὐτῆς Ἀφροδίτης παρθένου, 'her beauty was more than human, it was divine, and it was not the beauty of a Nereid or a mountain nymph at that, but of the maiden Aphrodite herself'.

⁴³ Among many examples, Alexander is godlike at *Il.* 3,16, and Helen resembles the immortal goddesses at 3,158.

⁴⁴ A fact that has been clear since the earliest studies on the novels. Rohde 1876³, 160 ff. sees the origin of this in Hellenistic poetry.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 165-166. On this see also Schmeling 2005.

Χαιρέας γάρ τις ἦν μειράκιον εὐμορφον, πάντων ὑπερέχον, οἶον Ἀχιλλέα καὶ Νιρέα καὶ Ἴππόλυτον καὶ Ἀλκιβιάδην πλάσται καὶ γραφεῖς δεικνύουσι.

There was a young man named Chaereas, surpassingly handsome, like Achilles and Nireus and Hippolytus and Alcibiades as sculptors and painters portray them.

Following the same principle, Callirhoe will be compared, in the course of the novel, to the *Sleeping Ariadne* (1,6,2) and the *Aphrodite Anadyomene* (8,6,11). Such an apparently simple procedure serves in fact different functions. The heroic or divine metaphor is sufficient to provide an image that helps the readers' visualisation of the heroine, projects her in a superhuman sphere, and also saves the author the trouble of having to describe her.⁴⁶ Take for instance the scene where Callirhoe, during her funeral, is compared to the sleeping Ariadne:

Κατέκειτο μὲν Καλλιρρόη νυμφικὴν ἐσθῆτα περικειμένη καὶ ἐπὶ χρυσηλάτου κλίνης μείζων τε καὶ κρείττων, ὥστε πάντες εἵκαζον αὐτὴν Ἀριάδνη καθευδούσῃ.

Callirhoe, as she lay there dressed in her bridal clothes, on a bier decorated with gold, bigger and lovelier than in life, made everyone think how like the sleeping Ariadne she looked.

(1,6,2)

It seems that in antiquity there was not one single specific artwork which everyone knew as the *Sleeping Ariadne* (unlike, say, the *Cnidian Aphrodite*). However, the subject was very popular, and the image of the sleeping heroine was the most recurrent motif in Ariadne's iconography.⁴⁷ The *Sleeping Ariadne* is one of those elements that connect the fictional world created by Chariton and the real world of the readers, for it exists in both. All the people who are attending the funeral know what the *Sleeping Ariadne* looks like, and agree that the girl they are seeing is similar to the work of art, at the same time elevating Callirhoe by associating her with one of the famous heroines from mythology. But the readers, too, are able to enjoy the same show as the Syracusans because they also are well aware of the appearance of the referent 'Sleeping Ariadne', and they are led to think about it as soon as they read the words. If the author can count on the fact that the readers, too, are picturing the famous work of art for themselves, then he needs not describe any longer what Callirhoe actually looks like. This can only work for those works of art, the knowledge of which

⁴⁶ Schmeling 2005, 45; on Chariton's particular use of the divine metaphor see Hägg 2002; on the deliberate lack of precise, if any, description of the heroines of the novels see Dubel 2001.

⁴⁷ See Cressedi 1958.

cannot possibly be questioned, as in the case of the comparison with *Aphrodite Anadyomene* that takes place at the end of the novel, when the protagonists return to Syracuse:

ἔδοξε δὲ ἔτι καὶ αὐταῖς Καλλιρρόην καλλίω γεγονέναι, ὥστε ἀληθῶς εἶπες ἂν αὐτὴν ὄραν τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ἀναδυομένην ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης.

Callirhoe seemed to them to be lovelier than ever; you truly would have thought you were looking at Aphrodite herself as she arose from the sea.⁴⁸
(8,6,11)

Curiously, these two references to works of art, one at the beginning and one at the end of the narrative, end up encircling Callirhoe's life by providing the question whose answer constitutes the core of the novel: how does a sleeping and abandoned heroine become a goddess that is born again from the sea?

We might think that we find ourselves again in the divine-metaphor situation when by the end of Book One Callirhoe, now in Miletus, appears for the first time in front of the Ionians:

ἀποκαλύψας τὴν Καλλιρρόην καὶ λύσας αὐτῆς τὴν κόμην, διανοίξας τὴν θύραν, πρῶτην ἐκέλευσεν εἰσελθεῖν. Ὁ δὲ Λεωνᾶς καὶ πάντες οἱ ἔνδον ἐπιστάσης αἰφνίδιον κατεπλάγησαν, οἱ μὲν δοκοῦντες θεὰν ἑώρακεναι· καὶ γὰρ ἦν τις λόγος ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς Ἀφροδίτην ἐπιφαίνεσθαι.

He uncovered Callirhoe's head, shook her hair loose, and then opened the door and told her to go in first. Leonas and all the people in the room were awestruck at the sudden apparition –some of them thought they had seen a goddess, for people did say that Aphrodite manifested herself in the fields.
(1,14,1)

It is true that Callirhoe's superhuman beauty has taken everyone aback since the very beginning, hence the recourse to the divine metaphor in order to explain such a phenomenon, but in this case for the first time we get the impression that the distance between the terms of the metaphor (Callirhoe and Aphrodite) is not being respected.⁴⁹ This is confirmed shortly after and continuously stressed throughout Book Two. Attending her bath, the countrywomen believe that they are seeing something divine (ὥς θεῖον πρόσωπον ἔδοξαν ἰδοῦσαι, 'they admired her face as divinely beautiful' 2,2,2),⁵⁰ and after Plangon suggests that she goes to Aphrodite's temple to pray the

⁴⁸ The *Aphrodite Anadyomene* can be referred to a specific artwork more safely than the *Sleeping Ariadne*, for it was a famous masterpiece by Apelles.

⁴⁹ On the connection between Callirhoe and Aphrodite see Laplace 1980. Hägg 1971, 226 hints at the possible narrative exploitation of this relationship. For Callirhoe's epiphanies see Hägg 2002 and Cioffi 2014, 8-13.

⁵⁰ On this scene as her preparation for becoming Aphrodite see Egger 1994.

goddess, one of them will say: Δόξεις, ὦ γύναι, θεασαμένη τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εἰκόνα βλέπειν σεαυτῆς, ‘Lady, when you look at Aphrodite, you’ll think you’re looking at a picture of yourself’. Callirhoe in front of the statue of Aphrodite would not look like a worshipper of the goddess, but like a person standing in front of a mirror. Again, it appears that the compliments that Callirhoe is receiving do not derive from simple flattery but from the belief in a real resemblance between her and Aphrodite.

The countrywoman’s words are truly prophetic of what will happen the following day,⁵¹ when Dionysius goes to the temple while Callirhoe is there too, praying to the goddess:

Ὁ μὲν Διονύσιος ἐξήλαυνεν εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς, ἡ δὲ Καλλιρρόη τῆς νυκτὸς ἐκείνης θεασαμένη τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ἠβουλήθη καὶ πάλιν αὐτὴν προσκυνῆσαι· καὶ ἡ μὲν ἐστῶσα ἤρχετο, Διονύσιος δὲ ἀποπηδήσας ἀπὸ τοῦ ἵππου πρῶτος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν νεών. Ψόφου δὲ ποδῶν αἰσθημένη Καλλιρρόη πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐπεστράφη. Θεασάμενος οὖν ὁ Διονύσιος ἀνεβόησεν· “Ἰλεως εἶης, ὦ Ἀφροδίτη, καὶ ἐπ’ ἀγαθῶ μοι φανείης.”

Dionysius, then, was on his way to the country. That night Callirhoe had dreamed about Aphrodite, and decided to pay homage to her again. She was standing there praying, when Dionysius dismounted and entered the shrine ahead of his companions. Callirhoe heard footsteps and turned to face him. So Dionysius saw her. “Aphrodite,” he cried, “be gracious to me! May your appearance be propitious to me!”
(2,3,5)

The visualisation of the scene by the reader is fostered by the dramatic style in which Chariton describes it. By dividing the first two periods into halves, each one focused now on Dionysius’ action (Ὁ μὲν Διονύσιος...), now on Callirhoe’s (ἡ δὲ Καλλιρρόη...), and then inversely on Callirhoe (καὶ ἡ μὲν...) and then Dionysius (Διονύσιος δὲ...), the approach of the characters is followed slowly and step by step, highlighting its cruciality. The reader, already aware of the perfect resemblance between Callirhoe and Aphrodite, perceives the potential ambiguity in the use of the participle ἐστῶσα, since it is the verb that often defines the standing of statues or of apparition in dreams. When Dionysius enters in the temple he has no way of telling the exact nature of what he is seeing, for he is admiring two figures that are the reflection of one another, and it is only the sudden movement of one of them that allows him to tell which one is not a still image. Their identity makes him choose the only rational explanation: since the figure moving cannot be the image, then it must be the original, Aphrodite.

Since having set foot in Ionia Callirhoe has been drawn, metaphorically but also physically, closer and closer to Aphrodite. This approach comes to its end when the two of them meet in the

⁵¹ Hägg 1971, 226.

temple for the first time (the first time in Miletus), when Callirhoe meets her copy (and vice versa) and woman and goddess are assimilated. What seemed to begin as a compliment has rapidly turned into a misunderstanding which will bear immediate consequences. Callirhoe's modest attempts to deter such an attitude towards her are by far surpassed by her quickly spreading fame, and soon enough she will find herself, at least apparently, the object of the cult's practice:

Ἔσπευδον οὖν πάντες τὴν γυναῖκα ἰδεῖν, προσεποιούντο δὲ πάντες τὴν Ἀφροδίτην προσκυνεῖν.

So they were all eager to see the woman –though they all pretended to be worshipping Aphrodite.
(2,3,9)

This highlights the change in Callirhoe: formerly one of the worshippers of Aphrodite sharing with the others the act of *proskynēsis* towards cult images (cf. 1,1,5), now a living portrait of the goddess, and the direct object of *proskynēsis*.⁵² This will put her through a series of scenes of misunderstanding: when she walks out of the temple in 3,2,14 the sailors think she is Aphrodite and kneel down before her; the people attending her wedding in 3,2,17, their eyes irresistibly drawn to look at her, will shout that it is Aphrodite who is getting married; later on in 3,9,5, informed that the temple had two suspicious visitors, a comprehensibly jealous Dionysius (the visitors were in fact Chaereas and Polycharmus) will call Callirhoe 'my Aphrodite'.

It is not clear how sincere the Ionians are when they worship Callirhoe as a goddess. On the one hand the comparison with Aphrodite seems to come from a genuine resemblance and not just flattery. On the other hand one cannot avoid the impression that they are staging a masquerade, perhaps in order to please their lord Dionysius. In fact the very first time she is made the object of cult they do not 'prostrate themselves before her' but instead 'pretend to prostrate themselves before her' (προσεποιούντο δὲ πάντες τὴν Ἀφροδίτην προσκυνεῖν, 2,3,9). Perhaps what the Ionians are doing is pretending it is Aphrodite whom they are worshipping. Either way, it is important to notice that Callirhoe's deification is strongly focalised through the eyes of the Ionians. It is true that every population that sees her in the novel praises her divine beauty. Chaereas and the Syracusans, as well as the King and the Persians, say that she is of divine beauty and compare her to a goddess. The Ionians, however, are the only one among these who actually make her a goddess, or, better, mistake her for one. Chariton might be taking into account the Ionians' particular predisposition towards Aphrodite, so strong that they are willing to believe in her apparition in the

⁵² See Bettinetti 2001 on the role of statues in Greek religious practice.

flesh (her epiphanies in that area even before Callirhoe's arrival are mentioned in 2,2,5).⁵³ At the same time, the double-like situation that this generates in Miletus leads to critical turns of events that influence the rest of the story.

One such event takes place when Chaereas and Polycharmus set foot on the Ionian coast and visit the temple of Aphrodite. It is important to position this episode within the plot. As long as Chaereas and Callirhoe are together in Syracuse, the narration follows the two of them as one. However, after Callirhoe's abduction, the narration follows her story in Ionia, leaving Chaereas behind for almost two books (1,6 to 3,2). Callirhoe's story is followed until the wedding, or, more precisely, until right before its beginning, when the crowd flocks to see 'Aphrodite getting married' (3,2,17). At this point the narration is interrupted by an abrupt intrusion of the author:

ὅπως δέ, μικρὸν ὕστερον ἔρω. βούλομαι δὲ εἰπεῖν πρῶτον τὰ γενόμενα ἐν Συρακούσαις κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον.

How he did so I shall tell you shortly; first, I want to relate what happened in Syracuse during the same time.

We are then brought back in time and far away in space in order to fill in the gap of what happened to Callirhoe's other half. The time elapsed between Chaereas' discovery of Callirhoe's pillaged tomb and his arrival in Miletus is not specified by Chariton. We can only assume that exploring the coast of Libya looking for Callirhoe, bumping into Theron's drifting ship, taking him back to Syracuse, putting him under trial and torture in order to learn the truth, and finally sailing for Miletus, must have taken quite some time. When they finally arrive in Ionia, however, we do not know at which point of the events taking place in Miletus they are intervening.

As soon as they arrive, Chaereas and Polycharmus go to Aphrodite's temple to pray the goddess. This scene takes place towards the end of this flash-back focused on Chaereas.

Ἔδοξεν οὖν αὐτοῖς προσκυνῆσαι τὴν θεόν, καὶ προσπεσὼν τοῖς γόνασιν αὐτῆς Χαιρέας “σύ μοι, δέσποινα, πρώτη Καλλιρρόην ἔδειξας ἐν τῇ σῇ ἑορτῇ· σὺ καὶ νῦν ἀπόδος, ἦν ἐχαρίσω.” Μεταξὺ ἀνακύψας εἶδε παρὰ τὴν θεὸν εἰκόνα Καλλιρρόης χρυσοῦν, ἀνάθημα Διονυσίου. Τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ. Κατέπεσεν οὖν σκοτοδινιάσας· θεασαμένη δὲ αὐτὸν ἡ ζάκορος ὕδωρ προσήνεγκε καὶ ἀνακτωμένη τὸν ἄνθρωπον εἶπε· “Θάρρει, τέκνον· καὶ ἄλλους πολλούς ἡ θεὸς ἐξέπληξεν· ἐπιφανῆς γὰρ ἔστι καὶ δείκνυσιν ἑαυτὴν ἐναργῶς. Ἄλλ' ἀγαθοῦ μεγάλου τοῦτ' ἔστι σημεῖον. Ὅρας εἰκόνα τὴν χρυσοῦν; αὕτη δούλη μὲν ἦν, ἡ δὲ Ἀφροδίτη πάντων ἡμῶν κυρίαν πεποίηκεν αὐτήν.” “τίς

⁵³ A connection accentuated by the fact that Chariton himself, according to what he tells us, was from a city where the goddess' cult was especially felt, Aphrodisias. On Aphrodisias and Miletus see Tilg 2010, 32 ff., and 25 ff. on the cult of Aphrodite.

γάρ ἐστιν;” ὁ Χαϊρέας εἶπεν. “αὕτη δέσποινα τῶν χωρίων τούτων, ὦ τέκνον, Διονυσίου γυνή, τοῦ πρώτου τῶν Ἴωνων.”

They decided to offer worship to the goddess. Chaereas threw himself at her feet: “Lady,” he said, “you were the first to show me Callirhoe, at your festival; give me back now the woman you granted me.” As he rose, he saw beside the goddess’s statue a golden image of Callirhoe which Dionysius had offered. *And then his limbs gave way, his heart felt faint.* He felt dizzy and fell to the ground. The attendant saw him, brought water, and revived him. “Don’t be frightened, child,” she said. “Many other people have been scared by the goddess besides you; she appears in person, you see, and lets herself be distinctly seen. But this is a sign of great good fortune. You see the golden image? That woman was a slave, and Aphrodite has made her mistress of all of us.” “Why, who is she?” asked Chaereas. “The mistress of this estate, my child, the wife of Dionysius, the leading man in Ionia.”

(3,6,3-5)

Aphrodite plays with Chaereas’ prayers and expectations. The goddess appears to give him instantly what he asked for, that is Callirhoe (Καλλιρρόην ... σὺ καὶ νῦν ἀπόδος), but in fact she does not, for what Chaereas sees is not the real Callirhoe, but an image of her. This image, we learn, is a golden image of Callirhoe, placed next to the statue of Aphrodite as an offering from Dionysius. By doing this, Dionysius has recreated a scene similar to the one that had met his eyes when he entered the temple and saw Callirhoe for the very first time: the statue of Aphrodite and its spitting image (Callirhoe) standing next to her. Judging by the attendant’s words (καὶ ἄλλους πολλοὺς ἢ θεὸς ἐξέπληξεν), it was common to be taken aback by the vision of the goddess. It had been the reaction of Dionysius, the first one who witnessed the two images standing side by side (καταπίπτοντα, 2,2,6), and it has been the reaction of all the Ionians so far. From the attendant’s point of view, Chaereas is just the last of many visitors who had the usual reaction (κατέπεσεν, 3,6,4), and she responds to him by giving him the usual answer.⁵⁴ She is sure that she is giving him the explanation he needs for what she thinks is the reason for his bewilderment. However, Chaereas is possibly the only one whose attention was caught not by the similarity between the statue of Aphrodite and the image of Callirhoe, but by the presence itself of Callirhoe’s image, since he is the only one that does not see in the image a copy of the goddess, but recognises immediately a woman that is very real to him.⁵⁵ The Ionians have always known Callirhoe as Aphrodite’s double: they have considered her a goddess from her first apparition. Chaereas instead has always known the original Callirhoe, and her alone, and will never be mistaken about her identity. He is the only one who does not find any consolation or good omen in the attendant’s words (ἀγαθοῦ μεγάλου τοῦτ’

⁵⁴ Through which we learn that their arrival in Miletus took place at some point after the wedding, thus making Chaereas’ story only partially a flash-back, since it does not end at the point in the plot where it started, but some time after that.

⁵⁵ On this scene and the infallibility of Chaereas’ recognition see Montiglio 2013, 35-36.

ἔστι σημείον), but instead learns the most painful truth, that Callirhoe is married to another man. The different focalisations through which the statue of Aphrodite and the image of Callirhoe are looked at, that is the Ionians' on the one hand, and Chaereas' on the other hand, have produced a misunderstanding that has led to the acquisition of a piece of information that is vital to the plot.

The effects of this are shown in a scene which will take place shortly after and that must be coupled with this one. After the visit to the temple, Chaereas and Polycharmus are assaulted with the rest of their crew, and then taken as slaves to Caria, which for the moment marks the end of Chaereas' story. The narrator beautifully glides from Chaereas' story back to Callirhoe's: the last image we have of Chaereas is as a prisoner in chains, and, immediately after, the first image we have of Callirhoe is her waking up from a dream where she has seen Chaereas in chains.⁵⁶ By now, she has already married Dionysius, which means that her story is not resumed where it had stopped, and that the flash-back focused on Chaereas has allowed Chariton to gloss delicately over Callirhoe's second wedding and the beginning of her life with Dionysius. Chaereas' last important scene, the one in front of the statue, has its parallel, its counterpart, in Callirhoe's first important scene in the resumed narration of her story.

After Callirhoe has given birth to the child, Dionysius proclaims a sumptuous thanksgiving for Aphrodite, during which Callirhoe asks to be left alone to pray to the goddess. She puts the child in the statue's arms and starts her prayer, but is interrupted by her own tears:

ἔτι βουλομένην λέγειν ἐπέσχε τὰ δάκρυα. Μικρὸν οὖν διαλιπούσα καλεῖ τὴν ἰέρειαν· ἡ δὲ πρεσβύτις ὑπακούσασα “τί κλάεις” εἶπεν, “ὦ παιδίον, ἐν ἀγαθοῖς τηλικούτοις; ἤδη γὰρ καὶ σὲ ὡς θεὰν οἱ ξένοι προσκυνοῦσι. πρῶην ἦλθον ἐνθάδε δύο νεανίσκοι καλοὶ παραπλέοντες· ὁ δὲ ἕτερος αὐτῶν θεασάμενός σου τὴν εἰκόνα μικροῦ δεῖν ἐξέπνευσεν. οὕτως ἐπιφανῆ σε ἡ Ἀφροδίτη πεποιήκεν.” ἔπληξε τὴν καρδίαν τῆς Καλλιρόης τοῦτο.

She would have said more but could not for her tears. After a short time she called the priestess. The old woman came when called. “Why are you crying, child,” she asked, “when you have such good fortune? Why, foreigners are actually worshipping you as a goddess now. The other day two handsome young men sailed by here, and one of them almost fainted when he saw your image –that is how famous Aphrodite has made you.” These words struck Callirhoe's heart.
(3,9,1)

Callirhoe is now occupying the same space that Chaereas was occupying but a few days earlier (πρῶην ἦλθον ἐνθάδε δύο νεανίσκοι). The situation is completely symmetrical. Once again, the attendant tries *bona fide* to help and console someone in the temple in front of the two images, but

⁵⁶ This sequence also serves the function of letting us know that the timing of their two separate stories has been realigned.

once again that someone is the only person that can read something more beyond her words.⁵⁷ The message that Callirhoe receives from the attendant's words is not, as was intended by the attendant, that she should be happy because people worship her, but that Chaereas is alive, and in Ionia. Unawares, the attendant has given both protagonists crucial pieces of information that will influence the story to come.

The symmetry of the two scenes underlines the relevance of the object around which they are centred. Had it not been for the image of Callirhoe, Chaereas would never have had that reaction, hence he would never have known about Callirhoe, who would never have known about him a few days later. Ultimately, this progressive acquisition of knowledge will lead to Dionysius' jealousy (when he is informed about what happened), his staging of Chaereas' funeral (in order to nullify Chaereas' influence on Callirhoe), the doubts about Chaereas' death (regarding Mithridates' letters), the necessity of a trial in Babylon, and, in short, to the following five books of the novel. Chariton devised these events in Miletus not only to be vitally necessary to the plot, but also rather hectic. More than any other part of the novel, these chapters of Book Three are conceived in a way that stresses to the maximum the unity of space (the temple of Aphrodite, and especially the area in front of the statue of the goddess and the image of Callirhoe) and the importance of the temporal sequence of events. The intended effect is an increasing tension around a point where the protagonists almost met, having been in the same place but not at the same time.

The sequence concerned is the one included between Chaereas' arrival in Miletus and Callirhoe's scene in the temple during the festival of Aphrodite. The reconstruction of events goes as follows. Chaereas' presence in Miletus is a matter of hours, just about the time to visit the temple, go back to the ship, be attacked by the soldiers (on that night), and get captured. The same night Callirhoe has the dream where she sees Chaereas in chains,⁵⁸ followed by the telling of it and by Dionysius' worried reaction:

Παρεμυθεῖτο τοίνυν ὡς δυνατὸν μάλιστα τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας παρεφύλαττε, μὴ ἄρα τι δεινὸν ἑαυτὴν ἐργάσῃται. περιέσπασε δὲ τὸ πένθος ἐλπίς τοῦ τάχα ζῆν ἐκεῖνον καὶ ψευδόνειρον αὐτὴν γεγονέναι· τὸ δὲ πλεῖον ἡ γαστήρ· ἐβδόμῳ γὰρ μηνὶ μετὰ τοὺς γάμους υἱὸν ἔτεκε τῷ μὲν δοκεῖν ἐκ Διονυσίου, Χαϊρέου δὲ ταῖς ἀληθείαις.

⁵⁷ Although not specified, it is reasonable to assume that the attendant in 3,6 (ἡ ζῆλοποιος) and the old woman here in 3,9 (ἡ δὲ πρεσβύτις) are the same person.

⁵⁸ The fact that this scene (Callirhoe waking up from the dream) takes place right after Chaereas' capture is not said explicitly, but, given its place in the narration and the effect of continuity and succession to Chaereas' story that it is meant to create, other options seem impracticable. The dream is immediately subsequent, if not concurrent, to Chaereas' capture.

So he consoled his wife as best he could, and for many days he watched over her in case she did herself some harm. Callirhoe's grief was dissipated by the hope that perhaps Chaereas was alive and her dream had been a deceptive one, and most of all by the child in her womb. Seven months after the wedding she gave birth to a son, ostensibly Dionysius's child, but in reality that of Chaereas.
(3,7,7)

Although Chariton could have been clearer about this, it seems that at the time of the dream (thus right after Chaereas has been in Miletus) Callirhoe is still pregnant, and gives birth soon after. After the dream, in fact, Chariton still talks in terms of 'womb' (τὸ δὲ πλεῖον ἢ γαστήρ), but the festival of Aphrodite organised as a thanksgiving for the birth of the child cannot be more than a couple of days after Chaereas' landing. We know this because during the festival the same temple's attendant that saw Chaereas in 3,6,4 will say to Callirhoe 'πρώην ἦλθον ἐνθάδε δύο νεανίσκοι καλοὶ παραπλέοντες' ('The other day two handsome young men sailed by here', 3,9,1), and πρώην dates Chaereas' visit (when Callirhoe was still pregnant) back to a maximum of a few days prior to the festival, as it is also agreed by all translators. The period of time between the dream and the birth is revealed by another indication beside πρώην: Dionysius watches over Callirhoe 'for many days' (ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας). Now, 'πρώην' and 'ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας' refer to the same period of time, but obviously mean different things. The contradiction could be explained through focalisation: what to an anxious soon-to-be father appears like a long time is in fact only a couple of days for an external observer. Alternatively, with Hägg, 'πρώην' should be understood as simply meaning 'recently'.⁵⁹ What is sure is that the child must have been born in between the two events.⁶⁰

This fact, not unstated but certainly downplayed by Chariton, perhaps in order not to highlight the very stretched chronological compatibilities that surround it, greatly increases the readers' feeling of a missed-by-a-minute situation. Chaereas was in the same city as Callirhoe, even in the same place (in front of the statue of Aphrodite), and almost during the birth of his child. The two protagonists, as well as the two branches of the narration that parted when they got separated, are at the point of meeting each other in a finally complete family reunion, but the coincidence is missed by a very short period of time, and what could have been the solution of the novel becomes

⁵⁹ Hägg 1971, 142. Is there enough time, in practice, for all these events (arrival of Chaereas, dream, birth of the child, organisation of the festival, recovery of Callirhoe from birthgiving) to take place in the short timespan between Chaereas' landing and the attendant's 'πρώην' at the festival? Barely, unless 'πρώην' is used vaguely and indicates 'recently'. Anyway, Chariton does underline Callirhoe's almost divine recovery: "νῦν μὲν οὖν λεχῶς ἔτι εἰμί, περιμείναντες δὲ ὀλίγας ἡμέρας ἀσφαλέστερον ἀπίωμεν εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς." ταχέως δὲ αὐτὴν ἀνέλαβεν ἐκ τοῦ τόκου καὶ κρείττων ἐγένετο καὶ μείζων, "For the moment I am still recovering from the birth; it will be safer if we wait a few days before we go to the country." She quickly recovered from the birth and grew stronger and bigger' (3,8,2).

⁶⁰ The words 'ἐβδόμῳ γὰρ μηνὶ μετὰ τοὺς γάμους υἱὸν ἔτεκε' are somewhat misleading, as they seem to indicate a long ellipsis after the dream, but they merely state the duration of the pregnancy.

instead a new beginning. As a sign of this, just as in Book One the couple's separation was marked by Callirhoe's funeral, this new cycle of separations begins with another funeral, this time Chaereas' (4,1 ff.). In Chariton's wave-like arrangement of the paths of Chaereas and Callirhoe, insurmountable distance immediately follows nearly achieved reunification. This produces in the reader the appropriate level of frustration that makes them read forward, waiting for the couple's next chance and knowing that, having missed this one, it will take a while before they get another.

From this point of view, the statue of Aphrodite and the image of Callirhoe are not mere objects to be admired in Miletus, but instead play an important role with regard both to the plot and the characters. They adhere to the very core of the plot by representing the crossroads between the separate adventures of Chaereas and Callirhoe: they are placed in a strategic location and are seen at a strategic time, thus constituting the cornerstone that allows a crucial turn of events. Moreover, they deepen the definition of the characters by making the image of Callirhoe the point of convergence of everyone's attention, therefore revealing, through the lens of the different reactions, where they stand in their relationship with Callirhoe. Dionysius and the Ionians always saw her as a goddess and worshipped her. Callirhoe, however, is no goddess, and what they are adoring is but her image, unlike Chaereas, who instantly recognises her for who she really is. It is not a coincidence that at the end of the novel the final retribution that the characters are given agrees with the way in which they have looked at Callirhoe: Chaereas will have the original, whereas Dionysius is left with the image, the double:

ταῦτα εἰπὼν παρεσκευάζετο τὴν ταχίστην καταβαίνειν εἰς Ἴωνίαν, μέγα νομίζων παραμύθιον πολλὴν ὁδὸν καὶ πολλῶν πόλεων ἡγεμονίαν καὶ τὰς ἐν Μιλήτῳ Καλλιρόης εἰκόνας.

With these words he got ready to return to Ionia as quickly as possible, thinking he would find great consolation in a long journey, authority over many cities, and the images of Callirhoe in Miletus.
(8,5,15)

Finally Callirhoe's interaction with Aphrodite's statue and her own image is worth considering. Callirhoe's modesty about her beauty, and the fact that she has always been a devoted worshipper of Aphrodite, keep her from following the general opinion of the Ionians that she and the goddess are the same thing. In fact, when her resemblance to Aphrodite is underlined in her presence, she speaks against it and makes sure that the due distance between her and the goddess is kept.⁶¹ On the

⁶¹ See for instance her reaction to the first time when Dionysius mistakes her for an apparition of Aphrodite: παῦσαι μου καταγελῶν καὶ θεὸν ὀνομάζων τὴν οὐδὲ ἄνθρωπον εὐτυχῆ. 'Stop making fun of me! Stop calling me a goddess –I'm not even a happy mortal!' (2,3,7).

other hand, when it comes to manifesting her own faith, Callirhoe's relationship with Aphrodite becomes close and personal. She is first seen praying to the statue of Aphrodite in Syracuse, immediately after having seen Chaereas for the first time (1,1,7), and the last thing she is seen doing at the very end of the novel is again interacting with Aphrodite's statue in order to thank her for the happy end of her adventures (8,8,15). When praying to Aphrodite Callirhoe is not content with just looking at the goddess' s statue from afar, she kneels in front of it and touches it, alternating kisses and prayers. Following the Greek practice, Callirhoe's worshipping involves interaction and direct contact with the cult object, reflecting the belief that one can reach the divinity through its image.⁶²

This attitude stays immutable throughout the whole novel, even in Miletus, where everyone else puts her at the same level with Aphrodite. However, showing that this does not influence the way in which she looks at herself, she will not take even for a moment her own image in the temple into consideration. As a matter of fact, when during the festival Callirhoe asks to be left alone in the temple with Aphrodite, we hardly remember that an image of the girl is standing right next to the statue of the goddess, because she does not pay the slightest attention to it, careful not to get trapped in the same confusion that has befallen everyone else about her identity. Instead, she performs a very singular ritual that brings about a unique scene:

πρῶτον μὲν οὖν τὸν υἱὸν εἰς τὰς αὐτῆς ἀγκάλας ἐνέθηκε, καὶ ὥφθη θέαμα κάλλιστον, οἷον οὔτε ζωγράφος ἔγραψεν οὔτε πλάστης ἔπλασεν οὔτε ποιητῆς ἰστόρησε μέχρι νῦν· οὐδεὶς γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐποίησεν Ἄρτεμιν ἢ Ἀθηνᾶν βρέφος ἐν ἀγκάλαις κομίζουσαν.

First she took her son in her own arms; that formed a beautiful sight, such as no painter has ever yet painted nor sculptor sculpted nor poet recounted, since none of them has represented Artemis or Athena holding a baby in her arms.
(3,8,6)

The words used by Chariton recall the introduction of the protagonists at the beginning of the novel, and in fact seem to combine what had been said about Callirhoe (θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα παρθένου καὶ ἄγαλμα, 1,1,1)⁶³ and Chaereas (οἷον Ἀχιλλέα καὶ Νιρέα καὶ Ἴππόλυτον καὶ Ἀλκιβιάδην πλάσται καὶ γραφεῖς ἀποδεικνύουσι, 1,1,3), which fits well with the idea that what is being introduced here is the fruit of their union. Following the form of worship that characterises her, Callirhoe extends the close contact with the representations of Aphrodite to her newly born son. There is, once again, a small textual problem. All editors have 'εἰς τὰς αὐτῆς ἀγκάλας ἐνέθηκε',

⁶² On these gestures see Bettinetti 2001, 170.

⁶³ What is said here about Callirhoe with the child on her arms (θέαμα κάλλιστον) will also be said by the King in 6,1,9, again referred to Callirhoe.

but the manuscript has ‘αὐτῆς’. According to the manuscript, Callirhoe puts the child in the arms of the statue, which is something unprecedented that would reasonably create the spectacle stressed by Chariton (ὤφθη θέαμα κάλλιστον). The reading ‘αὐτῆς’ indicates instead that Callirhoe is taking her son in her own arms, a sight (a mother with a child in her arms) perhaps less uncommon, but equally marvellous, especially given the way in which the Ionians always look at Callirhoe. The reading ‘αὐτῆς’ would solve a problem, that is, that a few lines later Callirhoe still has the baby in her arms (στᾶσα πλησίον τῆς Ἀφροδίτης καὶ ἀνατείνασα χερσὶ τὸ βρέφος, ‘she stood near Aphrodite and held up her child’),⁶⁴ but create another one, because when Callirhoe walked into the temple she probably had the child already in her arms (the child is newborn), and would therefore not need to put it in her own arms again (ἐνέθηκε), as the text says (notice also that she is alone, so there is no one else who could have carried it and given it to her). On the other hand, the fact that Callirhoe first puts the child in the statue’s arms is not incompatible with the fact that she lifts it up again later.

The statement that ‘none of these artists ever represented Artemis or Athena carrying a baby in her arms’ raises more questions. Why mention Artemis and Athena, who, being the virgin goddesses par excellence, cannot be portrayed (and indeed are not) with a baby in their arms? And why make an out-of-context reference to representations of Artemis and Athena when what are currently in the spotlight are images of Aphrodite (Callirhoe and the statue)? One way to solve this is to simply borrow Chariton’s words (οὔτε ... μέχρι νῦν) and agree that his intent here is to create something new,⁶⁵ although this still leaves our questions unanswered. Another one is to consider the implications of Chariton’s words, for a subtle meaning of ‘οὔδεις γὰρ αὐτῶν ἐποίησεν Ἄρτεμιν ἢ Ἀθηναῖν βρέφος ἐν ἀγκάλαις κομίζουσας’ is that it is not possible to make a mother of a virgin, or at least it has never been done. The apparent quizzicality of this statement can be clarified by recalling what Chariton said when introducing Callirhoe at the beginning of the novel: ἦν γὰρ τὸ κάλλος οὐκ ἀνθρώπινον ἀλλὰ θεῖον, οὐδὲ Νηρηίδος ἢ Νύμφης τῶν ὄρειων ἀλλ’ αὐτῆς Ἀφροδίτης παρθένου. φήμη δὲ τοῦ παραδόξου θεάματος πανταχοῦ διέτρεχε, ‘her beauty was more than human, it was divine, and it was not the beauty of a Nereid or a mountain nymph at that, but of the maiden Aphrodite herself’ (1,1,2).

These words present a situation that is the exact reversal of 3,8,6: both passages are descriptions of Callirhoe, but in 3,8 we have the attribution of motherhood to famously virgin goddesses, in 1,1 the attribution of virginity to the goddess of beauty and love. Aphrodite is as new

⁶⁴ Moreover, Greek would have it that the Genitive of αὐτός indicating possession occupies the predicative position, whereas the Genitive of the reflexive (αὐτοῦ, αὐτῆς) indicating possession occupies the attributive, as in this case.

⁶⁵ Tilg 2010, 164 ff. reads these lines, together with a number of passages in the novel, as the author’s claims of originality.

to the apposition *parthenos*, which instead usually characterises Athena, as Athena and Artemis are to being associated with maternity.⁶⁶ If Chariton, as it would appear, is enacting a symmetrical inversion of roles, then the function of the first divine reference should be paralleled by the second one. Describing Callirhoe as an Aphrodite *parthenos* underlines both her goddess-like beauty and the fact that she is a virgin, and, since these two conditions coexist with difficulty, it implies that one of the two will have to give way to the other: the fact that she gets married and fully becomes an Aphrodite represents the fulfilment of this prophecy. By introducing the image of Artemis and Athena in maternal attitude, the second reference proposes the same paradoxical association, only with inverted terms. Following the same reasoning, this would then hint at the fact she will lose the status of mother in order to become a virgin goddess, but it is clear that the first condition is not reversible in the second. Chariton, however, goes very close to making this absurdity possible.

As a matter of fact, this is the last time that Callirhoe will be seen with her child. She is not associated with him any more, not even at the funeral of Chaereas, the real father, where Callirhoe is pictured in her blazing beauty but the child is not mentioned at all. His next two appearances will take place in Babylon (5,10,25) and again in Miletus (8,5,15). In both of them he is far from his mother and together with Dionysius, with whom he will ultimately be left.⁶⁷ As a result, in the last scene where Callirhoe interacts with her son she is almost seen entrust him to someone else, never to retrieve him again. In fact, both the last gesture she performs while the child is still present (raising him towards the statue) and her last words (σωζέ μοι τὸν ὀρφανόν, ‘preserve my fatherless child’, 3,8,9) show Callirhoe giving away her son.⁶⁸ It is at this time, when she is, in a way, giving up her motherhood to Aphrodite, that the reference to Artemis and Athena carrying babies in their arms is made. Given the striking precedent of Aphrodite *parthenos* at the beginning of the novel, which anticipates the first change in Callirhoe from virgin to woman, the equally striking association of virgin goddesses with motherhood might indicate that another change is bound to happen to Callirhoe, and a certain symmetry between the two passages suggests that this might be a change from mother to virgin.

This is obviously unachievable, but less absurd than it first appears, especially if one considers the particular tendency of the story told by Chariton to return to the original state of

⁶⁶ Hercher deleted the manuscript’s ‘παρθένου’ considering it an intrusion from ‘τι χρήμα παρθένου’ of a few lines above. His line of thought is followed by Goold, and by Reardon in his edition. Blake, followed by Molinié, keeps it and only slightly modifies it into an epithet of the goddess (Παρθένου). Apuleius’ reference to ‘*Venerem aliam virginali flore praeditam*’ (4,28) is noticed by Roncali 1996, 67 and Trzaskoma 2010, 189.

⁶⁷ There are indications that the child will reunite with the parents when he grows up, but, as far as the story is concerned, he stays in Miletus.

⁶⁸ This would be even more evident if Callirhoe had put the child in the arms of the statue, that is, if we read, with the manuscript, ‘εἰς τὰς αὐτῆς ἀγκάλας ἐνήθηκε’.

things.⁶⁹ Unlike in the other novels (with the exception of Xenophon's *Ephesiaca*), the movement of *Chaereas and Callirhoe* is not a forward thrust directed to the achievement of a wedding, which then results in a final scenario that is an irreversible modification of the beginning of the novel,⁷⁰ but instead a search for a return to an already achieved marriage and satisfying happiness, a return to the exact condition in which things were at the beginning of the novel. In *Chaereas and Callirhoe*'s reunion, what happened during their separation is wiped out, almost forgotten in order to make room for a fresh new beginning that resumes the earlier *status quo* of the couple in Syracuse.⁷¹ In view of this, conveying the idea, at least imaginary and virtual, of a return of Callirhoe to virginity, is functional to the final happy reunion. It is clear that in order to obtain this the child must be taken out of the equation, and in fact he has no role in his parents' reunion, and does not seem to be particularly missed. Callirhoe's symbolic return to virginity is accomplished on the occasion of her return to Syracuse. The harbour is crowded with people who have gathered to witness the return of the city's best citizens, and all agree that Callirhoe looks more beautiful than ever before: ἀληθῶς εἶπες ἂν αὐτὴν ὄραν τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ἀναδυομένην ἐκ τῆς θαλάσσης, 'you truly would have thought you were looking at Aphrodite herself as she rose from the sea' (8,6,11). Echoing her first appearance in 1,1, where she looked like Aphrodite *parthenos*, she is now seen again as similar to one of Aphrodite's iconographies, and, more precisely, to the one that shows the goddess in a virginal state, that is, when she is born from the sea.

The key to the understanding of the two anomalous references in 1,1 and 3,8 lies in something Chariton said right after comparing Callirhoe to a virgin Aphrodite: φήμη δὲ τοῦ παραδόξου θεάματος πανταχοῦ διέτρεχε, 'report of the astonishing vision spread everywhere' (1,1,2). A *paradoxon theama* indeed, since Callirhoe can be Aphrodite when still a virgin and Artemis and Athena when already a mother. But the paradoxical wonder that is Callirhoe is not limited to her appearance alone, but also refers to the very unexpected role played by her character in the novel, for the greatest paradox of all is that the heroine of a novel marries someone who is not her destined partner and manages to escape blame for it under everyone's eyes, including the readers'. All the more reason to leave the past behind and start anew when finally reunited. The odd

⁶⁹ In addition to this, studies on sexuality have shown that the Greek's ideas on virginity were different from ours, and that a woman could still be a *parthenos* even after having become a mother. See Sissa 1990, especially 105-23.

⁷⁰ Daphnis and Chloe married, living in the city and not in the countryside where they met; Leucippe and Clitophon married but not going back to Tyre; Theagenes and Chariclea living in Ethiopia, their lives completely changed compared to when they met in Delphi.

⁷¹ It is true that the main characters grow up and develop: Callirhoe becomes less manipulable and learns how to exert power on those surrounding her, and Chaereas learns to control his impulses and, to a certain extent, his jealousy (De Temmerman 2007 on the former, and also De Temmerman 2014, 46 ff.). However, the two major transformations (aside from the perturbations that are common to all protagonists of novels, such as separation, slavery, harassment, etc.) that occur to the couple and are bound to change the nature of their relationship, that is, the birth of a child and the second wedding, are manifestly cast out in order to facilitate the happy reunion.

iconographical associations are Chariton's way of covertly alluding to Callirhoe's idiosyncrasies, at the same time helping the character (and the readers' perception of her) in the restoration of the unperturbed situation that characterised the beginning of the novel.

In the difficult task of telling the story of a novel's heroine who has a relationship with someone beside the hero, Chariton arranges several expedients aimed at making this truth less shocking and the heroine less culpable. First of all he stresses the fact that she has no other choice (the alternative is terminating the pregnancy), also hinting at Chaereas' consent (him appearing in the dream telling Callirhoe to keep the child). Secondly, through an abrupt ellipsis he omits everything about her intimate life with Dionysius (the wedding, the first night, any display of affection), and will never make Callirhoe declare any sort of love to Dionysius. Thirdly, he conveys the idea that whatever happens to Callirhoe in Miletus does not happen to the real Callirhoe but to her double Callirhoe-Aphrodite. The Ionians have always considered her a goddess, to the point of dedicating a statue to her in the temple right next to Aphrodite, but she has never shared this view, instead proclaiming her real identity, recognised only by Chaereas; the double Callirhoe-Aphrodite is what the Ionians are ultimately left with, whereas the real Callirhoe returns to Syracuse with Chaereas;⁷² after the transfer of the child to the statue of Aphrodite everything that symbolises her maternity is left behind in Miletus with the double and she can return to Chaereas purified, almost in the same condition in which they first met, almost as a virgin.

Now, resorting to the presence of a double in order to mitigate and even remove the accusation of adultery connects Callirhoe with the icon of cursed beauty, Helen, and Chariton with some famous predecessors, first Stesichorus and most famously Euripides. The similarities between Callirhoe and her mythical antecedent, whichever the version of her story, are many. To name the most evident ones, the unmatched beauty (the heroines are compared in 2,6,1) and the betrayal of a Greek husband for an Asian one that leads the former to cross the sea in search for his wife. A few elements, however, bring Callirhoe closer to Euripides' Helen rather than Homer's, as has been thoroughly noticed.⁷³ Following an ancient alternative tradition that has its founder in Stesichorus, this Helen not only never betrayed Menelaus, but never went to Troy to begin with.⁷⁴ It was an *eidolon* that went in her stead, a god-made double that fooled everyone for ten years, while the real, unshakably faithful Helen was somewhere completely different (Egypt), cursing her beauty and

⁷² Notice also the resumption of the initial way in which Callirhoe is looked at. In 8,6 she is compared (as she had been before in Syracuse) to the divine via a known work of art, the *Aphrodite Anadyomene*, but there is no fallacious identification of her with Aphrodite, which was a prerogative of the Ionians. Callirhoe has left her double behind and has come back to her real unmistakable self.

⁷³ See Laplace 1980 and also Montiglio 2013, 23-25 and 30. Schmeling 2005 associates Helen and Callirhoe according to their status of celebrities, but not with reference to the fact that they both have doubles.

⁷⁴ See Stesichorus, fr. 192-193 Campbell (=15-16 Page).

lamenting the fate of her compatriots. But if all the blame has to be put first on the gods who plotted this, and secondly on the double, then the original Helen comes out of the whole story entirely innocent. Similarly, the innocent Callirhoe returns to Syracuse with her rightful husband leaving behind in Ionia her double, her Aphrodite-like image, which in the end is the only identity the Ionians have ever attributed to her. Notoriously, legend has it that this version originated as Stesichorus' reparation after having too harshly attacked Helen, and after the consequent divine punishment of losing his sight. But just as this started as a palinode, as a defence for a mistreated Helen, so should Chariton's choice of using this as a model be read as the preventive defence of his heroine from accusations of adultery.

Chariton's use of works of art is varied and complex. While they seem to be incidental objects for private or cultic purposes, they perform several functions and become deeply intertwined with the plot and the characters. For instance, the author employs the feature of the portrait of the lover, as can be expected in a story where two lovers are separated for most of the time. However, the presence of Chaereas' image in Callirhoe's tomb is taken literally, and its implications brought to the extreme, so that his path is modified by the misunderstandings thus generated. But Chariton makes sure that both protagonists equally partake in the connection with works of art, and devises a special path for Callirhoe as well, by providing her with an artistic counterpart that generates misunderstandings and, consequently, plot, but that also accompanies the heroine's personal growth and the changes she undergoes, becoming in fact her double. The double's situation that originates in Miletus might have been inspired by the famous antecedent of Euripides' *Helen*, but Chariton makes the theme his own and fully develops its aspects in a way that is altogether original. To begin with, he starts by using customary metaphors and comparisons with works of art, a feature that is common to many literary genres; unlike anyone else, however, he takes these metaphors to a further stage by understanding them literally. Thus Callirhoe is not just as beautiful as the image of Aphrodite: she becomes the double of the goddess. There is of course little difference between saying that someone is *like* a work of art and saying that someone *is* a work of art, but it marks a huge difference in that works of art go from being the external referents of a metaphor to being part of the story, active presences in the novel, carriers of perturbations and therefore a constituent part of the plot.⁷⁵ Chariton's ability lies in not forcing these connections with art by never making them too explicit, but only insinuating them in the story and in the readers' minds and then letting them gradually evolve as if on their own. It is this natural development that has slowly taken place before our eyes that in the end allows us to 'forgive' Callirhoe without any doubt and almost without

⁷⁵ What Hägg 2002 aptly calls 'the employment of a metaphor'.

realising that she was to be blamed in the first place.

2.3. The use of works of art in Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesiaca*

There are only a few references to works of art in Xenophon. At the beginning of the novel the beauty of both protagonists is given divine status via the comparison with works of art representing divinities; after the protagonists get married some space is given to the description of a canopy that covers their *thalamos*; finally, the beginning of Book Five displays a very particular case of a funerary *eidolon*. This could be read as an indication that the author had no particular inclination towards art, thus making Xenophon the odd one out among the extant novelists. The epitome-theory could be applied in order to say that in the fuller version of the novel more space was given to works of art,⁷⁶ but venturing in that direction is mere speculation. One sure thing is that, epitome or not, what we have shows the hand of a concise author,⁷⁷ which could indicate that his brevity in treating works of art is paralleled by his brevity in treating a number of things. What is notable, from the present purpose, is that Xenophon's use of works of art, however little, is perfectly aligned with what has just been seen in Chariton's case.

2.3.1. Introduction of the protagonists

Habrocomes is introduced first:

Ἦν ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ἀνὴρ τῶν τὰ πρῶτα ἐκεῖ δυναμένων, Λυκομήδης ὄνομα. Τούτῳ τῷ Λυκομήδει ἐκ γυναικὸς ἐπιχωρίας Θεμιστοῦς γίνεται παῖς Ἀβροκόμης, μέγα δὴ τι χρῆμα ὠραιότητι σώματος ὑπερβαλλούσῃ, <τοσοῦτου> κάλλους οὔτε ἐν Ἰωνίᾳ οὔτε ἐν ἄλλῃ γῆ πρότερον γενομένου.

Among the most influential citizens of Ephesus was a man called Lycomedes. He and his wife, Themisto, who also belonged to the city, had a son Habrocomes; his good looks were phenomenal, and neither in Ionia nor anywhere else had there ever been anything like them.⁷⁸

(1,1,1)

⁷⁶ In fact, the description of the canopy, as we shall see, has been used as evidence to show that the text we have is an abbreviated version.

⁷⁷ De Temmermann 2014, 118 ff., ascribes this to a deliberate use of *apheleia*, the simple style of composition of which Xenophon of Athens (according to the author, the homonymy is no coincidence) was one famous example.

⁷⁸ The Greek text is that of the 2005 Teubner edition by O'Sullivan; unless otherwise specified, the translations are taken from Anderson 1989.

As has been noticed by the editors,⁷⁹ the beginning of the *Ephesiaca* recalls quite closely the beginning of Chariton's novel: geographical location (Syracuse; Ephesus), mention of the parents (Hermocrates; Lycomedes and Themisto), introduction of the protagonist and praise of her beauty (Callirhoe, θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα παρθένου; Habrocomes, μέγα δὴ τι χρῆμα), and closure of the first sentence with the extended geographical location (Sicily; Ionia). Noticing the similarity between the praises of beauty, Dalmeyda sees in 'μέγα δὴ τι χρῆμα [...] κάλλους' the first of a series of 'analogies qui ne sont certainement pas imputables au hasard'. This affinity makes the only difference all the more striking, for it is not a maiden who is introduced first, but a boy. Moreover, the boy's beauty is soon taken to the extreme:

Προσείχον δὲ ὡς θεῶ τῷ μεираκίῳ· καί εἰσιν ἤδη τινὲς οἱ καὶ προσεκύνησαν ἰδόντες καὶ προσηύξαντο. Ἐφρόνει δὲ τὸ μεираκίον ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ μεγάλα καὶ ἠγάλλετο μὲν καὶ τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς κατορθώμασι, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον τῷ κάλλει τοῦ σώματος· πάντων δὲ τῶν ἄλλων, ὅσα δὴ ἐλέγετο καλά, ὡς ἐλαττόνων κατεφρόνει καὶ οὐδὲν αὐτῷ, οὐ θέαμα, οὐκ ἄκουσμα ἄξιον Ἀβροκόμου κατεφαίνετο· καὶ εἴ τινα ἢ παῖδα καλὸν ἀκούσαι ἢ παρθένον εὐμορφον, κατεγέλα τῶν λεγόντων ὡς οὐκ εἰδότες ὅτι εἷς καλὸς αὐτός. Ἐρωτά γε μὴν οὐδὲ ἐνόμιζεν εἶναι θεόν, ἀλλὰ πάντῃ ἐξέβαλεν ὡς οὐδὲν ἠγούμενος, λέγων ὡς οὐκ ἂν ποτέ οὐ...τις ἐρασθείη οὐδὲ ὑποταγεῖ τῷ θεῷ μὴ θέλων· εἰ δὲ που ἱερὸν ἢ ἄγαλμα Ἐρωτος εἶδε, κατεγέλα, ἀπέφαινε τε ἑαυτὸν Ἐρωτος παντὸς κρείττονα καὶ κάλλει σώματος καὶ δυνάμει. Καὶ εἶχεν οὕτως· ὅπου γὰρ Ἀβροκόμης ὀφθείη, οὔτε ἄγαλμα καλὸν κατεφαίνετο οὔτε εἰκὼν ἐπηνεῖτο.

They treated the boy like a god, and some even prostrated themselves and prayed at the sight of him. He had a high opinion of himself, taking pride in his attainments, and a great deal more in his appearance. Everything that was regarded as beautiful he despised as inferior, and nothing he saw or heard seemed up to his standard. And when he heard a boy or girl praise for their good looks, he laughed at the people making such claims for not knowing that only he himself was handsome. He did not even recognize Eros as a god; he rejected him totally and considered him of no importance, saying that no one would ever fall in love or submit to the god except of his own accord. And whenever he saw a temple or a statue of Eros, he used to laugh and claimed that he was better than any Eros in beauty and power. And that was the case: for whenever Habrocomes appeared, no one admired any statue or praised any picture. (1,1,3-6)

The praise of Habrocomes' beauty uses formula already seen in Chariton, for the boy's almost divine beauty is described indirectly through the association with statues of divinities. Like the statue of a god, he is made the object of *proskynēsis*, and shortly after the people of Ephesus will say of him: "καλὸς Ἀβροκόμης (...) καὶ οἷος οὐδὲ εἷς καλοῦ μίμημα θεοῦ." ("Handsome Habrocomes! Such as not even the representation of a handsome god." 1,2,8). As seen in Chariton, the comparison with the divine does not seem to be just the narrator's standard way of conveying

⁷⁹ Dalmeyda 1926, 3, n. 2; Papanikolaou 1973, 1.

the idea that someone is very attractive, but is taken literally, and its ramifications are observed. The acts of worship performed towards Habrocomes as towards a religious idol, and the claim that he is even more beautiful than the statue of a god, have an immediate effect on the boy's perception of himself. He not only thinks that he is superior to Eros, but, fully believing himself to be a work of art, considers the actual works of art as inferior rivals and scorns them, an act of arrogance that will very soon lead to the beginning of his misfortunes.

But for the characters' own responses to all of this, the introductions of Habrocomes and Callirhoe are rather similar. They are both associated with the word *agalma*, but while Callirhoe is indifferent to it, Habrocomes starts to consider himself as one, and competes with other statues and pictures. They are both the object of *proskynêsis* (which takes place a little later for Callirhoe), but while Callirhoe is against it and is worshipped against her wishes, Habrocomes welcomes it and lives in the illusion of being superior to a god. The affinity of the two presentations is shown also in the reasons behind the start of the characters' adventures. Eros plots against Callirhoe because he is a god who loves conflict and a good story (φιλόνικος δέ ἐστίν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ χαίρει τοῖς παραδόξοις κατορθώμασιν, 1,1,4), and he plots against Habrocomes because he is mad at his arrogant behaviour (φιλόνικος γὰρ ὁ θεὸς καὶ ὑπερηφάνοις ἀπαραίτητος, 1,2,1).⁸⁰ Xenophon seems to be reversing the exploitation of certain elements that are present in the beginning of Chariton's novel, the first and most evident being the fact that the first character introduced is the boy and not the girl. Moreover, keeping in mind the way in which Chariton employs the comparison with works of art to introduce his protagonists as nearly divine and heroic beings, it would seem that Xenophon plays with the hyperbolic potential of this feature in order to push the nature of his male protagonist to the extreme: not a boy who is as handsome as a statue, but a statue which cannot match the beauty of a boy.

Anthia is first met in the course of the procession for the festival of Artemis, and, unlike Habrocomes', her features are described with a certain amount of detail:

Ἦρχε δὲ τῆς τῶν παρθένων τάξεως Ἀνθία, θυγάτηρ Μεγαμήδους καὶ Εὐίππης, ἐγχωρίων. Ἦν δὲ τὸ κάλλος τῆς Ἀνθίας οἷον θαυμάσαι καὶ πολὺ τὰς ἄλλας ὑπερεβάλετο παρθένους. Ἔτη μὲν τεσσαρεσκαίδεκα ἐγεγόνει, ἦνθει δὲ αὐτῆς τὸ σῶμα ἐπ' εὐμορφία, καὶ ὁ τοῦ σχήματος κόσμος πολὺς εἰς ὥραν συνεβάλετο· κόμη ξανθή, ἢ πολλὴ καθειμένη, ὀλίγη πεπλεγμένη, πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀνέμων φορὰν κινουμένη· ὀφθαλμοὶ γοργοί, παιδροὶ μὲν ὡς καλῆς, φοβεροὶ δὲ ὡς σώφρονος· ἑσθῆς χιτῶν ἀλουργῆς, ζωστὸς εἰς γόνυ, μέχρι βραχιόνων καθειμένος, νεβρὶς περικειμένη· ὄπλα γωρυτὸς ἀνημμένος, τόξα, ἄκοντες φερόμενοι, κύνες ἐπόμενοι. Πολλάκις αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ τεμένους ἰδόντες Ἐφέσιοι προσεκύνησαν ὡς Ἄρτεμιν. Καὶ τότε οὖν ὀφθείσης ἀνεβόησε τὸ πλῆθος, καὶ ἦσαν ποικίλαι παρὰ τῶν θεωμένων φωναί, τῶν μὲν ὑπ' ἐκπλήξεως τὴν θεὸν

⁸⁰ 'φιλόνικος' is Reardon's reading for the manuscript's 'φιλόνικος', based on LSJ *ad* 'φιλόνικος', 2.

εἶναι λεγόντων, τῶν δὲ ἄλλην τινὰ ὑπὸ τῆς θεοῦ * πεποιημένην· προσήχοντο δὲ πάντες καὶ προσεκύνουν καὶ τοὺς γονεῖς αὐτῆς ἐμακάριζον· ἦν δὲ διαβόητος τοῖς θεωμένοις ἅπασιν Ἀνθία ἢ καλή. Ὡς δὲ παρήλθε τὸ τῶν παρθένων πλῆθος, οὐδεὶς ἄλλο τι ἢ Ἀνθίαν ἔλεγε· ὡς δὲ Ἀβροκόμης μετὰ τῶν ἐφήβων ἐπέστη, τὸνθὲνδε, καίτοι καλοῦ ὄντος τοῦ κατὰ τὰς παρθένους θεάματος, πάντες ἰδόντες Ἀβροκόμην ἐκείνων ἐπελάθοντο, ἔτρεψαν δὲ τὰς ὄψεις ἐπ' αὐτὸν βοῶντες ὑπὸ τῆς θεᾶς ἐκπεπληγμένοι.

Anthia led the line of the girls; she was the daughter of Megamedes and Euipe, both of Ephesus. Anthia's beauty was an object of wonder, far surpassing the other girls'. She was fourteen; her beauty was burgeoning, still more enhanced by the adornment of her dress. Her hair was golden –a little of it plaited, but most hanging loose and blowing in the wind. Her eyes were quick; she had the bright glance of a young girl, and yet the austere look of a virgin. She wore a purple tunic down to the knee, fastened with a girdle and falling loose over her arms, with a fawnskin over it, a quiver attached, and arrows for weapons; she carried javelins and was followed by dogs. Often as they saw her in the sacred enclosure the Ephesians would worship her as Artemis. And so on this occasion too the crowd gave a cheer when they saw her, and there was a whole clamor of exclamations from the spectators: some were amazed and said it was the goddess in person; some that it was someone else made by the goddess in her own image. But all prayed and prostrated themselves and congratulated her parents. "The beautiful Anthia!" was the cry on all the spectators' lips. But when Habrocomes came in turn with the Ephebes, then, although the spectacle of the women had been a lovely sight, everyone forgot about them and transferred their gaze to him and were smitten at the sight.

(1,2,5-8)

Anthia is not described generally in terms of incredible beauty. Her hair and eyes are described, as well as her dress and accessories. However, by the time the readers get to the fawnskin, the quiver, the arrows, and the dogs, they must have realised that the description of Anthia has become very similar to the description of the well-known iconography of Artemis.⁸¹ Given the precedent of Habrocomes, associated with divine images, an explicit comparison between the girl and the goddess is to be expected, and the expectation is fulfilled right at the end of the description, when it is said that the inhabitants of Ephesus worship her like Artemis. The girl and the goddess are so similar that Anthia must either be Artemis herself or someone modelled directly by the goddess after her image. As a consequence, Anthia too is the object of *proskynésis*, though her reactions to this fact are not shown. She will, however, prove to be much humbler than Habrocomes.

There is an aura of subordination about Anthia, which starts with the fact that she is introduced second, and is made manifest by what happens at the procession: as long as she is parading with the other maidens all eyes are for her, but she is forgotten the second Habrocomes is seen. Perhaps, as the equivalent of the representation of Artemis, she suffers the fate of every work

⁸¹ De Temmerman 2014, 141.

of art in Ephesus, for ‘whenever Habrocomes appeared, no one admired any statue or praised any picture’ (1,1,6). Still, the most striking feature of this episode is the abrupt and slightly disrespectful way in which Anthia is dismissed, especially considering the promising introduction. A very similar situation, only with inversed roles, takes place in Heliodorus’ *Aithiopica*, when the spectacular effect of the presence of Theagenes in a procession in Delphi is completely nullified by the appearance of Charicleia (3,3-4). Moreover, in Chariton, when Chaereas is given the funeral in Miletus, no one looks at his beautiful *eidolon*, because everyone’s eyes are glued to Callirhoe (4,1,10). By now, the readers of the *Ephesiaca* must have become well aware that, contrary to expectations, the champion of beauty in the novel will be the boy and not the girl, and perhaps might notice that even the comparison with art, which defines the nature of the protagonists, mirrors Habrocomes’ superiority: as far as the elevation to representations of divinities goes, the *agalma* of Habrocomes surpasses the *agalma* of Anthia.

Having recalled Chaereas’ funerary *eidolon*, and having hinted at what seems to be an attitude of Xenophon to reverse expectations concerning the role of the characters, and subsequently of their relation to works of art, it is worth considering at least briefly an episode occurring at the beginning of Book Five.

2.3.2. Aegialeus and Thelxinoe

When in Sicily looking for Anthia, Habrocomes finds shelter with the old fisherman Aegialeus, who tells him his story. Born a Spartan, the young Aegialeus had fallen in love with Thelxinoe. The girl reciprocated the feeling but was betrothed to another man, hence the couple’s escape from Sparta, the arrival in Sicily, and the long and happy life spent together until the death of Thelxinoe, which occurred not long before Habrocomes’ arrival. The story of Aegialeus and Thelxinoe looks like basic novelistic material, and Habrocomes can certainly see in it a means to reflect upon his own story.⁸² Before this happens, however, Aegialeus abruptly changes the kind of story he is telling:

“Καὶ τέθνηκεν ἐνταῦθα οὐ πρὸ πολλοῦ Θελξινόη καὶ τὸ σῶμα οὐ τέθαπται, ἀλλὰ ἔχω γὰρ μετ’ ἑμαυτοῦ καὶ αἰεὶ φιλῶ καὶ σὺνειμι.” Καὶ ἅμα λέγων εἰσάγει τὸν Ἀβροκόμην εἰς τὸ ἐνδότερον δωμάτιον καὶ δεικνύει τὴν Θελξινόην, γυναῖκα πρεσβυτινὴν μὲν ἤδη, καλὴν <δὲ> φαινομένην ἔτι Αἰγιαλεῖ κόρην· τὸ δὲ σῶμα αὐτῆς ἐτέθαπτο ταφῇ Αἰγυπτία· ἦν γὰρ καὶ τούτων ἔμπειρος ὁ γέρον. “Ταύτη οὖν” ἔφη, “ὦ τέκνον Ἀβροκόμη, αἰεὶ τε ὡς ζώσῃ λαλῶ καὶ συγκατάκειμαι καὶ συνευωχοῦμαι· κὰν ἔλθω ποτὲ ἐκ τῆς ἀλιείας κεκμηκῶς,

⁸² Together with the story, heard by Habrocomes in 3,2,1 ff., of Hippothous and Hyperanthes. On this see Schmeling 1980, 68. It is worth recalling here that the episode of Aegialeus has been interpreted as an interpolation by Merkelbach in his theory of the *Ephesiaca* as a mystery romance, on which see O’Sullivan 1995, 141 ff.

αὕτη με παραμυθεῖται βλεπομένη· οὐ γὰρ οἷα νῦν ὄραται σοὶ τοιαύτη φαίνεται
<ἐ>μοί· ἀλλὰ ἐννοῶ, τέκνον, οἷα μὲν ἦν ἐν Λακεδαίμονι, οἷα δὲ ἐν τῇ φυγῇ· τὰς
παννυχίδας ἐννοῶ, τὰς συνθήκας ἐννοῶ”.

“Thelxinoe died here in Sicily not long ago; I didn’t bury her body but have it with me; I always have her company and adore her.” At this he brought Habrocomes into the inner room and showed him Thelxinoe. She was now an old woman but still seemed beautiful to Aegialeus. Her body was embalmed in the Egyptian style, for the old fisherman had learnt embalming as well. “And so, Habrocomes, my child,” he explained, “I still talk to her as if she were alive and lie down beside her and have my meals with her, and if I come home exhausted from fishing, the sight of her consoles me, for she looks different to me than she does to you; I think of her, child, as she was in Sparta and when we eloped; I think of the festival and the compact we made.” (5,1,9-11)

Chariton’s novel as well allowed us to observe a certain interest on the author’s side on problems related to the mourning of a dead beloved combined with the presence of a funerary *eidolon*. Let us here recall a few points from that discussion: Chaereas is given a funeral that has as its centre his *eidolon*; the function of an *eidolon* is to act as a substitute for the departed, a double that preserves the soul of the dead; inasmuch as it is connected to a dead person, the *eidolon* constitutes a link to the underworld, which is why anyone interacting with it in ways that go beyond the norm is inevitably dragged to the underworld, as shown for example by the story of Laodamia; for the same reason, returns from the underworld once the *eidolon* has been erected are equally problematic, as shown by the ending of Euripides’ *Alcestis* (although Admetus only promises that he will set up a statue of Alcestis and live with it); showing awareness of these practices and especially of these myths, Chariton makes Chaereas’ return from the dead difficult at first, and fully achieved only once enough time has passed and the *eidolon* is far away. With the story of Aegialeus, Xenophon revisits these dynamics, but instead of providing a solution to the problem, as Chariton did, he seems to be exploring how far one can push its complication. In fact, the fisherman’s sweet and nostalgic tone draws attention away from the fact that what he is telling is essentially a story of necrophilia. Aegialeus puts into practice precisely what Admetus intends to do, that is, keeping in bed the image of the late wife, spending time with it, calling it by name, kissing it, and consorting with it.⁸³ It is grim enough to want to do this with an image of a lost person, but to actually do it, and not just with an image but directly with the dead person, is deviant. What makes it worse is the

⁸³ Cf. Eur. *Alc.* 348 ff.: σοφῆι δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν | εἰκασθὲν ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκταθήσεται, | ὦι προσπεσοῦμαι καὶ περιπτύσσων χέρας | ὄνομα καλῶν σὸν τὴν φίλην ἐν ἀγκάλαις | δόξω γυναῖκα καίπερ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν· | ψυχρὰν μὲν, οἶμαι, τέρψιν, ἀλλ’ ὅμως βάρος | ψυχῆς ἀπαντλοίην ἄν. ‘I shall bid a cunning sculptor carve your image in stone, and it shall lie stretched on our bed, and I shall kneel beside it, and throw my arms round it, and speak your name, and vainly think I hold my dear wife in my arms –cold comfort, truly; none the less, a way to lighten my heavy heart.’ (trans. Vellacott). Schmeling 1980, 166 n. 40 points at this and other myths while commenting on the story of Aegialeus.

fact that the *eidolon* of Thelxinoe is not the woman's double, which carries the memory but also guarantees a certain distance, but the woman herself, and this brings Aegialeus to an unmediated contact with death.⁸⁴ It is not only a reversal of the funerary ritual, but also a reversal, and a macabre one, of the relationship between lover and portrait of the beloved.⁸⁵

The surprise that derives from the grotesque story and the placid way in which it is told is matched only by that deriving from Habrocomes' reaction:

Ἔτι λέγοντος τοῦ Αἰγιαλέως ἀνωδύρετο ὁ Ἀβροκόμης “σὲ δὲ” λέγων, “ὦ πασῶν δυστυχεστάτη κόρη, πότε ἀνευρήσω κἄν νεκράν; Αἰγιαλεῖ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ βίου μεγάλη παραμυθία τὸ σῶμα τὸ Θελξινοῆς, καὶ νῦν ἀληθῶς μεμάθηκα ὅτι ἔρωσ ἀληθινὸς ὄρον ἡλικίας οὐκ ἔχει.”

While Aegialeus was still speaking, Habrocomes broke into a lament. “Anthia,” he exclaimed, “the unlukiest girl of all! When will I ever find you, even as a corpse? This body of Thelxinoe is a great comfort in the life of Aegialeus, and now I have truly learnt that true love knows no age limits.”

(5,1,12)

Habrocomes observes Thelxinoe while listening to the things Aegialeus does to it with perfect calm, and responds to the whole story in a completely unpredictable way, not only without flinching but even admiring and envying the fisherman and claiming he gave him an invaluable lesson on love.⁸⁶

The episode of Aegialeus and Thelxinoe is shocking in many ways. It brings about, out of nowhere, an unexpected story that subverts the common practice regarding funerals and funerary *eidola*. It is structured in such a way as to increase the suspense, responding to the readers' incredulity by providing more evidence and details. All is fairly normal until the very end of Aegialeus first direct speech (τὸ σῶμα οὐ τέθραπται, ἀλλὰ ἔχω γὰρ μετ' ἑμαυτοῦ καὶ ἀεὶ φιλῶ καὶ σύνειμι). The speech ends with 'σύνειμι', leaving the readers (and, one would expect, Habrocomes) with the uneasy feeling of not knowing whether to believe Aegialeus' words, or whether to even wish to know the truth at all. The answer to this is the display of evidence, the mummy, and a more detailed account of the activities that Aegialeus entertains with it. Xenophon plays with the curiosity of the readers, counting on the fact that they would know what the ritual normally prescribes. At this point Xenophon creates another twist playing again with the readers'

⁸⁴ Incidentally, Aegialeus' own death is only a few chapters away (5,10), though his already old age downplays the effects that this contact might have had. The Greek 'ταφῆ Αἰγυπτία' (Egyptian burial) does not specify exactly under which form Aegialeus is preserving Thelxinoe, for it could be either a mummy or the body in a sarcophagus. The fact that her appearance is shown (cf. 'she was now an old woman but still seemed beautiful to Aegialeus', 'she looks different to me than she does to you') seems to indicate the presence of a mummy with visible features. A sarcophagus, here less likely, might have had the representation of the deceased painted on it.

⁸⁵ Bettini 1992, 56.

⁸⁶ Schmelting 1980, 67-68.

expectations, for during the entire time they probably believed that at some point Habrocomes would show their same kind of reaction, only to find out that the young man, instead, has been looking at the same scene with different eyes. His reading of the situation entirely fails to observe that which is its most evident aspect, that is, its horrific nature.

This episode does not necessarily need the reference to Euripides nor the comparison with Chariton to be appreciated. From the point of view of the contents, common knowledge on burials is enough to understand that something distorted is going on, and, from the point of view of the form, the way in which Xenophon orchestrates the progressive uncovering of the truth about Thelxinoe does well in producing bewilderment in the readers.⁸⁷ Having said this, a few aspects are worth taking into consideration. The first is that Chariton pays a certain degree of attention to the same themes (death of the beloved; substitution with images); the second is that, accordingly, Chariton has the story of Alcestis in the background, as does Xenophon; the third is that Chariton elaborates these themes by the book and in a way that is acceptable, while Xenophon leads things in a completely opposite direction and seems to take some pleasure in unsettling the readers. This is not an isolated case, since it shows a strategy similar to the one observed for the introduction of the protagonists. There as well, in fact, we underlined what seemed to be a tendency to share elements with Chariton but exploit them in a way that disappoints expectations and takes the consequences to the extreme (the first one to appear and be compared to works of art is Habrocomes and not Anthia; he takes the comparison seriously and looks down on other works of art). As both the introduction and this episode involve the use, or, better, the abuse of images, and as both cases seem to reverse what happens in similar passages in Chariton, it could be said that Xenophon shows knowledge of Chariton, understanding of his employment of works of art, and desire to elaborate on it by altering some parameters, but there is no conclusive evidence for this claim. Suffice it to say, then, that what has been seen so far in Xenophon strengthens the hypothesis that early novelists considered dealing at some point with images and works of art as part of what writing a novel entailed. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice that the most notable work of art in the *Ephesiaca*, and the last that will here be analysed, has a parallel in Chariton's novel as well.

2.3.3. The nuptial canopy

Habrocomes and Anthia become husband and wife shortly after the beginning of the novel. Brief attention is paid to the ceremony, as the narrator's main interest is the first night of the couple:

⁸⁷ The deviancy of this scene is underlined in Whitmarsh 2011, 1-2.

ἐπειδὴ ταῦτα ἐτετέλεστο, ἠκούσης τῆς νυκτὸς (βραδύνειν δὲ πάντα ἔδοκει Ἀβροκόμη καὶ Ἀνθία) ἤγον τὴν κόρην εἰς τὸν θάλαμον μετὰ λαμπάδων, τὸν ὑμέναιον ἄδοντες, ἐπευφημοῦντες, καὶ εἰσαγ<αγ>όντες κατέκλινον.

When these rituals had been performed, night came (everything seemed too slow for Habrocomes and Anthia); they brought the girl to the bridal chamber with torches, sang the bridal hymn, shouted their good wishes, brought the couple in, and put them on the couch.

(1,8,1)

That this is going to be an important moment which will be given plenty of space is clear from the start, because as soon as night comes the pace of the passage changes: ‘βραδύνειν’ not only reflects the state of mind of the trepidant couple, but can also serve as an indicator that the narrative is going to slow down. As a matter of fact, after the ritual torches and hymn, the narration gives way to a descriptive passage, the first in the novels to have a work of art as its subject:

Ἦν δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ θάλαμος πεποιημένος· κλίνη χρυσῇ στρώμασιν ἔστρωτο πορφυροῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης Βαβυλωνία ἐπεποίκιλτο σκηνὴ παίζοντες Ἔρωτες, οἱ μὲν Ἀφροδίτην θεραπεύοντες (ἦν δὲ καὶ Ἀφροδίτης εἰκών), οἱ δὲ ἰππεύοντες ἀναβάται στρουθοῖς, οἱ δὲ στεφάνους πλέκοντες, οἱ δὲ ἄνθη φέροντες. ταῦτα ἐν τῷ ἐτέρῳ μέρει τῆς σκηνῆς· ἐν δὲ τῷ ἐτέρῳ Ἄρης ἦν, οὐχ ὠπλισμένος, ἀλλ’ ὡς πρὸς ἐρωμένην τὴν Ἀφροδίτην κεκοσμημένος, ἔστεφανωμένος, χλαμύδα ἔχων· Ἔρως αὐτὸν ὠδήγει, λαμπάδα ἔχων ἡμμένην. Ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ σκηνῇ κατέκλιναν τὴν Ἀνθίαν, ἀγαγοντες πρὸς τὸν Ἀβροκόμην, ἐπέκλεισάν τε τὰς θύρας.

The chamber had been prepared: a golden couch had been spread with purple sheets, and above it hung an awning with an embroidered Babylonian tapestry. Cupids were playing, some attending Aphrodite, who was also represented, some riding on Nabatean ostriches, some weaving garlands, others bringing flowers. These were on one half of the canopy; on the other was Ares, not in armor, but dressed in a cloak and wearing a garland, adorned for his lover Aphrodite. Eros was leading the way, with a lighted torch. Under this canopy they brought Anthia to Habrocomes and put her to bed, then shut the doors.⁸⁸

(1,8,2-3)

This kind of description, written in the manner of rhetorical *ekphrasis*, is not present in Chariton. Xenophon has already given proof of this technique in the description of Anthia (1,2,5), and we have observed there that what starts as the description of a person flows into the description of a representation of Artemis. The *ekphrasis* of the canopy is conducted with attention to spatial

⁸⁸ Anderson’s translation follows Papanikolaou’s emendation of ‘ἀναβάται’ with ‘Ναβαταίαις’ and translates ‘Nabatean ostriches’. The problem is that ‘ἀναβάται’ repeats something already indicated by ‘ἰππεύοντες’; ‘Ναβαταίαις στρουθοῖς’, on the other hand, would not be just a *lectio difficilior*, but an extremely rare collocation. O’Sullivan retains ‘ἀναβάται’. See Anderson 1989, 133, n. 3, and Tagliabue 2011, 451-53 for a discussion.

coordinates (ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ μέρει τῆς σκηνῆς· ἐν δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ) and chromatic details (χρυσῆ; πορφυροῖς; λαμπάδα, though indirectly), and takes into consideration the figures involved in careful order (with the exception of Aphrodite). It is a bare description where the readers are given just what is essential to visualise the piece. In Achilles Tatius a description this long is usually the introduction to the *ekphrasis* proper, before every single detail is expanded and the expression of every figure analysed and explained. It is probably because of this that some have thought that this is a reduction of an originally longer description, which in turn has been proposed as evidence that the *Ephesiaca* as we have it is a shorter version of the original novel. From this perspective, it is impossible to avoid noticing that there is no real description of Aphrodite, regardless of the words ‘ἦν δὲ καὶ Ἀφροδίτης εἰκῶν’.⁸⁹ The presence of Aphrodite, however, is guaranteed by ‘οἱ μὲν Ἀφροδίτην θεραπεύοντες’, and the author might simply have taken her description for granted and have focused instead on the contrast between the Erotes and Ares.⁹⁰ It is a short *ekphrasis*, but it was also written before the time when *ekphraseis* became long pieces, so its length should not be used to prove that it is not complete. Moreover, it is well balanced in that it analyses the two sides of the object giving them equal space, and, as we shall see, it contains everything it needs to fulfill its function.

There are literary models behind this description. In terms of contents, the most famous precedent for the story illustrated in the canopy is Demodocus’ account of the loves of Aphrodite and Ares (*Od.* 8,266-366).⁹¹ In terms of framework, an object not too dissimilar had been described by Catullus in the *epithalamium* of Peleus and Thetis,⁹² where the poet spends some two hundred lines describing a blanket embroidered with the story of the abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus, which is waiting for the couple on the *thalamos* for their first night together. This precedent highlights the fact that neither subject is particularly appropriate for the occasion, for abandonment (Ariadne and Theseus) and adultery (Aphrodite and Ares) are not good omens for newly-weds.⁹³ This, however, is not necessarily true, at least in Xenophon’s case. The love of Aphrodite and Ares was a theme very dear to ancient art, and the attention on the erotic aspect of it by far surpassed the illicit value of the union. This is already clear in the *Odyssey*, where Hephaestus, (having caught the adulterers red-handed and trapped them) has the evidence and the witnesses (other gods have occurred, called by his shouts), but is frustrated in his hopes of having the gifts of courtship to the

⁸⁹ See Bürger 1892, 64, followed by Dalmeyda 1926, 11, n. 1. For refutations see Palm 1965-66, 193, and O’Sullivan 1995, 133. Following Bürger’s suggestion, Papanikolaou puts in brackets the words ‘ἦν δὲ καὶ Ἀφροδίτης εἰκῶν’.

⁹⁰ Palm 1965-66, 133, who also points at a painting in Philostratus the Elder where the description of the Erotes playing is given plenty of space, and at the end the difficulty of finding Aphrodite is underlined (*Imagines*, 1,6).

⁹¹ See on this Tagliabue 2012, 22-5.

⁹² Cat. 64. See Friedländer 1912, 47.

⁹³ Schmeling 1980, 28; DeTemmerman 2014, 143 justifies this by saying that Xenophon wanted to play on the contrast with the adulterers in order to highlight the lawful wedding of Habrocomes and Anthia.

goddess returned to him, since the gods are convinced more by Aphrodite's beauty than by Hephaestus' words and forgive Ares without second thoughts. Aside from the choice of subject, the examples of Catullus and Xenophon anticipate what will become a norm in rhetorical theory on epideictic speech, that is, the description of the *thalamos* as part of an *epithalamium*.⁹⁴

A very similar, if not the same, object, that is, a Babylonian tapestry, can be found in other authors as well. Herodotus describes at length Pausanias and the other Greeks going through the riches left behind by the Persians after their defeat at the battle of Plataea (*Hist.* 9,80-1), and in particular Xerxes' own tent: κατασκευὴν χρυσῶ τε καὶ ἀργύρῳ καὶ παραπετάσμασι ποικίλοισι κατεσκευασμένην, 'a tent equipped with gold and silver and curtains wrought in various colours' (9,82). There are similarities in the object (κατασκευὴν in Herodotus; σκηνή in Xenophon)⁹⁵ and in the colours (Herodotus' χρυσῶ and ποικίλοισι; Xenophon's χρυσῆ and ἐπεποίκιλτο), and Xenophon's mention of Babylon hints at the East. Considering that the main message that Herodotus is expressing in those chapters is the amazement of the Greeks at the Persians' wealth, an explanation for the presence of a Babylonian *skênê* in the *thalamos* of Anthia and Habrocomes would be that Xenophon wants to convey the idea that the young Ephesians come from a very rich background. But Xenophon is not the only one to have in mind Herodotus' Persian tents. In Chariton's novel, when the protagonists return triumphantly to Syracuse by ship, they come out of a Babylonian tent:

Εἰσέπλευσεν οὖν τριήρης ἡ Χαιρέου πρώτη. εἶχε δὲ ἐπάνω σκηνὴν συκεκαλυμμένην Βαβυλωνίοις παραπετάσμασιν. ἐπεὶ δὲ καθωρμίσθη, πᾶς ὁ λιμὴν ἀνθρώπων ἐνεπλήσθη· φύσει μὲν γὰρ ὄχλος ἐστὶ περίεργόν τι χρῆμα, τότε δὲ καὶ πλείονας εἶχον αἰτίας τῆς συνδρομῆς. βλέποντες δὲ εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν ἔνδον ἐνόμιζον οὐκ ἀνθρώπους ἀλλὰ φόρτον εἶναι πολυτελῆ, καὶ ἄλλος ἄλλο τι ἐμαντεύετο, πάντα δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ ἀληθὲς εἶκαζον. (...) πάντων δὲ ἀπορούτων καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐκτετακότων αἰφνίδιον εἰλκύσθη τὰ παραπετάσματα, καὶ ὤφθη Καλλιρόη μὲν ἐπὶ χρυσηλάτου κλίνης ἀνακειμένη, Τυρίαν ἀμπεχομένη πορφύραν, Χαιρέας δὲ αὐτῇ παρακαθήμενος, σχῆμα ἔχων στρατηγοῦ.

So Chaereas' ship sailed in first. On its upper deck was a tent covered with Babylonian tapestries. When the ship docked, the whole harbor was full of people; a crowd is naturally an inquisitive thing, and on this occasion they had several other reasons for collecting. When they saw the tent, they thought that it contained not people but rich cargo; they made various conjectures about it, but guessed everything except the truth. (...) No one knew what to make of it, and they were all straining their eyes, when

⁹⁴ Cf. Menander, *Peri epideiktikôn* 404-405 Spengel (θάλαμος δὲ πεποίκιλται ἄνθεσι καὶ γραφαῖς παντοίαις, πολλὴν δὲ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ἔχει· πείθομαι δὲ καὶ ἔρωτας παρεῖναι τόξα μὲν ἐντειναμένους, βέλη δὲ ἐφαρμόττοντας, κτλ.). This was noticed by Matz 1867, 14, but it is important to underline that this is again a case where theory followed practice.

⁹⁵ Herodotus too has *skênai*, though in other parts of the Persian camp.

suddenly the tapestries were drawn back. Callirhoe could be seen reclining on a couch of beaten gold, dressed in Tyrian purple; Chaereas, dressed like a general, sat beside her.

(8,6,5-7)

The first thing seen by the Syracusans is the Babylonian tent, which, as well as the golden couch, is a spoil of war. The connection with Herodotus is made clear by the mention of ‘βαβυλωνίους παραπετάσμασιν’ (cf. *Hist.* 9,82: παραπετάσμασι ποικίλοισι), and the golden couch too (ἐπὶ χρυσηλάτου κλίνης) finds correspondence in the spoils found by the Greeks at Plataea (*Hist.* 9,80-1).⁹⁶ This link works well in that it duplicates the victory of Greece over Persia: the last thing left behind by Xerxes, the symbol of his crushed hopes, becomes the booty of Chaereas, the first Greek to defeat the Great King since Pausanias. The tent represents what from the point of view of the Greeks was the greatest wealth and luxury, as can be seen in the fact that the Syracusans immediately think that its contents must be a treasure. The contents turn out to be even better than that, since when the curtains are drawn the Syracusans can see the city’s most precious treasure, its best citizens, returned home, truly a spectacle beyond words (θέαμα λόγου κρείττων, 8,6,7).

In turn, this strengthens the connection between Xenophon and Chariton. They have in common the tent (‘σκηνὴν συγκεκαλυμμένην βαβυλωνίους παραπετάσμασιν’ in Chariton, ‘βαβυλωνία ἐπεποικίλιτο σκηνή’ in Xenophon)⁹⁷, the couch (‘χρυσήλατου κλίνης’ in Chariton, ‘κλίνη χρυσή’ in Xenophon), and also the general tone of the scene. In fact, unlike in Herodotus (or in Heliodorus), in Xenophon and Chariton the Babylonian tent is used to host couples, and to host them in a special moment: it is the place where Habrocomes and Anthia have sex for the first time, and it is the place where Chaereas and Callirhoe have sex for the first time after the very long separation.⁹⁸ It is likely that these facts are more than coincidences. Xenophon is once again responding to and elaborating on elements that are present in Chariton, almost in continuity. The

⁹⁶ That Chariton has Herodotus as a model is made even clearer by something the narrator says shortly after about the contrast between Greece and Persia in terms of wealth: ἐνεπλήσθη πᾶσα ἡ πόλις, οὐχ ὡς πρότερον ἐκ τοῦ πολέμου τοῦ Σικελικοῦ πενίας Ἀττικῆς, ἀλλά, τὸ καινότερον, ἐν εἰρήνῃ λαφύρων Μηδικῶν, ‘the whole city was filled, not, as previously, after the Sicilian war, with the poverty of Attica, but –a real novelty- with Persian spoils, in time of peace!’ (8,6,12); cf. *Hist.* 9,82: “Ἄνδρες Ἕλληνες, τῶνδε εἵνεκα ἐγὼ ὑμέας συνήγαγον, βουλόμενος ὑμῖν τοῦ Μήδων ἡγεμόνος τὴν ἀφροσύνην δεῖξαι, ὅς τοιήνδε δίαίταν ἔχων ἦλθε ἐς ἡμέας οὕτω οἰζυρὴν ἔχοντας ἀπαιρησόμενος.”, “Men of Greece, I asked you here in order to show you the folly of the Persians, who, living in this style, came to Greece to rob us of our poverty.”

⁹⁷ Notice that, again as a symbol of Persian wealth, the tent will be used by Heliodorus as well: σκηνὴν ὑπὸ ἀλυργοῖς καὶ χρυσοῦφέσι παραπετάσμασιν ἐκ προστάγματος ἡ Ἀρσάκη πηξαμένη, ‘Arsake gave orders for a pavilion to be erected beneath a canopy of purple embroidered with gold.’ (7,3, trans. Morgan).

⁹⁸ To be more precise, the new first time of Chaereas and Callirhoe takes place in Aradus not under the tent but in one of the residences of the Great King (therefore, still a Babylonian environment). However, it takes place on a golden couch with purple blankets: κλίνη μὲν ἔκειτο χρυσήλατος, στρωμνὴ δὲ Τυρία πορφύρα, ὕφασμα βαβυλωνίων, ‘in it was a bed of beaten gold covered with cloth of Tyrian purple, of Babylonian weave’ (8,1,14). This is the same couch that will be revealed under the tent in Syracuse (ὠφθη Καλλιρόη μὲν ἐπὶ χρυσηλάτου κλίνης ἀνακειμένη, Τυρίαν ἀμπεχομένη πορφύραν). Compare also the blankets: ‘στρωμνὴ δὲ Τυρία πορφύρα’ in Chariton 8,1,14, and ‘στρώμασιν ἔστρωτο πορφυροῖς’ in Xenophon.

curtains are drawn and Chaereas and Callirhoe make their exit from the tent at the end of Chariton's novel, while Habrocomes and Anthia walk in and lie down, and close the doors behind them at the beginning of Xenophon's (ὕπ' αὐτῇ τῇ σκηνῇ κατέκλιναν τὴν Ἀνθίαν, ἀγαγόντες πρὸς τὸν Ἀβροκόμην, ἐπέκλεισάν τε τὰς θύρας), as if occupying the place left by their predecessors. What Xenophon originally adds is the description of the tent's canopy, almost reacting to Chariton's statement that the whole scene taking place around the tent was 'an indescribable sight' (θέαμα λόγου κρεῖττων, 8,6,8).

Even without the description of the loves of Ares and Aphrodite, the tent alone would be an important object. By alluding to Herodotus' famous precedent it conveys the idea of Eastern wealth, and by alluding to Chariton it prepares the stage for the couple's lovemaking in continuity with Chaereas and Callirhoe. The figures embroidered in the canopy, however, are not added for ornament's sake, since they interact well with the story and with the characters. At a general level, the erotic content of the scene anticipates the erotic moment that Anthia and Habrocomes are about to experience. Some details are proleptic: some Erotes are weaving garlands, and Ares has one on his head, as do the protagonists (τοὺς στεφάνους ἀνελάμβανε, 'they took off the garlands', 1,9,6). Some are analeptic: Ares is seen without weapons, lead by Eros, and Habrocomes has lost the battle against Eros who had marched against him.⁹⁹ When Habrocomes reaches the *thalamos* he has dismissed his pride and agreed to obey to Eros, and can read in the defenseless figure of Ares his own story.¹⁰⁰ Descriptions of works of art that activate this kind of connection will have a major role in Achilles Tatius, who starts his novel with the description of a painting which ends, not casually, with the figure of a powerful god lead by Eros.¹⁰¹

As anticipated, works of art in the *Ephesiaca* are not as critical to the story as they were in *Chaereas and Callirhoe*. What we have, however, is by no means marginal. Xenophon shows attention to the use of works of art aimed at describing the protagonists, and plays with the hyperbolic potential of this feature. In doing so, he seems to be drawing from Chariton and responding to his novel by distorting some parameters. This tendency can be observed in the introduction of the protagonists and in the scene of Aegialeus and Thelxinoe. A connection with Chariton occurs also with the best artistic piece of the novel, the nuptial canopy, where Xenophon reuses an item that appeared at the end of Chariton's novel and highlights it with a precise description. The object itself maintains a function similar to the one it had in Chariton, but the

⁹⁹ 1,4 and 1,2,1, respectively. Both passages made use of military vocabulary.

¹⁰⁰ Friedländer 1912, 47.

¹⁰¹ Attention will be paid in due time to the already mentioned description of Erotes in Philostratus' *Imagines* 1,6, as well as to Aetion's painting of the wedding of Roxana and Alexander described by Lucian in *Herodotus* 4, which shows many elements in common with Xenophon's canopy.

description of the contents of the embroidery introduces something new for the novels, that is, the use of works of art to encourage reflection on the connection between the stories depicted there and the main story. These kinds of links, which are quite elementary in the case of the canopy, will be resumed and complicated to the utmost by Achilles Tatius, whose descriptions of paintings will be the object of the next chapter. Similarly to the case of the nuptial canopy, where references to both Herodotus and Chariton led us to a better understanding of Xenophon's use of the work of art, the next chapter will analyse as thoroughly as possible the sources, extra-genre, both literary and not, of Achilles' descriptions, but will consider that the novelist was also the continuator of something which belonged to the genre.

Ekphrasis of paintings in Achilles Tatius

Achilles Tatius provides the first evident case that art was recognised by novelists as an important part of the job. We have seen that an intricate level of connection between works of art, mainly statues, and narrative was already present in the early novels, and also that, with the *ekphrasis* of the nuptial canopy, Xenophon of Ephesus added to this pattern the feature of rhetorical description. Achilles Tatius capitalised on these aspects and made *ekphrasis* of works of art, paintings in particular, one of the prominent elements of his novel, paving the way not only for future novelists but also for authors of *ekphrasis* of works of art, and, as we have already seen and will see further, influencing rhetorical theory on the subject. After Achilles Tatius no novelist neglected to include paintings in their works, and to give them a fundamental role. The first thing that has to be noticed, therefore, is that whereas earlier novels preferred works of art that resembled characters or divinities or heroes, a new trend can be seen starting from the case of Xenophon's canopy, and even more with Achilles' paintings, as novels became interested in works of art that told stories. More than anyone else in the world of the novel, however, Achilles Tatius explored the field of the description of works of art. Xenophon of Ephesus composed a clear but concise description of the canopy, whereas Achilles Tatius' descriptions do not economise on words and occupy significant portions of the books that feature them. This leads to questions of balance between narration and description that had not previously been met by other novelists, and that our novelist must have taken into due consideration. Therefore, before the analysis of the paintings in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, it is worth paying some attention to the rudiments of modern theory on narration and description and to what can be found on the subject in ancient theory, in order to approach Achilles Tatius' descriptions not just as readers of the final product but as observers of the author at work.

3.1. On narration and description

A general understanding of the word 'description' is easy to obtain: in the broadest possible sense, and regardless of any contextualization, it is when we are told what things look like. However, the nature of description is a difficult one to grasp. Normally, we tend to recognize it in virtue of its opposition to narration.¹ To put it simply, narration is the account of facts and actions, description is the observation of objects.² One could identify the opposition between the two as the opposition of

¹ Lukacs 1970; Genette 1969; Fowler, 1991.

² Lukacs 1970 associates narration with people and description with things.

what is subject to movement and change, and what stays still. However, there can be objections to this view. First of all, there is no limit to the subjects of description: one can describe a building, a landscape, but also a living creature, or an action.³ Description does not only deal with objects, and it does not only deal with lack of movement. One can describe one moment in the course of an event, or the sequence of moments that constitute the entire event. As a consequence, the line that separates description and narration is thin, and not an easy one to draw. For, if description can be applied as well to events, actions, and movements, how is it different from narration? In any given account of any event, are we even able to distinguish the narration of what happened from the description of what happened?

When Aeneas, during the account of the sack of Troy in Book Two of the *Aeneid* (203 ff.), tells the story of the two serpents that killed Laocoon and his two sons, is he narrating or describing what happened? Not only is action involved, but the movements of the characters and especially the contorted movements of the beasts are crucial to the effect of the story. Stillness is nowhere to be found,⁴ and yet there is definitely a descriptive flavour to the passage. Much attention is paid to the bodies entwined with the mortal coils, with an abundance of details that can only have the purpose of making the scene more vivid for the audience to imagine. Although it is difficult, as it appears, to tell when narration stops (if it ever does) and description begins, we can safely indicate a few elements that make the passage diverge from the narration that precedes and follows, and that encapsulate it as descriptive. The first one is the abundance of details. Adjectivity becomes prominent, together with a more frequent use of figures of speech: alliteration, for instance, is used often in order to make the account more effective. The second one comes as a consequence of the first: the action is slowed down. The flow of time is never interrupted, but when it comes to the story of the serpents the narrative pace decreases, and one can appreciate the scene more attentively. One word seems to be pointing us towards a better definition, and that is 'scene'.⁵ For there is a difference between a series of events that come one after the other and a scene, limited in time and space, to which attention is particularly drawn. We could say that narration is more concerned with the former, description with the latter. Generalization, however, is paramount, because every

³ As we have already seen, this is noticed invariably by all authors of *Progymnasmata*.

⁴ To be more precise, stillness is carefully avoided. Logically, the serpents' grasp would lead to a progressive reduction in the men's movements until complete entrapment, and finally to the immobility of death. Yet, the death of Laocoon and his children is never described: Laocoon's fight and shouts are interrupted by a simile meant to explain them, after which we see the serpents leave the scene. It is true that the simile carries an image of ineluctable death, but the actual death is never showed. Leaving to Lessing the task to explain whether it was sculpture that imitated poetry, or vice versa, it suffices here to indicate that the poet freezes the group in a moment when action is still in progress, without ever even mentioning the interruption of movement.

⁵ Genette 1969, 59.

instance is different from the other, and, more importantly, always subject to the perception of the reader. Gérard Genette investigated the issue and provided a sharp analysis:

la narration s'attache à des actions ou des événements considérés comme purs procès, et par là même elle met l'accent sur l'aspect temporel et dramatique du récit; la description au contraire, parce qu'elle s'attarde sur des objets et des êtres considérés dans leur simultanéité, et qu'elle envisage les procès eux-mêmes comme des spectacles, semble suspendre le cours du temps et contribue à étaler le récit dans l'espace. [...] La différence la plus significative serait peut-être que la narration restitue, dans la succession temporelle de son discours, la succession également temporelle des événements, tandis que la description doit moduler dans le successif la représentation d'objets simultanés et juxtaposés dans l'espace.⁶

Narration imitates time and description imitates space, which accounts for the indissolubility of these two forms of discourse in any literary example. For literary works, in wanting to recreate reality, must follow reality's two main coordinates, none of which can be entirely autonomous. A narration that is restricted to a mere list of facts is as unsuccessful a communication as an isolated description that refrains from any context. Paraphrasing Lukacs we could say that pure narration, as well as pure description, does not exist in literature.⁷ But in his view they are two different phenomena, in contrast and perhaps in competition with each other, and one of them (description), void of any ideology, unavoidably loses the contest.⁸ Rather, one needs to realise, again with Genette, that 'raconter un événement et décrire un objet sont deux opérations semblables, qui mettent en jeu les mêmes ressources du langage.' It is difficult to establish parameters that differentiate narration and description, thus Genette's cautious conclusion that, with regards to narration, 'on considérera la description non comme un de ses modes (ce qui impliquerait une spécificité de langage), mais, plus modestement, comme un de ses aspects.'⁹

Against Genette's point of view one could only argue that description may in fact show some specificity of language, and that would be the tendency to abound in adjectives, in precise sensory details, in figures of speech that aim to communicate not only what to imagine, but also how to imagine it. Obviously, all these features belong to the linguistic resources that both narration and description have in common, but there seems to be a greater concentration of them in description, whereas narration displays them to a smaller extent. This should not lead to the assumption that we can tell when we are moving from narration to description based on the fact that

⁶ *Ibid.* 59-60.

⁷ Lukacs 1970, 136.

⁸ Cf. Lukacs 1970, 143: 'Without an ideology a writer can neither narrate nor construct a comprehensive, well-organized and multifaceted epic composition. Observation and description are mere substitutes for a conception of order in life.'

⁹ Genette 1969, 60.

we come across adjectives. Abundance of adjectives does not function as a switch that allows us to know that one has stopped and the other one has started, for it is impossible to determine starting from which level of deepening the account can be considered a description. It is a matter of intensification of details and, consequently, length of the account, which means that there can be different degrees of description. The more the details given and the longer the time spent on building the perception of the subject, the more distinguishable narration and description become, and in cases of extreme length and precision one might even be inclined to detach description from narration, and give to the former an autonomous status.¹⁰

Although these phenomena usually react to classification with a natural production of exceptions that allows them to escape from being labelled, it seems useful at this point to make some very simple distinctions in the degrees of description according to length and, consequently, use. We can identify minimal descriptions that have the only purpose of not leaving alone the word that represents the subject; short descriptions that outline the subject and make it stand out against the rest;¹¹ complete descriptions that provide an accurate visualization of the subject, in order for it not only not to escape attention, but also to be perceived important (whatever the reason);¹² and long descriptions that aim to render the full perception of the subject, with such an extension that the progress of the narration is almost compromised. The boundary between adjacent typologies is vague and open to overlapping, but what counts is the difference between typologies distant from one another, and especially the extreme ones, because, regardless of the context, we can instinctively tell what can be accepted within the boundaries of a 'normal' communication and what is more than normal, or perhaps beyond it.¹³ The accumulation of information and the consequent increase in length cannot avoid producing significant alterations in the narration, and when the limits of normality are exceeded, description is perceived by readers as a difficulty and the need is felt to explain its presence, if not to justify it.

The limits of normality are limits of space and time. The concept that best clarifies this is, once again borrowing Genette's words, that of speed of narrative, defined by the relationship between the duration of the story and the length of the text.¹⁴ The speed of an ellipsis, where variable portions of time are simply omitted in the text and the events within are left untold, or of a

¹⁰ We shall return to this principle when talking about the birth of the genre of *ekphrasis* of works of art.

¹¹ For example the description of Thersites in the *Iliad*, which the authors of *Progymnasmata* use as a study case.

¹² This could be the case of Xenophon's *ekphrasis* of the nuptial canopy.

¹³ To give one example outside literature, the one and only subject that is continuously shown in the film *Empire*, directed by Andy Warhol in 1964, is the Empire State Building in New York. The camera does not move, and the running time of the film is eight hours and five minutes.

¹⁴ See Genette 1972, 123.

summary, where a handful of words synthesizes events that lasted for days, weeks, or months,¹⁵ is, for example, fast. On the other hand, the movement of a descriptive passage that occupies a significant portion of the text but corresponds to an imperceptible if not non-existent progress in the story, is a very slow one.¹⁶ Zero-speed, so to say, (just like hyper-speed –once again the extremes are the easiest to identify) is when the limits of normality are exceeded. Genette, who, as seen above, defends the diegetic character of description and opposes the distinction between that and narration, specifies in a footnote that ‘le fait qu’un segment de discours corresponde à une durée nulle de l’histoire ne caractérise pas en propre la description’.¹⁷ According to him zero-speed applies more properly to excursions and interventions made by the author, digressions within the text that constitute a pause in the narrative. Contrarily to these, ‘toute description ne fait pas nécessairement pause dans le récit’.¹⁸ As subtle and ultimately always subject to the reader’s perception as this difference seems to be, Genette’s analysis still shows an effort to appreciate the integration of description with the surrounding narrative, and encourages the search for a function, or a reason, for these descriptions. Now, notwithstanding his point, integrating implies that something is seen as different from something else, and looking for a reason implies that the presence of something needs to be explained. When a description comes in its longest form, the gap between the normal pace of the narration and the prolonged zero-speed of the description challenges the reader’s experience, constitutes a problem and calls for a solution, and the solution is to try to find the reason why the description is there in the first place and what its function is.

Description is the result of a selection, and to find the function of a description means to find the reasons behind that selection. Any narration will at some point describe the world that it recreates, but the impossibility of encompassing everything that constitutes that world results in a selection: first, of the space that pertains to the story told as opposed to the space that is not touched by it; second, of the details that are apt carriers of the message the narrator wants to convey, as opposed to those that are not relevant. The narrator’s message can take a variety of shapes. Time and words might be spent describing a person or an object because that person is a character in the story or that object is used at some point, and the readers are meant to become more acquainted with them through the description. Or, in case of the description of someone or something focalised

¹⁵ For instance the summaries at the beginning of Books Five and Eight of *Chaereas and Callirhoe*. An example of this taken from Achilles Tatius: ‘Having waited therefore for two days and somewhat refreshed ourselves after our troubles...’ (3,9,1).

¹⁶ Genette 1972, 128: ‘Théoriquement, en effet, il existe une gradation continue depuis cette vitesse infinie qui est celle de l’ellipse, où un segment nul de récit correspond à une durée quelconque d’histoire, jusqu’à cette lenteur absolue qui est celle de la pause descriptive, où un segment quelconque du discours narratif correspond à une durée diégétique nulle.’

¹⁷ *Ibid.* n. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 129.

through one of the characters, the object or person described might not be important in themselves, but because of what the character thinks of them. Or, in the case of a third-person omniscient narrator, it is also possible that what is described is unconnected to the rest of the story or its characters. Apart from the all-seeing eye of the narrator, no one in the story will ever acknowledge the existence of the object described with as much as a quick glance, and it will have no influence whatsoever. Even in this case the description will respond to a function, and the narrator's aim in underlining that which seems completely irrelevant could be simply to make it appear real.¹⁹ Perhaps the narrator is trying to say that narrative's representation of life can go as far as to show that as life is filled with people, things, and places we never see or pay attention to, so too can narrative be.

In very simple terms we could say that there are descriptions with connections to the plot and the characters and descriptions without connections. In the first group we will find descriptions that are attached to the story (e.g. of characters, objects, places, events that play a role),²⁰ whereas in the other we will have descriptions that are ornamental, whose objects do not play a role nor interact with anything that does. This does not determine the level of importance attributed to the object of the description, but only a difference in function: the first group will have a narrative function, the second a decorative one; the first one serves the story, the second one its aesthetic. However, strict categorization is once again impossible. One should rather place the description at stake at one point of the spectrum that has 'very closely connected to the story' and 'purely ornamental' as its extremes, than put it in one of the two boxes, especially since the two types do not entirely exclude each other. A long description can depict an object that is fundamental to the story while offering a decoration to the text.²¹ In the same way, the realism provided by a purely ornamental description can be viewed as fundamental to the effect of the story. In view of this, every description can find its significance within a text. Nevertheless, a useful distinction should be kept in mind: that between descriptions of objects whose absence would change the story, and of objects without which the story can survive almost intact.²²

The purpose of this preamble was to make some general comments about the nature of description in written forms of communication, with special regard to instances of long descriptions

¹⁹ Barthes' 'reality effect'; see Barthes 1982.

²⁰ Lukacs 1970, 136: 'Anything which plays a meaningful role in the activity of a man about whom we are concerned becomes poetically significant (given a certain literary competence) precisely because of its relationship to the character's activity.'

²¹ The canopy in Xenophon of Ephesus, for example, constitutes a piece that speaks for the beauty of the room and the wealth of its owners, but also connects with the contents of the story.

²² Perutelli brings the examples of the shield of Achilles in Homer for the first case and the shield of Heracles in Hesiod for the second, and makes a preliminary distinction between narrative function and descriptive function. See Perutelli 1979, 32-35.

and problems raised by them. Although the theory behind this is mainly modern, it provides a helpful perspective for the reading of Achilles Tatius as well. Our novelist, as had others before him, set out to compose a long work of fiction in prose. Unlike his predecessors, however, he chose to insert reasonably long descriptions at several points of his narrative. This operation cannot have taken place without a due amount of consideration, on the author's side, of the dynamics of the combination of narration and description. This is generally valid for all descriptions in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, but especially for the descriptions of paintings, which are more prominent in both length and position in the novel. The next section will attempt to answer a few questions, before moving on to the analysis of the paintings in Achilles Tatius: which theoretical instruments were available to Achilles Tatius in order to do what he did? Were notions such as length, speed and function perceived in connection to description? And were they felt as a potential issue one needed to find a solution to? The best ground where to explore these matters are the ancient handbooks of prose composition, the *Progymnasmata*.

3.2. On narration and description in ancient rhetorical theory

First of all, we will look at how ancient rhetorical theory understood description in relation to the text that surrounds it, considering the differences and similarities with other kinds of speeches. This will contribute to a better outline of the nature of description, especially against that of narration. As will ensue from the analysis of the technical vocabulary, the two were considered as close already in early treatises, and, at a time that followed the composition of the novels, the treatment of description underwent a change that brought it even closer to narration.

3.2.1. Length and integration of description

The balance between individual exercises (*mythos*, *diêgêma*, *enkômion*, *ekphrasis*, etc.) and the text that surrounded them was felt by the authors of *Progymnasmata* as an aspect for which they needed to provide guidance. The *Progymnasmata* provided exercises that contributed to the completeness of a speech (hypothesis), but most of the exercises could not constitute a speech by themselves, although the authors rarely share the exact same opinion. For instance, it is said, with only a few differences from one author to another, that *enkômion* can be a full hypothesis (i.e. can constitute a full epideictic speech and not just part of it) by Theon (61,21-2), Nicolaus (47-48 Felten), and John

of Sardis (116 Rabe).²³ Similarly, with *nomou eisphora*, Aphthonius confusingly advances the idea that the introduction of a law could be a full hypothesis (14,1 Patillon), an indecision that is later confirmed by Nicolaus (79 Felten), and John of Sardis, who quotes Aphthonius (261 Rabe). However, we can maintain that, unless otherwise specified, a single exercise could not normally constitute an entire speech. Such is the case with *ekphrasis*, which was considered part of a speech by all the authors except one. In Nicolaus we read as follows:

Ἔστι δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ τοῦτο τὸ προγύμνασμα τῶν ὡς μερῶν παραλαμβανομένων· οὐδὲν δὲ ἴσως ἂν κωλύοι καὶ ὡς ἀρκούσαν ποτε αὐτὴν πρὸς ὅλην ὑπόθεσιν ἐργάσασθαι, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον μέντοι τῶν μερῶν ἔστι.

For the most part, this exercise is one of those which are used as parts [of a speech]. But nothing would prevent it from sometimes being made sufficient in itself for a complete subject, although for the most part it is one of the parts [of a speech]. (70 Felten, trans. Webb 2009, 204)

Ekphrasis is mostly one of the parts, but if sufficiently worked out it can become a full hypothesis. Since Nicolaus, and he alone, considers works of art when talking about *ekphrasis*, it is not impossible to infer from his words that the *ekphrasis* of a work of art could constitute a full speech, and it is not unlikely that the instances he is thinking about are works such as Philostratus' *Imagines*.

Connected to this is the issue of length, for a rhetor writing *ekphrasis* as a full hypothesis can expand it at will, but one using it as part of a bigger speech, as is more often the case, must pay attention to the balance between the *ekphrasis* and the surrounding text. When looking at examples from literature of the past the authors of *Progymnasmata* do not make any particular distinction concerning length, since the three-line description of Thersites in the *Iliad* is considered as good an example of *ekphrasis* as the over-one-hundred-line description of the shield of Achilles. However, what they expect the students to do is to exercise in long descriptions, as indicated by the fact that, when a model needs to be set, the choice falls on a long description (e.g. the acropolis of Alexandria in Aphthonius, 12,4-12 Patillon). No author of *Progymnasmata* addresses the issue of length in the treatment of *ekphrasis*, but one can extend to *ekphrasis* what is said in general about digressions under other headings. Thus Theon, when talking about *diêgêma*, says:

παραιτητέον δὲ καὶ τὸ παρεκβάσεις ἐπεμβάλλεσθαι μεταξὺ διηγήσεως μακράς· οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς χρὴ πάσαν παραιτεῖσθαι, καθάπερ ὁ Φίλιστος (ἀναπαύει γὰρ

²³ John of Sardis, however, had previously said something different: δεῖ τοιγαροῦν τὸν ταῦτα μελετῶντα οὐχ ὡς τελείοις λόγοις, ὡς μέρεσι δὲ μᾶλλον κεχρηῆσθαι τοῦ λόγου, 'there is need for the practitioner to use them as parts of speeches and not as complete speeches' (3 Rabe).

τὴν διάνοιαν τῶν ἀκροατῶν) ἀλλὰ τὴν τηλικαύτην τὸ μῆκος, ἥτις ἀπαλλοτριοῖ τὴν διάνοιαν τῶν ἀκροωμένων, ὥστε δεῖσθαι πάλιν ὑπομνήσεως τῶν προειρημένων, ὡς Θεόπομπος ἐν ταῖς Φιλιππικαῖς. δύο γὰρ πού καὶ τρεῖς καὶ πλείους ἱστορίας ὅλας κατὰ παρέκβασιν εὐρίσκομεν, ἐν αἷς οὐχ ὅπως Φιλίππου, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ Μακεδόνοσ τινὸς ὄνομά ἐστι. ἀσαφὴς δὲ γίνεται διήγησις παρὰ τὴν ἔλλειψιν ὧν ἐχρῆν ἀναγκαίως μνήμην ποιήσασθαι, καὶ παρὰ τὴν τῶν ἀποκεκρυμμένων ἱστοριῶν ἀλληγορίαν.

One should, moreover, avoid inserting long digressions in the middle of a narration. It is not necessary simply to avoid all digression, as Philistus does, for they give the hearer's mind a rest, but one should avoid such a lengthy digression that it distracts the thought of the hearers and results in the need for a reminder of what has been said earlier, as in Theopompus' *Philippica*. We find there two or three or more whole stories in the form of digressions where there is nothing about Philip and not even the name of any Macedonian. Narration becomes unclear by omission of what ought necessarily to have been mentioned and by an allegorical account of disguised events.²⁴

(80,30-81,7)

According to Theon, since digressions can give rest to the hearers' mind, one should not avoid them altogether, but only those the length of which distracts the hearers from the narration.²⁵ Quintilian, Theon's contemporary, shares a very similar view, but substitutes the more general παρέκβασις (digression) with *descriptio*.²⁶ A more specific criticism towards long digressions, though in a different context, comes from Lucian. In *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* (19 ff.), when showing practical examples of how not to write history, the sophist laments the work of an unnamed historian who seemed to be particularly keen on abounding in details. His descriptions of cities, mountains, rivers, and the like, were more copious than those by Thucydides, but this was far from being a good quality, for the result was a very cold style. The bad historian would waste an entire book describing the emperor's shield with what is carved on it, or king Osroes' shelter, all of which was unnecessary and did not contribute to the comprehension of the facts. Behind those descriptions lay weakness and ignorance, that made the targeted author turn to the writing of *ekphraseis* of lands and caves instead of saying what needed to be said. Lucian's criticism is not

²⁴ Philistus had already been mentioned by Dionysius of Halicarnassos as an example of the fact that the choice of avoiding *ekphrasis* does not correspond to an improvement of the text (*De imitatione* 31,3,2).

²⁵ Theon's point is quoted word for word by John of Sardis, 25 Rabe.

²⁶ *Institutio oratoriae* 2,4,3-4, noticeably in the section of the preliminary exercises: *Admonere illud sat est, ut sit ea neque arida prorsus atque ieiuna (nam quid opus erat tantum studiis laboris impendere si res nuda atque inornatas indicare satis videretur?), neque rursus sinuosa et arcessitis descriptionibus, in quas plerique imitatione poeticae licentiae ducuntur, lasciva. Vitium utrumque, peius tamen illud quod ex inopia quam quod ex copia venit.* 'it is sufficient to note that it (narrative) should be neither quite dry and jejune (for why spend so much labour on our studies if it was thought satisfactory to set things out baldly and without embellishment?) nor, on the other hand, tortuous and revelling in those irrelevant Descriptions to which many are tempted by their wish to imitate the licence of poets. Both are faults, but the one which comes from deficiency is worse than the one which comes from abundance.' (trans. Russell).

against *ekphrasis* in general, for he too, elsewhere, makes wide use of it, and not even against the application of *ekphrasis* to historiography, because Thucydides himself was often cited as an example of good *ekphrasis*. What he is disappointed in is the excessive application of *ekphrasis* to historiography, especially when it concerns pointless details. The *ekphraseis* exemplified by Lucian seem to indicate that at least one historian of the generation previous to his (the Parthian king Osroes dates from the first quarter of the second century AD) put into bad practice his rhetorical training, by using in the wrong kind of context (not the epideictic) the descriptive material learnt there, and by overdoing the emulation of the Thucydidean model without the correspondent depth of analysis.

That the careless application of the material used in declamations (*meletai*) to other genres (like oratory or history) was something to be advised against, is a point that had already been made some two centuries before Lucian. In the penultimate chapter of the *Ars rhetorica* attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, dedicated to the mistakes of the *meletai*, the author tackles the mistakes in the use of descriptions.²⁷ Interestingly enough, in what could be one of the very first appearances of the word, *ekphrasis* is already considered a problematic presence, and clearly defined as a mistake:

Ἐνίοις κάκεινο ἀμάρτημα, αἱ καλούμεναι ἐκφράσεις, πολλαχοῦ τὸν χειμῶνα γράφειν καὶ λοιμοὺς καὶ λιμοὺς καὶ παρατάξεις καὶ ἀριστείας. οὐ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ κρίσις τῆς δίκης, ἐν τῷ διαγράψαι τὸν χειμῶνα. ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῦτα ματαία ἐπίδειξις καὶ λόγου ἀνάλωμα· εἰσερρῦη δὲ τοῦτο τὸ ἀμάρτημα ἐν ταῖς μελέταις κατὰ ζῆλον τῆς ἱστορίας καὶ τῶν ποιημάτων. ἀγνοοῦμεν γὰρ ὡς ἔοικεν, ὅτι ἱστορία μὲν περὶ καὶ ποιήσεις γραφικὰς τὰς ὄψεις τῶν ἀναγκαίων τοῖς ἀκούουσιν παράγουσιν, ἀγῶν δὲ δικανικὸς μεμέτρηται πρὸς τὴν χρεῖαν. καὶ οἱ μὲν ποιηταὶ καὶ ἱστορικοὶ τὰ συμβεβηκότα τόποις τισὶ καὶ προσώποις ἐκτυποῦσιν, ὡς ἐγένετο· οἱ δὲ μελετῶντες ῥήτορες οὐκ ἔχοντες ὁμολογουμένην οὐδὲ ἰδίαν τὴν τῶν πεπραγμένων ἰδέαν αὐτοῖς ἀναπλάττουσιν λοιμῶν καὶ λιμῶν καὶ χειμῶνων καὶ πολέμων ὄψεις, οὐ πάντων οὕτω συμβεβηκότων, ὡς αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν. ἔξεστι γοῦν καὶ τῷ ἀντιδίκῳ ἑτέρως αὐτὰ φράσαι ἢ ὡς ἂν ὁ ἀντιδίκος εἶπη. ὥσπερ οὖν ἔφην, καὶ ταῦτα μάταιον μῆκος λόγων. τοῦτο δὲ τὸ πάθημα ἀνθρώπων ἀγνοούντων, ὅτι καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐπικαίροις τῶν ἀγῶνων ἐστὶ φαντασίας κίνησις ἰκανὴ καὶ οὐ δεῖ ἔξωθεν λόγοις φαντασίας ἐπεισκυκλεῖσθαι.

To some belongs that other mistake, the so-called *ekphraseis*, the widely distributed descriptions of storms and plagues and famines and battle lines and examples of prowess. It is not on the description of a storm that the result of a trial depends. These things are empty ostentation and a waste of words; this mistake flowed into the declamations from the imitation of history and poems. I ignore how it is that history in prose and poetry bring to the listeners the graphic images of the necessary things, but a trial is measured against what is useful. Poets and historians model the events of the

²⁷ Russell 1983, 72 dates the treatise to the late second or third century. On this passage see Webb 2009, 139-141.

past with certain places and persons, as they took place; rhetors in declamations, however, having neither an agreed nor a personal idea of the facts, fashion images of plagues and famines and storms and battles, all of which did not take place in the way in which they say they did. So it is possible to say things to an opponent in a different way from how he might have said them. As I said, this, too, is an empty magnitude of words. This is a misfortune of men who do not know that in the crucial parts of trials there is sufficient movement of imagination, and one should not pile up images with words from outside.

(10,17, my translation)

Ps.-Dionysius' point of view is a practical one: *ekphrasis* is a mistake because it is not by describing a storm that the trial will be won. The epideictic aspect of *ekphrasis* is empty (ματαιά ἐπίδειξις), just a show of words. Ps.-Dionysius understands the origin of such practice to be the works of historians and poets whom students want to emulate, although he admits ignorance as to the reason why *ekphrasis* are in those works in the first place. Regardless, it is what is useful that contributes to the trial. The difference between a poet or a historian on the one hand, and a rhetor on the other hand, is that the former describes the events as they happened, with faces and places, whereas the latter describes them without having the slightest idea of how things happened, and only according to his imagination. Since the visual aspect that is sufficient to a speech is already included in its rules, there is no need to accumulate more images, because such an empty multitude of words results in a mistake. Ps.-Dionysius' distinction is between forms of written and oral communication. The first ones, such as poetry or historiography, are the preferable contexts for *ekphrasis* (and Homer and Thucydides will become preferred models of it), but the same display of words in judicial oratory is not only unnecessary, but also detrimental. Like Lucian, Ps.-Dionysius is not against *ekphrasis* in general, but against the excessive application of the *ekphrasis* learnt through the *meletai* in an inappropriate context.

If we take this passage as a mirror of rhetorical practice, it seems that there were rhetors who abused *ekphrasis* in courts, and one can perfectly see why the pause constituted by the *ekphrasis* would annoy the hearers, especially in the case of an almost entirely irrelevant subject. As it appears, the balance between the length of the *ekphrasis* and the surrounding text (or speech), its relevance and connection to the main topic, and the pertinence of the context, are aspects that were not always taken into proper consideration, and certain indications in the *Progymnasmata* can, in a way, be seen as an attempt to regulate these phenomena by teaching precisely where and when to use an *ekphrasis*, and what to say. So, rhetors were recommended not to write *ekphrasis* alone (at least until the fifth century AD), not to write it in the wrong context, and not to describe subjects irrelevant to the context. Furthermore, it seems that setting such rules on descriptions led to a deeper thinking on the nature of description itself, which, at times, contains *in nuce* some of the main elements that constitute the modern theory on description outlined at the beginning of this

chapter. Ps.-Dionysius and Theon, for example, are concerned about the length of the narrative pause in the course of a speech, Lucian in the course of historical prose, and all of them about the function of the description in relation to what surrounds it. To be sure, narratology was not in the minds of the authors of *Progymnasmata*, primarily because the users of the handbooks were expected to compose orations and not to write books and novels, which are at the basis of modern theory. Some of these users, however, did end up writing novels, exploiting in particular the feature of description, and must therefore have been aware not just of the technical rules of *ekphrasis* (what to describe, in which order, with which style), but also of problems connected to it (excessive length, irrelevance), and when and how it should be used. Someone who attended a school of rhetoric, like Achilles Tatius, would have been aware of the risk of long descriptions irrelevant to the main topic; the novelist would likely have known that they could be perceived as pleasant, but also that it was advisable not to write something entirely unconnected to the main thread, and he might have thought about possible solutions to these problems. As we will see, someone interested in descriptions inserted in narrative would have been able to find in the *Progymnasmata* and in other manuals further information on the nature of description.

3.2.2. Combination of *ekphrasis* with other exercises

Almost all authors of *Progymnasmata* realise the difficulty of drawing the boundaries of description. It has already been said above in 1.3.4, for example, that from the point of view of the subject matter there is not much difference between *ekphrasis* and *enkômion*, and also the similarity between *ekphrasis* and some of the other exercises is often mentioned in the treatises. When talking about *ekphrasis*, for instance, Theon highlights the characteristics that are common of *ekphrasis* and *koinos topos*:

συγγένειαν δὲ τινα ἔχει τὸ γύμνασμα τοῦτο τῷ προειρημένῳ· ἡ μὲν γὰρ περὶ οὐδενὸς ὠρισμένου ἐστὶν ἀμφοτέρω, ἀλλὰ κοινὰ καὶ καθόλου, ταύτη ὁμοία· διαφέρει δὲ ἀλλήλων πρῶτον μὲν, ὅτι ὁ μὲν τόπος περὶ τῶν ἐκ προαιρέσεώς ἐστίν, ἡ δὲ ἐκφρασις τὰ πολλὰ περὶ τῶν ἀψύχων καὶ ἀπροαιρέτων γίνεται, δεύτερον δὲ ὅτι ἐν μὲν τῷ τόπῳ τὰ πράγματα ἀπαγγέλλοντες προστίθεμεν καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν γνώμην ἢ χρηστὰ ἢ φαῦλα λέγοντες εἶναι, ἐν δὲ ἐκφράσει ψιλῆ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐστὶν ἡ ἀπαγγελία.

This exercise shares a certain characteristic with what has been said earlier (about *topos*). In so far as neither is concerned with a particular and both are common and general they are alike, but they differ, first, in that *topos* is concerned with matters of moral choice, while *ekphrasis* is, for the most part, about lifeless things and those without choice; second, when describing things in a *topos* we also add our own

judgement, saying something is good or bad, but in *ekphrasis* there is only a plain description of the subject.
(119,6-15)

The meaning of Theon's words is not entirely clear. On the one hand, when he says that both exercises dwell 'on nothing defined' (περὶ οὐδενὸς ὠρισμένου) and that they are 'common in general' (κοινὰ καὶ καθόλου), he seems to be hinting at a general similarity of the subject matter. On the other hand, he soon makes a distinction of subjects, with moral choices belonging to *koinos topos* and inanimate objects to *ekphrasis*, and underlines that there is no judgment in *ekphrasis*; 'τῷ προειρημένῳ' probably refers to a previous passage under the heading *koinos topos*:

τὴν διατύπωσιν ποιησόμεθα, ὅταν ἐνεργούμενον τὸ ἀδίκημα ἀπαγγέλλωμεν καὶ τὸ πάθος τοῦ ἡδικομένου, οἷον κατὰ ἀνδροφόνου· διαγράψομεν γὰρ οἷος μὲν ἦν ὁ ἐργαζόμενος τὸν φόνον.

We shall create a representation (*diatypōsis*) whenever we describe the crime in the process of execution and the suffering of the one wronged, for example in denouncing a murderer; we shall vividly describe what kind of person committed the murder.
(108,35-109,4)

When amplifying a fault or an evil character in *koinos topos*, one should create a *diatypōsis*, a vivid description of the crime. Although the terminology of description used here by Theon is slightly different from the terminology adopted for *ekphrasis*, it is clear enough that he is indicating the use of *ekphrasis* in *koinos topos*.²⁸ Nicolaus too wrote on this topic, underlining however the risks of writing, in an instance of *koinos topos*, a too vivid *ekphrasis* of too cruel a crime.²⁹ The ambiguous relationship between *ekphrasis* and other exercises is observed by Ps.-Hermogenes:

ἰστέον δὲ ὡς τῶν ἀκριβεστέρων τινὲς οὐκ ἔθηκαν τὴν ἔκφρασιν εἰς γύμνασμα, ὡς προειλημμένην καὶ ἐν μύθῳ καὶ ἐν διηγήματι καὶ ἐν τόπῳ κοινῷ καὶ ἐν ἐγκωμίῳ· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖ, φάσιν, ἐκφράζομεν καὶ τόπους καὶ ποταμούς καὶ πράγματα καὶ πρόσωπα. ἀλλ' ὅμως, ἐπειδὴ τινες οὐ φαῦλοι καὶ ταύτην ἐγκατηρίθμησαν τοῖς γυμνάσμασιν, ἠκολουθήσαμεν καὶ ἡμεῖς ῥαθυμίας

²⁸ *Diatypōsis* is a synonym for *ekphrasis*; see for example the definition of *diatypōsis* in Anonimus Seguerianus, 233 Hammer: διατύπωσις ἐστὶν ἐναργῆς καὶ ἐξεργασμένη φράσις τῶν ψιλῶς καὶ ἀπλῶς ἐν τῇ διηγήσει λεγομένων, ὑπ' ὅσιν ἄγουσα τὸ πρᾶγμα, 'diatypōsis is the expression, vivid and elaborated, of the things that are said coldly and plainly in *diēgēsis*, bringing the action before the eyes' (my translation). Patillon's translation of Theon 108,35 has 'diatypose', which he then glosses with 'représentation' at p. 149, n. 321.

²⁹ Nicolaus, 45 Felten (notice the interchangeable use of *ekphrazō* and *diatypōsis*): σκοπεῖν δὲ ἐπὶ τούτου δεῖ τοῦ κεφαλαίου, ὅπως μὴ λάθωμεν ἐκφράζοντες αἰσχρὰ πρᾶγματα, ὃ συμβαίνει, ὅταν κατὰ μοιχοῦ τινος ἢ παιδοφθόρου ποιῶμεθα τοὺς λόγους· ἐπὶ γὰρ τῶν τοιούτων φεύγειν δεῖ τὴν διατύπωσιν· ἐκφράζοντες γὰρ πλέον ἡμᾶς αὐτοὺς ἢ ἐκείνον διαβαλοῦμεν, 'in the case of this heading (*hypotypōsis*) we must watch out that we do not, unwittingly, describe shameful deeds, which can result when we are making speeches against an adulterer or a child abuser. On such matters it is necessary to avoid detailed description, which will do more harm to us than to the defendant.'

ἔγκλημα φεύγοντες.

You should know that some of the more exact teachers do not make ecphrasis an exercise, on the ground that it has already been included in fable and narrative and common-place and encomion; for there too, they say, we describe places and rivers and actions and persons. Nevertheless, since some writers of no small authority number ecphrasis among the exercises, we have followed them to avoid any criticism of carelessness.

(10,7 Patillon)

Some rhetors, says Ps.-Hermogenes, do not even consider *ekphrasis* as one of the exercises, because it is already included in *mythos*, *diégēma*, *koinos topos*, and *enkōmion*, where we also describe places, rivers, events, and people. No record is left of these rhetors, which means that the prevailing opinion was that *ekphrasis* was a separate exercise, something different from fable, narrative, and the others. However, behind Ps.-Hermogenes' words lies perhaps the realisation that, as Genette puts it, 'raconter un événement et décrire un objet sont deux opérations semblables, qui mettent en jeu les mêmes ressources du langage',³⁰ and that the presence of *ekphrasis* in other exercises is not simply a matter of combination of exercises, but of the impossibility of producing any kind of writing without including, at some point and in different ways, description. A trace of this could also be found in John of Sardis' introduction of *ekphrasis*:

χρεία δὲ καὶ ταύτης ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσιν ἐστὶ καὶ ταῖς καταστάσεσιν· ἢ γὰρ τόπον ἐκφράσαι ἢ πράγματός τι μέρος οἷον λοιμοῦ ἢ πολέμου ἢ καιροῦ καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἀναγκαῖόν ἐστι.

There is use for it (*ekphrasis*) in proofs and in introductory statements; for to describe a place or some part of a subject, such as a plague or war or occasion and the like, is necessary.

(215 Rabe)

To describe things is simply ἀναγκαῖόν: necessary, but perhaps also unavoidable. An example of this, with further explanation, can be read some lines below:

δεῖ δὲ καὶ τοῦτο εἰδέναι, ὅτι ὁμοιοῦται ἐκφράσει ὁ μῦθος, καθὸ καὶ ἐν τῷ μύθῳ ζῶόν τι ἐκφράζομεν, οἷον ὅτι ὁ λέων τοιοῦσδε ἦν ἢ ὅτι ὁ πίθηκος τὴν λεοντῆν ἀμφιεννύμενος· διαφέρει δέ, ὅτι ὁ μὲν μῦθος δι' ὀλίγων, ἢ δὲ ἐκφρασις διὰ πλειόνων ἔχει τὴν ἐκφρασιν· τοῦ μὲν οὐκ ἂν εἴη τοῦτο προηγούμενον, τῆς δὲ ἐκφράσεως ἴδιον τοῦτο καὶ μόνον.

You should know this too, that fable resembles ecphrasis to the extent that we describe

³⁰ Genette 1969, 60.

some animal; for example, what the lion looked like or the ape that was wearing a lion skin. There is a difference, however, because fable gives a description in few words, *ekphrasis* in many. A description would not be the chief thing in a fable, whereas in an *ekphrasis* it is the one characteristic thing. (216 Rabe).

This time *ekphrasis* and *mythos* are alike, because at some point in the course of a fable one will inevitably end up saying what the animals involved look like. The difference lies in the verbosity of *ekphrasis* (ὁ μὲν μῦθος δι' ὀλίγων, ἡ δὲ ἔκφρασις διὰ πλείονων ἔχει τὴν ἔκφρασιν), which indicates that we can clearly distinguish *ekphrasis* only when its length becomes relevantly noticeable. What has been seen so far shows that someone who had learnt how to compose *ekphrasis* in a school of rhetoric must also have learnt that such an exercise was not meant to be a separate entity, but was seen instead as something closely attached to the surrounding context, to the point that it was difficult, at times, to tell the difference. In view of this, it is particularly interesting, having Achilles Tatius in mind, to look at some considerations on *diêgêma* and *ekphrasis* made in the *Progymnasmata*. As it turns out, the two exercises share specific terminology and turn out to be rather similar in nature.

First, though, one point should be made clear. The schools of rhetoric are not the places that inspired the composition of novels, but the places where the novelists obtained their education and learnt how to write well, and the same goes for the manuals used in these schools, the *Progymnasmata*. En passant, a proof of this is that the presence of rhetorical training is felt more at a stage that follows, not precedes, the composition of the first novels. Moreover, the manuals were meant for rhetorical training, not for the composition of works of literature. When they provide insight into the reason why the students should practice an exercise, the authors of *Progymnasmata* always point at rhetoric and its branches (deliberative, judicial, epideictic), and explain how the exercise contributes to them. There is one passage, in Theon, that points outside rhetoric.³¹

ἔστιν ἀναγκαῖον ἡ τῶν γυμνασμάτων ἀσκησις οὐ μόνον τοῖς μέλλουσι
ῥητορεύειν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἴ τις ἢ ποιητῶν ἢ λογοποιῶν ἢ ἄλλων τινῶν λόγων
δύναμιν ἐθέλει μεταχειρίζεσθαι.

Training in exercises is absolutely useful not only for those who are going to practice rhetoric but also if one wishes to undertake the function of poets or historians or any other writers. (70,26-9)

This should be read in terms of transferable skills: the exercises trained in rhetoric, but since they

³¹ Tilg 2010, 203.

taught how to write well and effectively one could, having acquired these skills, put them to whichever use one saw fit. It is from this perspective that the use of *ekphrasis* in the novels should be looked at, and it is again in this sense that the affinity between *ekphrasis* and *diêgêma* will here be analysed in connection with Achilles Tatius' propensity for providing his narrative with plenty of descriptions. First of all, it should be noted that what goes for description, that is, the fact that, when describing, novelists were following the techniques taught in the *Progymnasmata* under the heading 'ekphrasis', does not necessarily apply to narration: the fact that the novels are narratives and that the *Progymnasmata* dedicated a section to the exercise of 'narrative' does not mean that all the novelists did was to elaborate on that section of the handbooks.³² It is true that the novels are narratives and that *diêgêmata* is a good Greek word to classify them, but just as much as it is to classify anything that undergoes the process of being told.³³ Unlike other genres, the novel had no definition: generally speaking, *diêgêmata* does describe what the novels are, but so do *pathêmata*, *drâmata* (as the Byzantines will call them), *historiai*, or, simply, *erôtika*.³⁴ At any rate, just as an *ekphrasis* in a judicial speech (or any kind of rhetorical performance) is not the same as an *ekphrasis* in a novel, so the narrative part of a judicial speech (*diêgêma*, where the facts are told) is not the same as the narration of the story that takes place in a novel. Rhetoric and novel are akin in that they both provide instances of juxtaposition of parts that tell and parts that describe, but they do so not because one genre derives from the other, but because both of them express modes of communication that belong to any literary form. Having said this, rhetorical theory is the only place where indications on the nature of narration and description can be found, and it is also the place where the novelists acquired advanced writing skills. With the understanding that the *Progymnasmata* do not provide direct instructions on how to compose a novel (neither its narrative parts nor the descriptive ones) but instead techniques on how to compose in general, it is worth taking a look at what they say about *diêgêma* and *ekphrasis*, understanding that this kind of information had probably been assimilated by the authors of novels.

³² This was one of Rohde's points, for which see Rohde 1876³, 376-78. On similar grounds, Thiele 1890 argued that a particular kind of *narratio* discussed in Roman sources (*Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1,12 and Cicero's *De Inventione* 1,27) would work well as a definition of the genre of the novel, therefore bringing its date back to the first century BC, which prompted a series of reactions (Rohde's *in primis*) until Barwick 1928 settled the problem. A summary of the *querelle* can be found in Tilg 2010, 209-213. The author (198 ff.) starts by excluding a rhetorical origin of the Greek novel (199), but, based on the frequency of the word '*diêgêma*' in Chariton, and determined to prove that Chariton is the inventor of the genre, ends up suggesting that Chariton was expanding on the exercise of *diêgêma* (207), which is quite close to what Rohde initially said. See also Morgan 1993, 187-93.

³³ From what the *Progymnasmata* (for instance Ps.-Hermogenes, 2,2 Patillon) say about *diêgêma* in connection with works of literature rather than of oratory, it would seem that the word was used to indicate inserted narratives, or episodes (the examples are all from Homer: *hoplopoiia*, *nekuia*, *mnêstêrophonia*). The novelists use it, with a similar meaning, to indicate the recounting of episodes that have taken place in the story.

³⁴ Morgan 1993, 194-7.

3.2.3. *Ekphrasis* and *diêgêma*: narrative description

As it is put by Theon, and followed by all the authors of *Progymnasmata*, the definition of *diêgêma* is: λόγος ἐκθετικὸς πραγμάτων γεγονότων ἢ ὡς γεγονότων, ‘a speech that exposes facts that happened or as if they happened’ (78,16-7).³⁵ Ps.-Hermogenes adds a distinction of kinds of *diêgêmata*: mythical, fictitious, historical, and political.³⁶ Fictitious narrative (πλασματικὸν) is the one we find in the tragedians, and can also be called dramatic (δραματικὸν). Approximately the same division, with the exclusion of mythical narrative, is kept by Aphthonius, who however inverts the terms and specifies the δραματικὸν as πεπλασμένον.³⁷ Nicolaus maintains the division of mythical, historical, pragmatic, and fictitious narrative,³⁸ specifying that fictitious narrative is that of theatre,³⁹ and that it differs from *mythos* in that, even if the facts narrated did not happen, they could have happened in nature.⁴⁰ More worth noticing is however a distinction made by the rhetor immediately before this canonical one:

Τῶν δὲ διηγημάτων εἰσὶ διαφοραὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλα τρεῖς· τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀφηγηματικά, τὰ δὲ δραματικά, τὰ δὲ μικτά. ἀφηγηματικά μὲν οὖν ἐστὶν, ὅσα ἀπὸ μόνου λέγεται τοῦ προσώπου τοῦ ἀπαγγέλλοντος αὐτά, οἷα ἐστὶ τὰ παρὰ Πινδάρῳ· δραματικά δέ, ὅσα οὐκ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ συντιθέντος, ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ὑποκειμένων προσώπων λέγεται, οἷα τὰ ἐν τοῖς κωμικοῖς καὶ τραγικοῖς δράμασι· μικτὰ δὲ τὰ ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων συγκεῖμενα, οἷα τὰ Ὀμήρου καὶ Ἡροδότου καὶ εἴ τινα ἄλλα τοιαῦτα, πῆ μὲν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀπαγγέλλοντος ἐκφερόμενα, πῆ δὲ ἐξ ἐτέρων προσώπων.

³⁵ Almost in the exact same words in Ps.-Hermogenes (2,1 Patillon), Aphthonius (2,1 Patillon), and Nicolaus (11 Felten). On the relationship between narration and description in the *Progymnasmata* see Rabau 1995.

³⁶ 2,3 Patillon: εἶδη δὲ διηγήματος βούλονται εἶναι τέτταρα· τὸ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι μυθικόν, τὸ δὲ πλασματικόν, ὃ καὶ δραματικὸν καλοῦσιν, οἷα τὰ τῶν τραγικῶν, τὸ δὲ ἱστορικόν, τὸ δὲ πολιτικόν ἢ ἰδιωτικόν ‘They want there to be four species of narrative: one is mythical; one fictitious, which they also call dramatic, like those of the tragedians; one is historical; and one is political or private.’

³⁷ 2,2 Patillon: τοῦ δὲ διηγήματος τὸ μὲν ἐστὶν δραματικόν, τὸ δὲ ἱστορικόν, τὸ δὲ πολιτικόν· καὶ δραματικὸν μὲν τὸ πεπλασμένον, ἱστορικὸν δὲ τὸ παλαιὰν ἔχον ἀφήγησιν, πολιτικὸν δὲ ὡς παρὰ τοὺς ἀγῶνας οἱ ῥήτορες κέχρηται, ‘Some narrative is dramatic, some historical, some political. Imagined narrative is dramatic; narrative giving an account of early events is historical; what orators use in their contests is political.’

³⁸ 12 Felten: τῶν διηγημάτων τὰ μὲν ἐστὶν μυθικά, τὰ δὲ ἱστορικά, τὰ δὲ πραγματικά, ἃ καὶ δικανικά καλοῦσιν, τὰ δὲ πλασματικά, ‘some narratives are mythical, some historical, some pragmatic, which they all call judicial, and some fictive.’

³⁹ 13 Felten: πλασματικά δὲ τὰ ἐν ταῖς κωμωδίαις καὶ ὅλως τὰ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις δράμασι, ‘fictive are narratives in comedies and all those in other dramas.’

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: κοινωνεῖ τὰ πλασματικά διηγήματα τοῖς μύθοις τῷ ἀμφοτέρω πεπλάσθαι, διαφέρει δὲ καὶ ταῦτα ἀλλήλων, ὅτι τὰ μὲν πλασματικά διηγήματα, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἐγένετο, ἀλλ’ ἔχει φύσιν γενέσθαι, οἱ δὲ μῦθοι οὔτε ἐγένοντο οὔτε φύσιν ἔχουσι γενέσθαι, ‘fictive narratives share with fables the fact that both have been made up, but they differ from each other in that fictive narratives, even if they did not happen, could happen in nature, while fables neither happened nor could happen naturally.’ It is around these *plasmatika diêgêmata* (and the similar *diêgêsis peplasmênê* mentioned in Anonymus Seguerianus 53-4 Hammer), as well as around the Latin *tertium genus* of narratio, and its sub-division ‘*narratio, quae versatur in personis*’, that the debate over the supposed rhetorical definition of novel mentioned above took place.

There are three kinds of narrative, differing from each other. Some is descriptive (*aphêgêmatika*), some dramatic, some mixed. Descriptive is everything that is said by one person alone narrating everything, as found in Pindar's poems; dramatic is everything that is said by the supposed characters rather than by the author, as in comic and tragic drama; mixed is made up of both forms, as are the works of Homer and Herodotus and any others like them, in some passages being stated by the author, in others by different characters.

(12 Felten)

The Greek word for this distinction (διαφορά) is not very precise, but from what follows it seems that Nicolaus is not thinking about kinds of narrative as much as about modes of narrative. According to Nicolaus, the main division of narrative is between *aphêgêmatika*, *dramatika*, and *mikta*. *Aphêgêmatika* is the narrative where there is only one person speaking (his example is Pindar); *dramatika* refers to the fact that who is speaking is not the author but the characters, as is the predominant case in theatrical plays; finally, *mikta* is the narrative where both forms can be found, as in Homer or Herodotus, where the author's narration is mixed with the characters' speeches. To the usual division of *diêgêma* according to the subject matter (mythical, historical, etc.), Nicolaus is adding notions of what in modern narratology is called 'voice'.

Nicolaus' *Progymnasmata* is the only one that features the adjective *aphêgêmatikos*. It is difficult to convey the meaning of this compound (as well as others) of *êgeomai* in a precise and unanimous translation. To give an example, *LSJ* univocally translates this word with the adjective 'narrative' (therefore identical to *diêgêmatikos*), whereas Kennedy, in his translation of the *Progymnasmata*, chooses, quite at the opposite end of the scale, 'descriptive'.⁴¹ On the rare occasions when the authors of *Progymnasmata* use the word *aphêgêsis*, they indicate a plain and simple exposition of facts,⁴² and this is probably the meaning intended by Nicolaus here, also judging by the context.⁴³ The point Nicolaus is making is between plain narration and speeches, and there is nothing that refers to description in a technical way. *Aphêgêmatikos* here is used as a synonym of *diêgêmatikos*, which would have been too redundant and not much of an explanation, given that Nicolaus here is trying to classify precisely *diêgêma*.

What is interesting is that the only other use of *aphêgêmatikos* in the *Progymnasmata*, again in Nicolaus, occurs in his treatment of *ekphrasis*, and in the very definition of description:

⁴¹ Kennedy 2003, 136.

⁴² Ps.-Hermogenes (1,5 Patillon), Aphthonius (2,2 Patillon), Nicolaus (70 Felten). In two occurrences out of three the word is associated with the adjective ψιλός. Cf. also John of Sardis, 15 Rabe: τὸ διήγημα ἀφήγησις ἐστὶ πραγμάτων ἀληθῶς γενομένων ἢ γεγενῆσθαι δοκούντων, 'narrative is a recounting (*aphêgêsis*) of things that really happened or of things seeming to have happened.'

⁴³ There does not seem to be a great difference between *aphêgêsis* and *diêgêsis*, if not for the fact that *aphêgêsis* exposes facts in a more plain way than *diêgêsis*. On this see a passage from Valerius Apsines' (third century AD) *Ars rhetorica* (353 Spengel = 3,3 Patillon); Patillon's translation of *diêgêsis* with 'narration' and *aphêgêsis* with 'relation, exposition' conveys well the idea of *aphêgêsis* as a quicker exposition of facts.



ἔκφρασις ἐστὶ λόγος ἀφηγηματικός, ὑπ’ ὅψιν ἄγων ἐναργῶς τὸ δηλούμενον, ‘*ekphrasis* is narrative speech that brings what is shown vividly before the eyes’ (68 Felten). This is interesting not only because *ekphrasis* and *diêgêma* become associated by both being *logoi aphêgêmatikoi*, but also because defining *ekphrasis* as a *logos aphêgêmatikos* means to break with the previous (and following) tradition, which called it a *logos periêgêmatikos*.⁴⁴ The adjective *periêgêmatikos* occurs a total amount of five times in antiquity, and always in the definition of *ekphrasis* in the *Progymnasmata*. We find it in Theon (118,7), Ps.-Hermogenes (10,1 Patillon), Aphthonius (36 Spengel), and twice in John of Sardis (216 Rabe), who is trying to explain its meaning in his predecessors’ work. It is a technical word, designed for only one collocation (*ekphrasis*) in only one context (the *Progymnasmata*). *Ekphrasis* is a *logos periêgêmatikos* because it is the speech that ‘leads around’ (περιηγέομαι), showing the things that are worth seeing just like the famous *periêgêtai*, like Strabo and Pausanias, did.⁴⁵ Accordingly, John of Sardis explains that the word must be taken as a metaphor, as if someone were to lead a tourist around Athens showing him the city, the gymnasia, the harbour, and the other sights:

περιγηματικός. ἀντὶ τοῦ γραφικός, περιουδευτικός, διεξουδευτικός, οἶονεὶ δὲ δοκῶν τῷ λόγῳ συμπεριεῖναι καὶ οἶονεὶ δεικνύναι· ὡσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἐπιδημήσαντά τινα Ἀθήναζε παραλαβὼν ὑφηγεῖτο τὴν πόλιν, δεικνὺς τὰ γυμνάσια, τὸν Πειραιᾶ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἕκαστον· μεταφορικῶς οὖν καὶ ὁ λόγος ὁ πάντα ἐξῆς καὶ τὰ τοῦ πράγματος καὶ τὰ τοῦ προσώπου ἀφηγούμενος καὶ μετὰ ἀκριβείας δεικνὺς περιγηματικός ὀνομάζεται»

Periêgêmatikos: instead of ‘as in a painting’ (*graphikos*), ‘surveying’ (*periodeutikos*), ‘giving a detailed account’ (*diexodikos*); as if seeming to go around in the speech and as if showing; just as if someone took a recent arrival in Athens and guided him around the city, showing him the gymnasia, the Peiraeus and each of the rest [of the sights]; metaphorically, therefore, the speech which relates (*aphêgeomai*) everything in order, relating to both the action and the person and showing [it] in detail is called *periêgêmatikos*.

(216 Rabe, trans. Webb 2009, 205)

Periêgêmatikos is a word with a univocal meaning, so clear that the authors of *Progymnasmata* did not feel the need to modify or gloss it, and simply passed it down. In this view, Nicolaus is using *aphêgêmatikos* when he should be using *periêgêmatikos*, and this constitutes an important exception, because he refuses to adopt the canonical word in order to associate *ekphrasis* with *diêgêma* by using the same word, *aphêgêmatikos*, to define both. Now, as seen above, the difference between *aphêgêmatikos* and *diêgêmatikos* is very little and adds but a nuance to the

⁴⁴ See Webb 2009, 51-55.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 54.

general meaning of ‘narrative’. But the difference between *aphêgêmatikos* and *periêgêmatikos* is evident, for one clearly means ‘narrative’, the other ‘descriptive’. In other words, Nicolaus is the only author of *Progymnasmata* who defines *ekphrasis* as a narrative speech. We have already seen in Nicolaus a tendency to differ from the other authors when it comes to description, especially because he has in mind authors who describe works of art, and these might well have included Achilles Tatius. It is therefore intriguing to see in Nicolaus a reflection on the narrative aspect of description as a result of the work of our novelist, who pioneered, as we will see, a deep level of integration of *ekphraseis* of works of art with the surrounding narration.

3.2.4. *Diêgêma* and *ekphrasis*: descriptive narrative

Complementary to the idea of a narrative description is the idea of a descriptive narrative. It is not only *ekphrasis* that tends towards the narrative side, because narration too has elements that belong to the nature of *ekphrasis*. Besides the passages seen above that explicitly state that *ekphrasis* can be merged with other exercises on the basis of community of subject matter, there are other passages that indicate that *ekphrasis* is connected particularly with *diêgêma* because of their intrinsic qualities. The virtues (*aretai*) of *diêgêma* usually listed by the authors of *Progymnasmata* are *saphêneia* (clarity), *syntomia* (conciseness), and *pithanotês* (persuasiveness).⁴⁶ Apart from *enargeia*, the main characteristic of *ekphrasis*, the virtues of *ekphrasis* are not always mentioned in a dedicated section by the authors of *Progymnasmata*. When they are, *enargeia* is always followed by *saphêneia*,⁴⁷ which therefore is a prerogative only of *diêgêma* and *ekphrasis*, bringing these two close.⁴⁸

Although all the authors of *Progymnasmata*, without exception, attribute *enargeia* to *ekphrasis* alone, and Nicolaus (68 Felten) points out that *enargeia* constitutes the difference between *ekphrasis* and *diêgêma*, in other rhetorical treatises it can be found as a qualification of *diêgêma* or *diêgêsis*. The most notable case is probably Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria*, who adds *evidentia* (which translates the Greek *enargeia*) to the qualities of *narratio*, which are otherwise listed as we find them in the *Progymnasmata* (4,2,36 ff.: *aperta ac dilucida; brevis; credibilis; magnificentia*):

Sunt qui adiciant his evidentiam, quae ἐνάργεια Graece vocatur. (...) Evidentia in

⁴⁶ Theon, 79,20-1. Aphthonius (2,4 Patillon) adds *hellênismos*, Nicolaus (14 Felten) *hêdonê* (pleasure) and *megaloprepeia* (grandeur). Nicolaus mentions again *hêdonê* as one of the effects of *ekphrasis* (70 Felten).

⁴⁷ Theon 119,31-2 (later quoted by John of Sardis 224 Rabe), and Ps.-Hermogenes 10,7 Patillon.

⁴⁸ On *enargeia* see Zanker 1981, Manieri 1998, 123 ff., Webb 2009, 87 ff.

narratione, quantum ego intellego, est quidem magna virtus, cum quid veri non dicendum sed quodammodo etiam ostendendum est, sed subici perspicuitati potest.

Others add Vividness, in Greek called *enargeia*. (...) As to vividness, it is, to my understanding, undoubtedly an important virtue of Narrative, when a truth requires not only to be told but in a sense to be presented to the sight.
(4,2,64, trans. Russell)

For its qualities, says Quintilian, *evidentia* can be included under the virtue of clarity that belongs to *narratio*. In the third-century *Ars rhetorica* attributed to the Anonymus Seguerianus, we find again *enargeia* in the treatment of *diêgêsis*, as it is said that it contributes to its persuasiveness.⁴⁹ In the ninth century AD, in his commentary on Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata*, John of Sardis associates *enargeia* both with *diêgêma* (again because it contributes to persuasiveness) and with *ekphrasis*.⁵⁰ *Enargeia* is connected to persuasiveness in *diêgêma* because the ability to create a speech whose object can almost be seen involves the audience at a deep level, having a major impact on their minds and therefore on their opinion on the subject at stake: clarity and persuasiveness end up working together towards the cause of a successful speech.

The varied nature of speech does not allow an easy organisation of its components into entirely isolated categories, and overlapping is to be expected. The *Progymnasmata*, which were meant to teach the correct composition of a speech, dissect it in parts and teach them separately, so that having exercised in each of them would be useful when composing a complete one. These instructions needed to be clear and unequivocal, which is why one will not find much overlapping in the work of each individual author. To this aim, the authors of *Progymnasmata* divide narrative and description and teach them separately just like all the other exercises. The observations on the participation of description in other exercises are kept to a minimum and never fully explained. When these observations are explicit we will find, at best, the mention of the fact that description has similarities with this or that exercise, but in order to prevent confusion further analysis is avoided. However, when a closer look at the details allows us to see that different exercises share the same characteristics, as is the case with *ekphrasis* and *diêgêma*, one can infer that even in the rhetor's mind the exercises were not that different after all.⁵¹ If the narrative needs to be clear (*saphês*), and if clarity can be obtained by employing *enargeia*, then *ekphrasis*, whose virtues are

⁴⁹ 96 Hammer, 105 Hammer ff.

⁵⁰ Rabe: 21, 24, 25 for *enargeia* in *diêgêma*, and 215 ff. for *enargeia* in *ekphrasis*.

⁵¹ For example, Theon seems to be treating *diêgêma* and *ekphrasis* in a similar way when, in two separate occasions, he says that in both of them one should avoid useless digressions. Compare 80,30-1 for *diêgêma* (παραιτητέον δὲ καὶ τὸ παρεκβάσεις ἐπεμβάλλεσθαι μεταξύ διηγήσεως μακράς, 'one should avoid inserting long digressions in the middle of a narration'), with 119,33 for *ekphrasis* (τὸ μὴ τελέως ἀπομυκύνειν περὶ τὰ ἄχρηστα, '[one should not] recollect all useless details').

precisely *saphêneia* and *enargeia*, can be seen as an aspect of narrative, the one involved with precise representation.

For more references on this theory one needs to look outside the *Progymnasmata* to the commentaries written on them, or to the more advanced treatises that constituted the following steps of the rhetorical training, where the exercises ceased to be isolated entities and were considered in their relationship and contribution to the whole. In a passage from Ps.-Hermogenes' *On invention* (Περὶ εὐρέσεως), for instance, one can almost see an explanation of how narration changes in one of its aspects, description:

Εἰ δὲ τρόπος ἐν διηγήσει τῶν πεπραγμένων πλατύνοιτο, διασκευάζεται τὸ πρόβλημα, οὐ διηγείται· αἰτία μὲν γὰρ διήγησιν, τρόπος δὲ διασκευὴν κατασκευάζει. τρόποι δὲ διηγήσεως τρεῖς, ἀπλοῦς, ἐγκατάσκευος, ἐνδιάσκευος.

If the manner (*tropos*) of what has been done is extended in a diegesis, the problem is being artistically developed (*diaskeuazetai*), not being narrated (*diêgeitai*), for giving a cause contributes to narration, while (*other rhetorical*) treatment contributes to artistic development (*diaskeuê*). There are three manners of treating a diegesis: simple (*haplous*), argued (*enkataskeuos*), highly developed (*endiaskeuos*).
(2,7, trans. Kennedy)

According to Ps.-Hermogenes, when the narration is expanded (πλατύνοιτο), *diêgêsis* becomes *diaskeuê*, for we are not narrating any more (οὐ διηγείται), but instead 'artistically developing' (διασκευάζεται).⁵² The definition of *diaskeuê*, which occurs later in the same work, brings it very close to *diatypôsis* and *ekphrasis*:

Διασκευὴ δὲ τοῦ προβλήματος ἢ διατύπωσις ἐστὶ τοῦ πράγματος, ὥσπερ ἐν ποιητικῇ ἢ καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν γενομένων ἀφήγησις τε καὶ διατύπωσις.

The *diatypôsis* of the action constitutes a *diaskeuê* of the problem, like a recounting of events, one by one, and like a vivid description in poetry.
(15, 3, trans. Kennedy)

The artistic development (διασκευή) of a passage comes from the vivid description (διατύπωσις) of the facts.⁵³ It is true that we do not find the word *ekphrasis* but instead *diatypôsis*, but we have already seen that the two words can be considered as synonyms.⁵⁴ Consequently, if *diatypôsis* constitutes *diaskeuê*, which is a manner of *diêgêsis*, so *ekphrasis* can be considered a manner of

⁵² See Webb 2009, 65-66.

⁵³ See Kennedy 2005, 129, n. 182-183 for further explanation of the meaning of *diaskeuê* and *diatypôsis*.

⁵⁴ See n. 29 above.

narration as well. This finds confirmation in a late commentary on Ps.-Hermogenes' *On invention* written by Joannes Doxapatres (eleventh century AD), where the author establishes a connection between the exercises of the *Progymnasmata* and the real practice of speech:

Ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν μῦθος εἰκόνα ὡς λέγομεν εἶχε προοιμίου, τὸ δὲ διήγημα καὶ ἡ ἐκφρασις τῆς διηγήσεως τὸ μὲν τῆς ἐγκατασκευοῦ καὶ ἀπλῆς, τὸ διήγημα, ἢ δὲ τῆς ἐνδιασκευοῦ, ἢ ἐκφρασις· εἰ γὰρ ἔργον ἐστὶ τῆς ἐνδιασκευοῦ διηγήσεως τὸ ἐν λεπτῶ λέγειν τὰ πράγματα, πάντως αἱ ἐκφράσεις ἐνδιασκευῶς λέγονται διὰ τὸ παρασκευάζεσθαι ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐταῖς ἐκ τοῦ περιηγεῖσθαι καὶ ἐν λεπτῶ λέγειν τὰ πράγματα τὰ δηλούμενα καὶ ὑπ' ὄψιν αὐτὰ ἐναργῶς ἄγειν.

As we say, *mythos* carries the image of the proem, whereas *diêgêma* and *ekphrasis* carry an image of the narrative (*diêgêsis*), *diêgêma* of the argued and simple narrative, *ekphrasis* of the highly developed; for if it is the duty of highly-developed narrative (*endiaskeuos diêgêsis*) to tell the facts in a refined manner, surely *ekphraseis* are called highly-developed, because, by leading around as in a tour, they prepare us in them and tell in a refined manner the facts shown and bring them clearly before the eyes.

(362 Rabe, my translation)

Different exercises will be relevant to different parts of a speech, the parts being, according to a general classification, proem, introduction of the case, narrative, proof, epilogue. So, for instance, *mythos* is functional to the proem inasmuch as it prepares the audience with something familiar before moving on to the narrative, and detailed description qualifies the highly-developed kind of narrative. Doxapatres, who, unlike Ps.-Hermogenes, uses *ekphrasis* instead of *diatypôsis*, stresses again the affinity of *diêgêma* and *ekphrasis* as manners of *diêgêsis* in his *Homiliae in Aphthonii Progymnasmata* (509 Walz ff.). Moreover, an anonymous scholiast in Aphthonius (probably in Byzantine times) uses a formula very similar to that of Doxapatres to link *ekphrasis* with *endiaskeuos diêgêsis*, once again underlining the narrative nature of *ekphrasis*, which is described as akin to *diêgêma* (ὡς οὖσαν συγγενῆ τῷ διηγήματι, 55 Walz). Both authors, Doxapatres in the *Homiliae* and the Anonymus, express the idea that the order in which the two exercises (*diêgêma* and *ekphrasis*) are placed in the *Progymnasmata* does not reflect their close relation, for *diêgêma* is among the very first exercises and *ekphrasis* among the very last. The choice of the authors of *Progymnasmata* is reasonable and easy to see, since these handbooks constitute the first stage of training, and the exercises are logically ordered according to a criterion of increasing difficulty.⁵⁵ The comparison with the *Progymnasmata* under Ps.-Hermogenes' name allows to see that the rhetor made a distinction between *ekphrasis* and *diatypôsis*, the former being just one among the

⁵⁵ Doxapatres (509-510 Walz) argues that the canonical order set by Aphthonius reflects the fact that Ps.-Hermogenes in *On invention* places the treatment of *endiaskeuos diêgêsis* (end of Book Three) far after the treatment of the manners of *diêgêsis* (2,7).

preliminary exercises, the latter being the form of vivid representation in the more advanced speeches. The early authors of *Progymnasmata* do not consider *ekphrasis* when moving on to the production of more serious works, but their Byzantine commentators do, since they gloss *endiaskeuos diêgêsis* with *ekphrasis* and not with *diatypôsis*. An explanation for this can be the fact that by their time *ekphrasis* had also moved forward in their opinion, perhaps as a reflection of its use in renowned works of literature.

Having set this theoretical background, modern and ancient, allows us to look at Achilles Tatius' novel from the point of view not just of the subjects of his descriptions, but also of their composition. It has emerged that not only it was not advised to write descriptions unconnected to the surrounding text, but also that the nature of description was not understood as something separate from narration. To be more precise, ancient theory recognised that description and narration had similar core elements, and, in time, changed the definition of description into one that underlined its narrative aspect. This can be seen as the result of the fact that, in the meantime, the boundaries of description had been pushed by the authors who employed it extensively in their works. The relation, of both form and contents, between description and narrative is one of Achilles Tatius' fortes. It forms a prelude to the attention that third-century authors will pay to the themes of art and description, and eventually influenced rhetorical theory.

3.3. Paintings in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*

The descriptions of paintings are one of the most distinctive features of Achilles Tatius's novel, yet it was not until relatively recent times that scholars recognised and agreed that the descriptions are not a mere show of words, but fulfil instead a much more relevant and complicated purpose. One of the factors which contributed to the initial scorn towards the descriptions of paintings was their assimilation with the descriptions of other subjects (animals, gardens, or a city, for example), which occupy a considerable part of the novel and were part of the curriculum taught in the schools of rhetoric. Consequently, all the detailed descriptions found in Achilles Tatius' novel were believed to be not much more than the stale repetition of exercises practised by the novelists in the course of their rhetorical education.⁵⁶ Friedländer countered this view by demonstrating that descriptions of works of art belonged to a tradition different from that of descriptions of any other subject, with roots in epic and branches in almost every genre of ancient Greek literature. Concerning novels, he reversed the previous opinion by saying that although the schools of rhetoric could claim

⁵⁶ Cf. Rohde 1876³, 348, 360, 512.

responsibility over the technique of description adopted by the novelists, the idea of describing a work of art was the result of the older tradition.⁵⁷ Furthermore, with this tradition in mind, and knowing especially the symbolic value that descriptions of works of art had had in Hellenistic poetry, he pointed out, albeit briefly, the fact that the descriptions of paintings in Achilles Tattius have a proleptic function.⁵⁸

The first systematic study of the descriptions of paintings in Achilles Tattius was the doctoral thesis by Eva Harlan, who isolated descriptions of paintings from those of other subjects (including other works of art) and identified their origin in allegorical descriptions for moralising purposes (the Ps.-Cebes' *Tabula*, for instance). Harlan analysed the contents of Achilles Tattius' descriptions of paintings into greater detail than had previously been done, noticed, to some extent, the connections between paintings and story, and corroborated the idea that the paintings have a proleptic function.⁵⁹ Notwithstanding, Harlan's overall judgement on Achilles Tattius is less than enthusiastic, and when referring to Achilles' description of the painting of Philomela and Procne as a "simple-minded adaptation of the introductory technique for use in the middle of a story", or to the style used in the description of the painting of Prometheus as displaying "the most distasteful rhetorical bombast", she reminds the readers of detractors such as Rohde.⁶⁰

In this sense, it was only with Shadi Bartsch's *Decoding the Ancient Novel* that the perspective on Achilles Tattius' use of descriptions of paintings started to change. Bartsch observed the similarities of themes and of vocabulary between the contents of the paintings and the contents of the ensuing narrative, and recognised a pattern whereby the descriptions of paintings are used to foreshadow future events, although not in a straightforward way: Achilles Tattius punctually misleads the readers by creating expectations and eventually disattending them. Bartsch provides a number of insightful readings, and her approach has changed the way in which *Leucippe and Clitophon* is read. Readers are now more aware of the level of sophistication of the novel, know they are dealing with an author with full control of the mechanisms of narrative, and look out for possible riddles behind every line. There are a few limitations to Bartsch's study. First of all, her focus on finding one formula which applies to, and, in a way, tries to solve, every case prevents her

⁵⁷ Friedländer 1912, 47.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

⁵⁹ See for instance Harlan 1965, 105 for the painting of Europa.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 136-7. Cf. also, among many possible examples, these comments at p. 8: 'As far as we can judge from the preserved samples, the Greek romances were an undistinguished product of an eclectic and meretricious culture. In their own time they did not even merit consideration from literary critics. Yet even in this unimpressive company Achilles Tattius cannot shine. His romance is so obviously a patchwork of routine devices, copied exercises and conventional echoes from canonical authors that it has sometimes been termed (wrongly, I think) a parody of rhetorical fiction. However, the author's very lack of creativity and discrimination, his blatant plagiarism and conventionality make him an interesting source for students of literary techniques.' The colourful analysis of the description of the painting of Prometheus at p. 123-5 makes for entertaining reading as well.

from accounting for the many differences between the three descriptions of paintings. Secondly, when it comes to explaining where the descriptions came from she points at the exercises of the schools of rhetoric, perpetuating the idea that Achilles Tatius employed, albeit originally, stock material,⁶¹ and when it comes to explaining the reason why the author chose to use descriptions of paintings in the first place she says that he wanted to play an intellectual game with the readers.⁶²

Helen Morales has also paid attention to the descriptions of paintings in Leucippe and Clitophon, especially the description of the painting of Europa.⁶³ Her main purpose was to underline the voyeuristic, scopophilic, and mysoginist, point of view of the descriptions of the paintings as reflective of the perspective of the entire novel. Some close readings of passages will be taken into consideration, although the main body of her study is marginal to the present purpose. This exhausts the list of monographs dedicated to the descriptions of paintings in Achilles Tatius. Given their particular nature, the descriptions of paintings in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and most noticeably the painting of the rape of Europa, have offered themselves to a number of studies that targeted specific issues: the relationship between narrating and describing;⁶⁴ the position of the description at the beginning of the narrative as programmatic, and as an opening device;⁶⁵ the distribution of the paintings in the novel, connected to the bigger issue of the novel's lack of ending;⁶⁶ the intratextuality between contents of the descriptions of paintings and contents of the story;⁶⁷ the intertextuality with tragedy (given the contents of the paintings of Andromeda, Prometheus, and Philomela and Procne),⁶⁸ and with Plato (given especially the Phaedran setting of the beginning of the novel).⁶⁹ What follows is a close analysis of the descriptions of paintings in Achilles Tatius. Particular attention will be paid to the text and the words used, in order to observe the author at work as a describer of art and to establish intertextual connections. Attention will also be paid to aspects of narratology and iconography, the latter having been neglected by scholars in light of the opinion that all the paintings in Achilles Tatius are fictional. Against the idea that Achilles Tatius is repeating the same formula three times, these aspects will help to highlight the many differences between the descriptions and assess the author's role as a writer of *ekphrasis* of paintings.

⁶¹ Bartsch 1989, 7ff.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 78-9. See also Morales' criticism in Morales 2004, 97-8.

⁶³ Morales 2004, 96-151.

⁶⁴ Rabau 1995, Guez 2012.

⁶⁵ Schissel von Fleschenberg 1913, Maeder 1991.

⁶⁶ Most 1989, Rabau 1997, Nakatani 2003, Repath 2005, Guez 2008, Kasprzyk 2005.

⁶⁷ Mignogna 1993, Guez 2005, Reeves 2007.

⁶⁸ Mignogna 1997, Liapis 2006.

⁶⁹ Martin 2002, Ní Mheallaigh 2007, Repath 2007.

A Byzantine epigram

Ἔρωτα πικρόν, ἀλλὰ σώφρονα βίον
ὁ Κλειτοφῶντος ὡσπερ ἐμφαίνει λόγος·
ὁ Λευκίππης δὲ σωφρονέστατος βίος
ἅπαντας ἐξίστησι, πῶς τετυμμένη
κεκαρμένη τε καὶ κατηχρειωμένη,
τὸ δὴ μέγιστον, τρίς θανοῦσ' ἐκαρτέρει.
εἴπερ δὲ καὶ σὺ σωφρονεῖν θέλῃς, φίλος,
μὴ τὴν πάρεργον τῆς γραφῆς σκόπει θέαν,
τὴν τοῦ λόγου δὲ πρῶτα συνδρομὴν μάθε·
νυμφοστολεῖ γὰρ τοὺς ποθοῦντας ἐμφρόνως.

The story of Clitophon almost brings before our eyes a bitter passion but a moral life, and the most chaste conduct of Leucippe astonishes everyone. Beaten, her head shorn, vilely used, and, above all, thrice done to death, she still bore all. If, my friend, you wish to live morally, do not pay attention to the adventitious beauty of style, but first learn the conclusion of the discourse; for it joins in wedlock lovers who loved wisely. (AP 9,203 trans. Paton 1917 Loeb)

This epigram, attributed either to Photius or his contemporary Leo the Philosopher, is one of the examples of the interest of the Byzantines in Greek novels. Paton's translation of the lines 'εἴπερ δὲ καὶ σὺ σωφρονεῖν θέλῃς, φίλος | μὴ τὴν πάρεργον τῆς γραφῆς σκόπει θέαν, | τὴν τοῦ λόγου δὲ πρῶτα συνδρομὴν μάθε·' reads: 'If, my friend, you wish to live morally, do not pay attention to the adventitious beauty of style, but first learn the conclusion of the discourse'. *Sôphronein* echoes the 'moral life' (*sôphrona bion*) of the first line (as well as the *emphronôs* of the last line) and it is therefore intended in a moral sense (hence 'to live morally'). There is then an admonition not to look at the style of the novelist, for it can distract from what is really important, that is, that *Leucippe and Clitophon* is a story of love and marriage. It makes sense that a man of God (if this was written by Photius) would recommend the reading of a Greek novel with an eye on the moral values expressed in it, mainly the lesson on love. It is less obvious whether the lesson on love that can be found in *Leucippe and Clitophon* is a particularly moral one. The friend this epigram is addressed to might have walked into the novel with the very principled intentions suggested by the sender, but it is questionable whether he walked out of it believing that the poet had hit the target. Be that as it may, let us do the same as the first reader of the epigram and enter *Leucippe and Clitophon* aware of Achilles Tatius' distracting style.

3.3.1. The rape of Europa

The Adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon starts with a brief description of the coast and harbour of Sidon and moves on to a more extended and detailed one of a painting seen among the votive

offering in the city's temple. The narrator tells us that he arrived in the city after a seastorm, and that while he was walking around his attention was caught by a painting:

περιίωὼν οὖν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην πόλιν καὶ περισκοπῶν τὰ ἀναθήματα ὁρῶ γραφὴν ἀνακειμένην γῆς ἅμα καὶ θαλάσσης. Εὐρώπης ἢ γραφὴ· Φοινίκων ἢ θάλασσα· Σιδῶνος ἢ γῆ. (3.) ἐν τῇ γῆ λειμῶν καὶ χορὸς παρθένων. ἐν τῇ θαλάττῃ ταῦρος ἐπενήχето, καὶ τοῖς νῶτοις καλὴ παρθένος ἐπεκάθητο, ἐπὶ Κρήτην τῷ ταύρῳ πλέουσα. ἐκόμα πολλοῖς ἄνθεσιν ὁ λειμῶν· δένδρων αὐτοῖς ἀνεμικτο φάλαγξ καὶ φυτῶν. συνεχῆ τὰ δένδρα· συνηρεφῆ τὰ πέταλα· συνηπτον οἱ πτόρθοι τὰ φύλλα, καὶ ἐγένετο τοῖς ἄνθεσιν ὄροφος ἢ τῶν φύλλων συμπλοκή. (4.) ἔγραψεν ὁ τεχνίτης ὑπὸ τὰ πέταλα καὶ τὴν σκιάν, καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἡρέμα κατὰ τοῦ λειμῶνος σποράδην διέρρει, ὅσον τὸ συνηρεφές τῆς τῶν φύλλων κόμης ἀνέωξεν ὁ γραφεύς. (5.) ὅλον ἐτείχιζε τὸν λειμῶνα περιβολή· εἶσω δὲ τοῦ τῶν ὀρόφων στεφανώματος ὁ λειμῶν ἐκάθητο. αἱ δὲ πρασιαὶ τῶν ἀνθέων ὑπὸ τὰ πέταλα τῶν φυτῶν στιχηδὸν ἐπεφύκεσαν, νάρκισσος καὶ ῥόδα καὶ μυρρίναι. ὕδωρ κατὰ μέσον ἔρρει τοῦ λειμῶνος τῆς γραφῆς, τὸ μὲν ἀναβλύζον κάτωθεν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, τὸ δὲ τοῖς ἄνθεσι καὶ τοῖς φυτοῖς περιχεόμενον. (6.) ὀχετηγός τις ἐγγέγραπτο δίκελλαν κατέχων καὶ περὶ μίαν ἀμάραν κεκυφῶς καὶ ἀνοίγων τὴν ὁδὸν τῷ ρέματι. ἐν δὲ τῷ τοῦ λειμῶνος τέλει πρὸς ταῖς ἐπὶ θαλάτταν τῆς γῆς ἐκβολαῖς τὰς παρθένους ἔταξεν ὁ τεχνίτης. (7.) τὸ σχῆμα ταῖς παρθένοις καὶ χαρᾶς καὶ φόβου. στέφανοι περὶ τοῖς μετώποις δεδεμένοι· κόμαι κατὰ τῶν ὤμων λελυμένοι· τὸ σκέλος ἅπαν γεγυμνωμένοι, τὸ μὲν ἄνω τοῦ χιτῶνος, τὸ δὲ κάτω τοῦ πεδίου· τὸ γὰρ ζῶσμα μέχρι γόνατος ἀνεῖλκε τὸν χιτῶνα. τὸ πρόσωπον ὠχραῖ· σεσηρυῖαι τὰς παρειάς· τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀνοίξασαι πρὸς τὴν θάλατταν· μικρὸν ὑποκεχηνυῖαι τὸ στόμα, ὥσπερ ἀφήσειν ὑπὸ φόβου μέλλουσαι καὶ βοῆν· τὰς χεῖρας ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν βούην ὠρεγον. (8.) ἐπέβαινον ἄκρας τῆς θαλάττης, ὅσον ὑπεράνω μικρὸν τῶν ταρσῶν ὑπερέχειν τὸ κύμα· ἐώκεσαν δὲ βούλεσθαι μὲν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν ταῦρον δραμεῖν, φοβεῖσθαι δὲ τῇ θαλάττῃ προσελθεῖν. τῆς δὲ θαλάττης ἢ χροιά διπλῆ· τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τὴν γῆν ὑπέρυθρον, κυάνεον δὲ τὸ πρὸς τὸ πέλαγος. (9.) ἀφρός ἐπεποιήτο καὶ πέτραι καὶ κύματα· αἱ πέτραι τῆς γῆς ὑπερβεβλημένοι, ὁ ἀφρός περιλευκαίνων τὰς πέτρας, τὸ κύμα κορυφούμενον καὶ περὶ τὰς πέτρας λυόμενον εἰς τοὺς ἀφρούς. ταῦρος ἐν μέσῃ τῇ θαλάττῃ ἐγγέγραπτο τοῖς κύμασιν ἐποχούμενος, ὡς ὄρους ἀναβαίνοντος τοῦ κύματος, ἔνθα καμπτόμενον τοῦ βοῦς κυρτοῦται τὸ σκέλος. (10.) ἢ παρθένος μέσοις ἐπεκάθητο τοῖς νῶτοις τοῦ βοῦς, οὐ περιβάδην, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πλευράν, ἐπὶ δεξιὰ συμβᾶσα τῷ πόδε, τῇ λαιᾷ τοῦ κέρως ἔχομένη, ὥσπερ ἠνίοχος χαλινού· καὶ γὰρ ὁ βοῦς ἐπέστραπτο ταύτῃ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὸ τῆς χειρὸς ἔλκον ἠνιοχούμενος. χιτῶν ἀμφὶ τὰ στέρνα τῆς παρθένου μέχρις αἰδῶ· τὸν τεῦθεν ἐπεκάλυπτε χλαῖνα τὰ κάτω τοῦ σώματος. λευκὸς ὁ χιτῶν· ἢ χλαῖνα πορφυρᾶ· τὸ δὲ σῶμα διὰ τῆς ἐσθῆτος ὑπεφαίνετο. (11.) βαθὺς ὀμφαλός· γαστήρ τεταμένη· λαπάρα στενή· τὸ στενὸν εἰς ἰξύν καταβαῖνον ἠϋρύνετο. μαζοὶ τῶν στέρνων ἡρέμα προκύπτοντες· ἢ συνάγουσα ζώνη τὸν χιτῶνα καὶ τοὺς μαζοὺς ἔκλειε, καὶ ἐγένετο τοῦ σώματος κάτοπτρον ὁ χιτῶν. (12.) αἱ χεῖρες ἀμφὶ διετέταντο, ἢ μὲν ἐπὶ κέρας, ἢ δὲ ἐπ' οὐραν· ἤρτητο δὲ ἀμφοῖν ἐκατέρωθεν ὑπὲρ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἢ καλύπτρα κύκλω τῶν νῶτων ἐμπεπετασμένη· ὁ δὲ κόλπος τοῦ πέπλου πάντοθεν ἐτέτατο κυρτούμενος· καὶ ἦν οὗτος ἄνεμος τοῦ ζωγράφου. ἢ δὲ δίκη ἐπεκάθητο τῷ ταύρῳ πλεούσης νηός, ὥσπερ ἰστίῳ τῷ πέπλῳ χρωμένη. (13.) περὶ δὲ τὸν βούην ὠρχοῦντο δελφίνες, ἔπαιζον Ἔρωτες· εἶπερ ἂν αὐτῶν ἐγγεγράφθαι καὶ τὰ κινήματα. Ἔρωτες εἶλκε τὸν βούην· Ἔρωτες, μικρὸν παιδίον, ἠπλώκει τὸ πτερόν, ἤρτητο φαρέτραν, ἐκράτει τὸ πῦρ· μετέστραπτο δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν Δία καὶ ὑπεμειδία, ὥσπερ αὐτοῦ καταγελῶν, ὅτι δι' αὐτὸν γέγονε βούης.

I undertook a tour of the rest of the city, and was browsing among the sacred dedications when I saw a votive picture, a landscape and seascape in one. The picture was of Europa, the sea was the Phoenician, and the land Sidon. (3.) On the side of the land was a meadow and a troupe of maidens; in the sea a bull was gliding over the surface, and a beautiful maiden was

seated on his back, sailing on the bull towards Crete. The meadow was matted with a multitude of flowers, and a phalanx of trees and bushes intermingled with them. The trees were clasped together, and their leaves were intertwined; the branches coupled their foliage with one another, and the embrace of the foliage formed a vault over the flowers. (4.) The artist had also depicted the shade under the leaves, and here and there the sun gently trickled through down onto the meadow, wherever the painter had parted the thatch of the leaves. (5.) The entire meadow was bounded as its perimeter, garlanded by the leafy vault. The flowerbeds had been allowed to grow in rows under the leaves of the foliage: narcissi, roses, and myrtle. Water was streaming from the middle of the pictorial meadow, some spurting up from beneath the soil, and some dribbling around the blooms and bushes. (6.) A man was pictured using a mattock to irrigate the soil, hunched over one trench and opening a channel for the stream. At the edge of the meadow, on the parts of the land that jutted out into the sea, the artist had arrayed the maidens. (7.) The maidens' mien betrayed at once pleasure and terror. Wreathes were bound around their temples, but their hair ran loose down over their shoulders. Their legs were entirely bare, with no skirts around their calves (girdles drew their skirts up to the knee), nor sandals on their feet. Their faces were wan, their cheeks set in a half-smile, and their eyes stared wide open towards the sea. Their mouths gaped a little, as if they were actually about to give out a shriek of terror, and their arms were outstretched towards the bull. (8.) They were stepping into the edge of the sea, enough for the wave to lap over their feet a little; they seemed both to desire to pursue the bull and to fear to enter the sea. The colour of the sea was twofold, reddish towards the land and deep blue towards the open sea. (9.) There was spume portrayed, and also crags and waves: the crags stood proud on the land, spume whitened the crags, the wave climaxed and dissolved into spume around the crags. The bull was depicted cresting the waves in the middle of the sea, while the wave rose like a mountain where the bull fixed his bulging limb. (10.) The maiden sat in the middle of the bull's back, not astride him but side-saddled, keeping her feet together on his right. She clasped his horn with her left hand, as a charioteer would the reins, and the bull inclined a little in that direction, steered by the pressure of her hand. A tunic enveloped her upper body, down to her most intimate part; from there down, a skirt concealed the lower parts of her body. The tunic was white, and the skirt was purple. Her body was just about visible through her clothing: (11.) her navel was deep, her belly taut, her waist slender, and the slenderness gave way to broadness towards her loins. Her breasts protruded gently from her chest (the girdle that fastened her tunic enclosed her breasts, but the tunic mirrored her body). (12.) Her hands were each at full stretch, one on his horn and the other on his tail, and with these she gripped either end of her veil, which was spread out above her head, encircling her shoulders. The folds of her cloak were taut, bulging in every direction (and that was how the artist depicted the wind). She was seated on the bull as if on a ship at sea, using her cloak as if it were a sail. (13.) Dolphins were dancing around the bull, cupids were playing. You might have said that the picture was even moving. Eros was leading the bull: Eros, represented as a little boy, had unfurled his wings and strapped on his quiver, and was wielding his torch. He was turned towards Zeus, smiling surreptitiously as though mocking him because it was he who had caused Zeus to turn into a bull.⁷⁰

(1,1,2-13)

Structure and style

The chiasmic structure that introduces the description (γραφὴν ἀνακειμένην γῆς ἅμα καὶ θαλάττης. Εὐρώπης ἢ γραφή· Φοινίκων ἢ θάλασσα· Σιδῶνος ἢ γῆ.) is already enough to trigger the reader's spatial and thematical visualization of the painting, namely its being divided in

⁷⁰ The text used for Achilles Tatius is Garnaud 1991. The translation is Whitmarsh's from Whitmarsh and Morales 2001.

two different parts, and to draw attention to the fact that the story of Europa, whose name appears right in the middle of the chiasmus, will be the central subject of the picture. The narrator easily identifies the sea as that from which he escaped, and the land as the city where he just found rescue. The symmetry between the narrator's location and the geographical setting in the painting is underlined by the choice of words: 'Φοινίκων ἡ θάλασσα· Σιδῶνος ἡ γῆ' echoes closely 'Σιδῶν ἐπὶ θαλάττη πόλις· Ἀσσυρίων ἡ θάλασσα', the very first words of the novel. If in the beginning of the first paragraph the paratactic style, avoiding the use of verbs, is both briefly introducing the place and mimicking the dazed attitude of a man who has just made it to dry land after a storm, the resumption of the same style in the introduction of the painting aims at imitating the point of view of a spectator all of a sudden presented with a work of art, whose words follow the movement of his eyes necessarily focused on the main constitutive elements of what he is seeing.⁷¹ This explains the abrupt sequence that almost lists the subjects of the painting: the sea, the land, Europa. After the first glance there is space for more particulars: the meadow and the maidens on the land, the bull and the girl in the sea. The original bipartition between land and sea is again strictly followed in this first quick view of what is soon going to be elaborated in detail. The move from the first glance of the painting to its closer observation, which starts in the middle of section 3 and continues until the end of the passage, is accompanied by a change in style.⁷² The vocabulary is richer, the periods are longer and spotted with figures of speech, as if the habituation of the eyes to the painting and the consequent ability to appreciate its details marked the transition in the narrator's words to a syntactically more complete description.

It is useful here to understand the position of the elements in the painting, in order to obtain a more precise visualization while analysing the description. Nowhere are we told on which side of the painting the sea or the land is. If the exact collocation of the painting in the temple and the side from which the narrator arrived were known, it would be possible to argue that he started to describe the part that was closer to him. However, as the only thing we know is that he was looking around (περισκοπῶν), we are not given enough details to be able to make a decision, and the fact that the land is the first element described could just reflect the story depicted, since Europa's abduction starts on land. The claim that the land of Sidon lays on the right and the Phoenician Ocean on the left because the bull moves from Sidon to Crete (that is from East to West) could be reasonable, but perhaps too biased by our consideration of the modern coordinate system. As a proof of this, the history of Europa's iconography shows almost equal examples of the bull moving

⁷¹ On the style adopted by Achilles Tatius in the first part of the *ekphrasis* see also Martin 2002, 145-6.

⁷² As opposed to the canopy in Xenophon of Ephesus or, as we will see, to the prologue in Longus: both of these *ekphraseis* stop after what in Achilles Tatius is but the general introduction.

to the right and to the left, whatever the type of the work of art.⁷³ There is nonetheless one small detail that can be helpful, and that is the position of Europa on the bull's back: if she is seen from the front, she necessarily has the right hand on the bull's head and the left one on the tail when the bull is moving to the left, and vice versa when it is moving to the right. Fortunately, with regard to this, Achilles Tatius' description is extremely accurate. We are told that Europa is sitting in the middle of the bull's back, not astride but side-saddle (οὐ περιβάδην, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πλευράν), holding her feet together on the right side of the bull (ἐπὶ δεξιὰ συμβᾶσα τῷ πόδε). She is holding one horn with the left hand (τῇ λαίᾳ τοῦ κέρως ἔχομένη) and, as we are told some lines below, the tail with the right hand (ἡ μὲν ἐπὶ κέρως, ἡ δὲ ἐπ' οὐράν). As to the fact that she is seen from the front, the mention of chest, navel, belly, flanks and breasts leave no space for doubt, and there is therefore no other option but the bull moving from left to right. As a consequence of the bull's direction, the rest of the painting can be thoroughly orientated, with the meadow and the maidens on the left and the sea on the right.

Having said this, the description proceeds regularly from one side to the other, analyzing the aforesaid elements in their precise order. If we were to divide the *ekphrasis* into each subject depicted, we would obtain six unequally long sections, namely the meadow, the girls, the sea, the bull, Europa, and the Cupids and Eros. Each subject is linked with the previous one according to its spatial relation with it. The girls are at the end of the meadow, where the sea begins (ἐν δὲ τῷ τοῦ λειμῶνος τέλει πρὸς ταῖς ἐπὶ θάλατταν τῆς γῆς ἐκβολαῖς), the bull is in the middle of the sea (ἐν μέσῃ τῇ θαλάττῃ), Europa on the bull's back (μέσοις τοῖς νώτοις τοῦ βοός), the Cupids around it (περὶ δὲ τὸν βούν), and Eros leading it. The author knows that these are necessary landmarks in order to help the reader's visualization, but goes beyond the act of simply stating the position of a given subject. This happens for instance while the shore is being described. As 'γῆς ἅμα καὶ θαλάσσης' is the very first thing we are told about the painting, the place where land meets sea is particularly emphasized. To do so, the author starts pointing at the sea in the section that precedes its proper description. The girls have their eyes open toward the sea (τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀνοίξασαι πρὸς τὴν θάλατταν), they stand on the water's edge (ἐπέβαινον ἄκρας τῆς θαλάττης) afraid of entering (φοβεῖσθαι δὲ τῇ θαλάττῃ προσελθεῖν). The repeated mention of the sea (the word θάλαττα is repeated three times in about five lines) and the unfulfilled intention to enter it force the reader's mind into going where the maidens are too scared to go.⁷⁴

The description of the sea immediately follows this section. The perception of the land meeting the sea is achieved not only through the contents of the description, but also through the

⁷³ See LIMC and EAA s.v. Europa. We will come back to Europa's iconography shortly.

⁷⁴ See Guez 2005 on the stress on land and sea at the beginning as prefigurative of a trend which accompanies the novel until the end.

recreation of its movement via the display of words. Take into consideration the occurrences of the three main elements, ἀφρός, πέτραι, κύματα:

ἀφρός ἐπειοίητο καὶ πέτραι καὶ κύματα· αἱ πέτραι τῆς γῆς ὑπερβεβλημένοι, ὁ ἀφρός περιλευκαίνων τὰς πέτρας, τὸ κῆμα κορυφούμενον καὶ περὶ τὰς πέτρας λυόμενον εἰς τοὺς ἀφρούς.

At the beginning the order is first ἀφρός, then πέτραι, and then κύματα, but soon, when the wave's movement is being described, the order is upset; we have first the rocks (πέτραι) protruding from the beach, then the foam (ἀφρός) whitening the rocks, then the waves (κύματα) hitting the rocks and becoming foam. Each element is seen according to its relation with the others, but curiously enough the order we find at the end is the exact reverse of the one at the beginning: τὸ κῆμα, τὰς πέτρας, τοὺς ἀφρούς. If we were to number these words in order to trace their sequence in these few lines, attributing the number 1 to ἀφρός, 2 to πέτραι and 3 to κύματα, this is the sequence we would find: 1-2-3-2-1-2-3-2-1. A sequence that seems hardly casual and twice presents a progress from the lowest to the highest number and back to the lowest. Seeing in this sequence the image of a wave itself would probably be not too far-fetched. Here Achilles Tatius is not simply describing the content of the painting, he is playing with the words' order and their close repetition to reproduce the movement of the waves and therefore imitate them.⁷⁵ This is not the only point of the description where the author is using words not only to state something, but to recreate in the reader's imagination the content of the vision. Take for instance this passage from the description of the meadow:

συνεχῆ τὰ δένδρα· συνηρεφῆ τὰ πέταλα· συνηῆπτον οἱ πτόρθοι τὰ φύλλα, καὶ ἐγίνετο τοῖς ἄνθεσιν ὄροφος ἢ τῶν φύλλων συμπλοκή.

The frequent and close alliteration of the prefix συν-, that conveys the idea of union, as well as the fact that the period is framed by two of these words (συνεχῆ ... συμπλοκή), give substance to the image of intertwining that is being described.

⁷⁵ This can be read as an application of instructions from the *Progymnasmata*. See for instance Aelius Theon, 119,33-120,2, (τὸ δὲ ὅλον συνεξομοιοῦσθαι χρὴ τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις τὴν ἀπαγγελίαν, ὥστε εἰ μὲν εὐανθές τι εἴη τὸ δηλούμενον, εὐανθῆ καὶ τὴν φράσιν εἶναι· εἰ δὲ αὐχμηρὸν ἢ φοβερὸν ἢ ὁποῖον δὴ ποτε, μηδὲ τὰ τῆς ἐρμηνείας ἀπάδειν τῆς φύσεως αὐτῶν, 'one should make the style reflect the subject, so that if what it describes is colourful, the word choice should be colourful, but if it is rough or frightening or something like that, features of the style should not strike a discordant note with the nature of the subject'), or Aphthonius, 12,3 Patillon ('Ἐκφράζοντας δὲ δεῖ τὸν τε χαρακτῆρα ἀνειμένον ἐκφέρειν καὶ διαφόροις ποικίλλειν τοῖς σχήμασι καὶ ὅλως ἀπομιμῆσθαι τὰ ἐκφραζόμενα πράγματα, 'in composing an ecphrasis, one should make use of a relaxed style and adorn it with varied figures and, throughout, create an imitation of the things being described').

Another feature of Achilles Tatius' *ekphrasis* is details of light and colour. In the description of the meadow the author draws attention to the effects of light and shade as they can be seen on the grass:

ἔγραψεν ὁ τεχνίτης ὑπὸ τὰ πέταλα καὶ τὴν σκιάν, καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἠρέμα κατὰ τοῦ
λειμῶνος σποράδην διέρρει, ὅσον τὸ συνηρέφες τῆς τῶν φύλλων κόμης
ἀνέωξεν ὁ γραφεύς.⁷⁶

The words highlight how, once again, the description tries to go beyond the mere acknowledgement of the elements in the painting. This time the period is framed by words belonging to the family of γράφω (it opens with the verb ἔγραψεν and closes with the noun ὁ γραφεύς), showing how, more than the result of the chiaroscuro itself, it is the process of painting that is at stake, to the point that the shade is not produced by the sun filtering through the trees, but by the painter who, as the text says, opens (ἀνέωξεν) the branches to let the rays through. Something similar can be found later on, when Europa's clothes are being described:

ὁ δὲ κόλπος τοῦ πέπλου πάντοθεν ἐτέτατο κυρτούμενος· καὶ ἦν οὗτος ἄνεμος
τοῦ ζωγράφου.

There is of course a small difference between saying that Europa's peplum was blown by the wind and saying that the peplum presented folds and that 'this was the painter's wind' (ἦν οὗτος ἄνεμος τοῦ ζωγράφου), but, as subtle as it may seem, it denotes a shift of attention from the thing as it is seen to the thing as it was created.⁷⁷ This metaphorical standing behind the painter while the work of art is still in the process of being made underlines how what is at the centre of the narrator's attention is not only the painting before his eyes, but the painter at work, with his pictorial technique and *modus operandi*. Although works of art play an important role in the Greek novels, such interest does not have many parallels among the novelists, and it seems to be a predilection of Achilles Tatius, as later on we will find the only reference in the Greek novels to the name of a painter (3,6), and, in what is actually one of the very few occurrences at all, to a painter's atelier (5,3).

As for the colours, the author has different ways of creating a chromatic impression on the reader's mind. On the one hand he can count on the fact that some words carry with themselves, even without mentioning it, the colour that is naturally associated with the object to which they refer, that is, there is no need to specify the colour of the meadow because it is obviously green. On

⁷⁶ O'Sullivan's emendation 'κατὰ τοῦ λειμῶνος' has been adopted here instead of the manuscripts' 'τοῦ λειμῶνος κάτω'. See O'Sullivan 1978, 313.

⁷⁷ Maeder 1991, 7-10 underlines these 'effets de création'.

the other hand it is clear that Achilles Tatius tries to focus attention on specific colour associations, especially the juxtaposition of white and red. He does this in three different places of the *ekphrasis*, when describing the flowers, the shore, and Europa's clothes. In the first case there is no direct mention of colours, but the stress on certain kinds of flowers, narcissus, rose and myrtle (νάρκισσος καὶ ῥόδα καὶ μύρρινα), leads naturally to the visualization of white and red. Later on we are told that the sea presents two colours, reddish (ὑπέρυθρον) where close to the land and dark blue (κυάνεον) offshore. However, when the waves break upon the rocks, where the sea is reddish, the foam whitens the rocks (περιλευκαίνων τὰς πέτρας). Finally, Europa is wearing a white tunic and a purple cloak (λευκὸς ὁ χιτῶν· ἢ γλαῖνα πορφυρᾶ). It is therefore noticeable that the same colour association recurs three times in the same painting, possibly, as far as we can reconstruct, one on the left side (the flowers in the meadow), one in the centre (the shore) and one on the right side (Europa's robes). This ordered distribution, together with the fact that it concerns the only clear references to colours in the whole description, suggests the intention, on the narrator's part, to highlight details of colour in precise places. This results both in the perception of a painting with a carefully organised symmetrical structure, and in the creation in the readers' minds, by means of repetition, of a particular chromatic association.

From the latter perspective it is certainly worth noticing that the same or a similar association can be found in the first, second and third books of the novel. In the description of the garden in Clitophon's house in 1,15 we see narcissi, roses and violets, together with a more in-depth explanation of their characteristics. Shortly after, Leucippe's face is described through comparison with the aforesaid meadow, featuring narcissi, rose and violet (1,19). In 2,11 Calligone's necklace shows a jewel that includes the juxtaposition of a black, a white, and a red stone, and in the same paragraph the colour of her dress is explained through the short story of the origin of the colour purple (intended as a dark red, given the overall comparison with blood). Again, in the sacrifice during which Calligone is kidnapped the flowers used in the ritual are narcissi, roses and myrtle (2,15).⁷⁸ In the second *ekphrasis* of a painting, that of Andromeda (3,7), the heroine's face is described as pale with traces of red, and her eyes are like dying violets, and a couple of lines are dedicated to the description of her white tunic's fabric (in a style that is very close to the one used to describe Europa's clothes: ποδήρης ὁ χιτῶν, λευκὸς ὁ χιτῶν). It is either one of two things: Achilles Tatius is an author with just a basic chromatic vocabulary, or he is leaving behind recurrent details of colours that are bound to catch or stimulate the reader's mind. As we shall see,

⁷⁸ Not to mention the fact that at the end of the paragraph the Egyptian bulls used as victims are said to be of the same kind into which Zeus chose to transform himself when kidnapping Europa.

these details are the author's way to make the reader work out connections between the painting and the story.

Models

By Achilles Tatius' time the story of the rape of Europa had already been covered by both literature and art. Thematically speaking, the closest reference in Greek literature is probably Moschus' *Europa*, a short poem in hexameters made here all the more interesting by the fact that it includes, in its first part, the description of a work of art. The poem tells that Europa had a dream in which two women, one dressed like a foreigner, the other like a native, were fighting over her (8 ff.); the woman with the foreign clothing overcomes the other one and tells Europa that this was the will of Zeus (13-15). The day after the dream, quite similarly to Nausicaa in the *Odyssey*, Europa goes out to a meadow to play with her friends (28-37), and she happens to carry a golden basket the description of which occupies about twenty lines. It represents the story of Io, the girl loved by Zeus who crossed the sea in the shape of a heifer (43-62). After this description, the arrival of the bull and the abduction follow as expected. The readers of this poem would likely have known the content of the story that is told, and it is therefore a pleasant and not too difficult intellectual entertainment for them to see in the two women of the dream the representations of Europe and Asia and in the basket the anticipation of what is about to happen to Europa. Playing on the difference in knowledge between Europa and the readers, Moschus presents them with elements, a dream and a work of art, whose foreshadowing function only the reader is able to fully understand. Far from spoiling the reading with the addition of unnecessary details, this procedure engages the reader in a dialogue with the text, producing deeper involvement and sympathy for the character.

The telling of Europa's story, the description of a work of art, a dream that predicts the events to come: these features alone suggest a link between Moschus and Achilles Tatius.⁷⁹ In addition to this, some details could testify to Achilles' direct knowledge of Moschus' poem. Starting from line 63 we find the description of the meadow where Europa and the maidens are playing, which contains, together with plants such as thyme and saffron, flowers of narcissus, hyacinth, violet, and, with special attention, rose (ἡ μὲν νάρκισσον εὐπνοον, ἡ δ' ὑάκινθον,| ἡ δ' ἴον, ἡ δ' ἔρπυλλον ἀπαίνυτο, 65-66; ἀγλαΐην πυρσοῖο ρόδου, 70). Moreover, the fact that Europa is wearing a purple garment (πορφυρέην κολποῦ πτύχα, 127) and that she is using her veil as a sail (ἰστίον οἶά τε νηός, 130) constitute a striking similarity with Achilles' Europa (ἡ

⁷⁹ The reader of Achilles Tatius has not yet encountered a dream (the first one occurs at 1,3), but dreams are a feature of Achilles' novel, let alone of the novels in general.

χλαῖνα πορφυρά; ὥσπερ ἰστίῳ τῷ πέπλῳ χρωμένη).⁸⁰ Perhaps it is possible to strengthen the link between Moschus and Achilles Tatius. Probably four centuries separate the bucolic poet from the novelist, and, although the story of Europa and the bull surely had not been forgotten, its extended treatment does not seem to be very frequent. Aside from references that attest only a writer's knowledge of the story (e.g. Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, 6,29, just to name one), and short versions of the myth (e.g. Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca*, 3,2), we are left with few examples worth noting.

In the *Odes* Horace presents Europa sitting on the bull, afraid of the sea monsters (3,27,25-28); before the abduction she had been in a meadow, weaving a crown of flowers for the Nymphs (29-30). Then we see her in the isle of Crete, talking to herself about her misfortune (34-66), and at the end of the ode she receives advice from Venus, followed by Cupid (67-68). The lines that describe Europa on the bull, '*Sic et Europe niveum doloso | credidit tauro latus*' ('so Europa gave her white side to the deceitful bull', 25-26), do not allow us to fully understand her exact position, but '*latus*' could imply that she is not riding the bull but lying on its back. Also, even though there is no mention of other maidens, the presence of a meadow and the act of collecting flowers (29-30) puts Europa in the same setting described by Moschus.

In the *Metamorphoses* Ovid talks twice about Europa, in the second and in the sixth book. At the end of the second book the myth is told in a slightly different version from the usual. Zeus asks Hermes to fly to the land of Sidon and push the king's bulls to the shore, in order to turn into a bull, mingle with the herd and come closer to Europa (2,836-845). Quite similarly to Moschus' poem, we then find the maidens at play, the description of the bull, his approaches to Europa, her initial indecision, the decision to ride the animal and the abduction (2,846-873). What is interesting is the end of the story, or, better, the lack of an ending. The last lines show Europa sitting on the bull:

*Pavet haec litusque ablata relictum
respicit et dextra cornum tenet, altera dorso
inposita est; tremulae sinuantur flamine vestes.*

She was afraid and looked back at the shore she had been taken from, holding the bull's horn with her right hand and resting the other hand on its back; her tremulous garments were blown by the breeze.
(2,873-875).

⁸⁰ On this see also Whitmarsh 2011, 89, n. 98.

Since these lines close the second book, one would expect the third one to begin with the wedding procession or the union of Zeus and Europa, but the third book starts with Zeus in Crete turned back to his original form, and Europa nowhere to be mentioned. The unfulfilled expectation strengthens in the readers' minds the impression left by the last image of Europa they were given. An image, one must say, with a particularly pictorial connotation. Europa is looking back at the shore, holding one horn with the right hand and resting the left one on the back, while the wind is blowing her garments.⁸¹

History of art shows Europa on the bull already in the Archaic and throughout the Classical and Hellenistic periods.⁸² The bull is heading either to the right or to the left, the choice seeming to be quite arbitrary. In the early period the animal is walking quietly and Europa sits side-saddle, upright and fully dressed. There is however an alternative that will in time become the norm: the bull moving fast and Europa resting one or both hands on the back or grasping a horn and the tail. She either looks forward or, with slightly less frequency, turns her head backwards towards the shore. The heroine can be half or totally naked, or dressed with a chiton and a mantle, in which case the effect of the wind blowing her garments is often underlined. In early representations Europa and the bull have no company except sometimes for a winged figure, perhaps Eros. In the fifth century BC other figures begin to appear, forming what will become the wedding procession of sea monsters, dolphins, Tritons, Eros, Cupids, Nereids, Poseidon and other sea deities. In the Hellenistic period the scene is followed on the shore by Europa's companions. Altogether, we can date a definitive iconography of Europa as early as the sixth century BC, with variations in the following centuries that show a tendency to enrich the details and the set of characters. However, these variations do not change the fact that almost all Greek and Roman representations of Europa follow one main scheme, showing the girl riding the animal side-saddle and, in the vast majority of cases, grasping one of its horns.

If we return to Ovid's last verses in Book Two, it is difficult not to think of the details we are given (the stare towards the beach, the position of the hands on the bull, the mantle blown by the wind) as descriptive of Europa's iconography more than just of her story. If we compare this with Horace there is little doubt that Ovid is much closer to the iconography of the story, and the artistic reference would certainly fit the poet's choice of an abrupt ending of the myth and his consequent intention to leave the readers with an effective image. This is made even more likely by the fact that in the second mention of her story, in Book Six of the *Metamorphoses*, Europa appears in a work of art. The background is the famous contest between Minerva and Arachne over which

⁸¹ A very similar description of Europa can also be found in *Fasti* 5,605-20.

⁸² See *LIMC* and *EAA* s.v. *Europa*.

one is the better weaver. The passage consists of two equally long descriptions that describe the works of the goddess and the mortal girl. Minerva embroiders the contest between her and Poseidon over the city of Athens and, in order to show Arachne what is awaiting her, examples of divine punishments in response to human arrogance. The girl replies to this by embroidering the long series of adulterous loves and acts of violence committed by male divinities. The first scene represents Europa:

*Maeonis elusam designat imagine tauri
Europam: verum taurum, freta vera putares;
ipsa videbatur terras spectare relictas
et comites clamare suas tactumque vereri
adsilientis aquae timidasque reducere plantas.*

The girl from Maeonia wove Europa deceived by Zeus disguised as a bull: you would have thought that the bull was real, and the sea too; she was pictured looking at the land she had left, shouting to her companions, afraid of touching the leaping water, timidly drawing back her feet.
(6,103-107).

Not only does the image once again agree with Europa's iconography, but it also shows the heroine in the exact same aspect she had when the readers last met her (cf. '*litusque ablata relictum | respicit*' 2,873-4, with '*terras spectare relictas*' 6,105), as if the interrupted scene at the end of Book Two crystallized Europa's image in a work of art to be shown again after four books. There is enough to say that, together with literary models such as Moschus (especially with regard to the arrival of the bull), art plays a role in Ovid's version of the myth.

No author after Ovid seems to have dedicated similar attention to Europa's myth, at least until Achilles Tatius. Thus, the novelist appears to be the first one in a long time to resume the subject and, as Moschus and Ovid did before him, explore its connection with the world of art. Whether this is true or not depends on when we date *Leucippe and Clitophon*, especially in relation to the work of another author who tells the story of Europa, namely Lucian in *Dialogi marini*.⁸³ More will be said about the connections between Achilles Tatius and Lucian in the appendix at the end of this chapter, but for the moment let us say that both authors lived approximately in the same period, and that they shared a similar kind of background in terms of cultural *milieu* and education. In the last of the *Dialogi marini* Lucian rewrites Europa's myth in the form of a dialogue between

⁸³ Lucian, *Opera* vol IV, ed. Macleod. Few of Lucian's works can be dated with certainty, and *Dialogi marini* is not one of them. Schwartz 1965, 56 ff. dates it from between AD 157 and 161 (based on the association with *Dialogi deorum* and therefore with Lucian's Menippean writings); Hall, who dedicates the first chapter of her monograph to the deconstruction of the parameters used by previous scholars to date Lucian's works, points to the fact that there is not much Menippean satire going on in *Dialogi deorum*, but does not propose an alternative date. See Hall 1981, 47-48.

the winds Zephyr and Notus, the former telling the latter the magnificence of the show he has just witnessed. Lucian undoubtedly takes inspiration from Moschus, for the content of the dialogue resembles the poem more than any other literary model.⁸⁴ Except for the initial dream and the description of the basket, all the rest has been summarized by Lucian: the game with the coetaneous girls, the arrival of the bull, the abduction, the glorious procession of the sea gods. Moreover, Lucian seems to quote Moschus on several occasions: the girls being of the same age of Europa (ἡλικιώτιδας in Lucian, ἡλικας in Moschus 29); the bull uttering a sweet bellowing (ἐμυκάτο ἥδιστον in Lucian, μειλίχιον μυκήσατο in Moschus 97); the sea being calm (τὴν γαλήνην in Lucian, γαληνιάσκει in Moschus 115); the Nereids coming out of the water (ἀναδύσαι in Lucian, ἀνέδυσαν in Moschus 118).⁸⁵

There are, however, a few elements that slightly diverge from Moschus and bring Lucian's text close to Achilles'. For example, Achilles Tattius elaborates on Moschus when describing Europa's veil blown by the wind (compare 'ἡ δὲ δίκην ἐπεκάθητο τῷ ταύρω πλεούσης νηός, ὥσπερ ἰστίῳ τῷ πέπλῳ χρωμένη' in Achilles with 'ἰστίον οἶα τε νηός' in Moschus 130), but Lucian, although expressing the same idea, is closer to Achilles Tattius than Moschus (compare 'τῆ ἑτέρα δὲ ἠνεμωμένον τὸν πέπλον συνείχεν' in Lucian 2,11 with 'ὁ δὲ κόλπος τοῦ πέπλου πάντοθεν ἐτέτατο κυρτούμενος· καὶ ἦν οὗτος ἄνεμος τοῦ ζωγράφου' in Achilles Tattius). Also, if we compare the wedding processions in Moschus and Lucian, beside the close similarities, the latter's addition of the Cupids and Aphrodite at the beginning and at the end of the procession, respectively, are evident. Since Lucian is clearly presenting again the same set of characters seen in Moschus (dolphins, Nereids, Tritons, Poseidon, and other sea divinities), it is only natural to pay particular attention to the few details Lucian decided to add, the Cupids and Aphrodite. It is also worth noticing that the only other author who describes the procession, Achilles Tattius, avoids all the other usual characters to show only dolphins, Cupids, and Eros.

There are still differences between Lucian and Achilles Tattius: Lucian's Cupids are flying around and carrying torches, whereas those in Achilles Tattius are playing around the bull; following the tradition Achilles Tattius shows Eros leading the bull, but Lucian, in a way that is unusual in Europa's iconographical tradition, shows Aphrodite on a shell, perhaps under the influence of the model of the *Aphrodite Anadyomene*. On reflection, however, these differences can be softened. Both processions begin with Cupids and end with the representation of the power of love, personified in Eros in one case and his mother in the other; also, it is true that Achilles'

⁸⁴ On this see Baldwin 1980.

⁸⁵ There could be another link between Lucian and Moschus. Unlike Achilles Tattius, Lucian does not resume the meadow or the act of collecting flowers. However, in a passage in *Verae Historiae* he names a series of flowers (οἶον γὰρ ἀπὸ ρόδων καὶ ναρκίσσων καὶ ὑακίνθων καὶ κρίνων καὶ ἴων, ἔτι δὲ μυρρίνης καὶ δάφνης καὶ ἀμπελάνθης, τοιοῦτον ἡμῖν τὸ ἥδῦ προσέβαλλεν, 2,5) that show similarities with the flowers in Moschus' garden.

Cupids are not carrying torches, but this action is done by Eros (ἐκράτει τὸ πῦρ); even though, as said, Lucian's Cupids here are not playing like those in Achilles (ἔπαιζον Ἔρωτες), they do so in another one of Lucian's descriptions of paintings, namely *Herodotus*, 5 (Ἔρωτες παίζουσιν).⁸⁶

Be that as it may, the affinity between Lucian's description and that by Achilles Tattius is highlighted even better by two large-scale analogies. It has been said before that Achilles Tattius allows the readers, after a thorough analysis, to visualize the painting's orientation from left to right. Not all the authors considered show a similar intention. For instance, we are told by Moschus that Europa is holding the horn with one hand and her garment with the other hand (126-127), but, since it is not specified which hand is holding what, we are unable to orientate the scene. As we have already seen, this is instead evident in Achilles Tattius, and emerges in Ovid too. In the latter's version Europa is holding the bull's horn with the right hand; thus the scene shows the bull moving from right to left. Lucian describes Europa's left hand holding the horn almost in the same terms used by Achilles Tattius: τῇ λαίᾳ μὲν εἶχετο τοῦ κέρατος (cf. 'τῇ λαίᾳ τοῦ κέρως ἐχομένη' in Achilles Tattius). As a result, Achilles Tattius and Lucian are not only describing the same subject, but they also are the only two authors who are describing the scene of Europa's abduction orientated from left to right.⁸⁷ This can suggest at least two conclusions: that in both of them (and not just in Achilles Tattius, where it is evident) a relevant role was played not just by the story of Europa but by its iconography, and that they could have been acquainted with one another's work. The second possibility is bolstered by moving a bit forward in Achilles Tattius' narration and backwards in Lucian's dialogues. The penultimate dialogue in the series of the *Dialogi Marini*, that is, the one that immediately precedes that between Zephyr and Notus, shows Triton telling the Nereids about the liberation of Andromeda by Perseus. The two dialogues (14 and 15) share many similarities: the marine setting, of course, but also the telling of the myth as an eyewitness account, and the pictorial character of the description. Interestingly enough, the second of three extended *ekphraseis* of paintings in Achilles Tattius' novel, that is the one that follows that of Europa, describes the episode of Andromeda and Perseus. It is too soon now to draw a conclusion on the relation between the novelist and Lucian, but there is at least enough to say that the parallelisms between the two authors are not irrelevant.

⁸⁶ The image of Cupids at play seems to be dear to rhetors describing works of art, and appears in these terms also in Xenophon of Ephesus 1,8 (παίζοντες Ἔρωτες, in the description of the canopy) and twice in Philostratus the Elder's *Imagines* (οἱ μὲν... παίζοντες; τοὺς μὲν παίζειν; both in 1,6,3, which is the description of a painting representing Cupids). The Cupids at play is not the only similarity between Lucian's *Herodotus* and Achilles' description of Europa. When the two authors describe the veil over the heads of, respectively, Roxana and Europa, the choice of words seems to be rather similar: ἐκατέρωθεν ὑπὲρ τὴν κεφαλὴν καλύπτρα κύκλω τῶν νώτων ἐμπεπετασμένη' in Achilles Tattius, and ἀπάγει τῆς κεφαλῆς τὴν καλύπτραν' in Lucian.

⁸⁷ Baldwin 1980, 116-117 fails to notice this similarity, as well as the similar image of Europa's robe blown by the wind.

If we take a synoptical look at the authors taken into consideration it is possible to estimate the treatment of Europa's myth, also in the light of the history of art. Only two of them expressly describe Europa in a work of art (Ovid in the sixth book of *Metamorphoses* and Achilles Tatius), whereas Moschus, Horace, Ovid (in the second book of *Metamorphoses* and in *Fasti*) and Lucian narrate the myth. The fact that there does not seem to be a clear distinction between the narration of the myth and the description of its iconography is demonstrated by Ovid, who shows both procedures in the same work. Moschus narrates the myth, but the correspondence between his lines and almost every element in Europa's iconography makes at least plausible the presence of works of art as sources of inspiration, and the poet could have hinted at this fact with the inserted *ekphrasis* of another work of art, the basket illustrating Io's myth. Horace, on the other hand, seems to be the farthest from art. As for Lucian, the pictorial character of his version of the myth of Europa could be already implied in the reason for the dialogue, which is presented as the account of the sight of a show. In addition to this, and besides taking Moschus into consideration, Lucian shares at the same time many a detail with Achilles Tatius, who is by far the one who most expresses the will to describe art and shows great precision in the details, together with the interest in the creation itself of the painting. It is difficult to imagine that any author revisiting the story of Europa proceeded only either from literary models or artistic ones, for, in a case like Europa's, literature and art contributed to each other's cause in a way that makes it impossible to draw a line between them. Any written account of the story of Europa cannot have prescindend from the visualisation, on the author's side, of her abduction, and this visualisation was likely influenced by the impression left by the vision of works of art representing the subject. In the same way, any artistic representation of Europa's story cannot have prescindend from its written accounts. Taking into consideration what was said in the beginning of this chapter, and considering especially the examples of Lucian and Achilles Tatius, narrating the story of Europa and describing a picture that represents it would end up being very similar operations.

What, then, is the overall role played by art in these accounts? It can be argued that the authors who provide the spatial indications that lead to the orientation of the bull's journey are concerned not only with telling the story but also with helping the readers' visualisation of the scene, which might have come as a result of the fact that the authors themselves had an artistic model in mind. At any rate, the detail of the position of Europa's left and right hand finds no parallel in literary sources and makes more sense if understood in light of artistic ones. This is obvious in Achilles Tatius, who is describing a painting, but less so in Ovid and Lucian, unless they too drew inspiration from a work of art. The idea that these authors observed an artistic model would be strengthened by the variation in the direction of the bull, since the fact that one author

(Ovid) ‘sees’ the scene from right to left whereas two other authors (Achilles Tatius and Lucian) from left to right reflects the fact that both versions were present in artistic representations. The least one can say is that these three authors were particularly acquainted with Europa’s iconography and decided not just to include it in their accounts (as Moschus did), but to shape their accounts so that the readers would perceive an image of the scene corresponding to the one they probably already had in their minds by their own acquaintance with real works of art. This is valid for Ovid and Lucian but may seem rather otiose for Achilles Tatius, as he is explicitly describing a painting, and not just trying to recreate the story with the addition of pictorial details. In his case too, however, it is impossible to tell whether he was describing one specific painting, any painting of Europa, or simply the product of his imagination.⁸⁸ What is sure, and what the detail of the hands also tells, is that he wanted the painting to appear realistic. Or, to put it better, he wanted two-thirds of it to look like a realistic painting.

The first, introductory part of the painting of Europa underlines its bipartite structure (land and sea). However, as seen, there is one detail of colour that recurs three times in three different parts of the painting: the association of white and red is seen first in the garden, then on the shore, where the maidens are and where sea meets land, and finally on Europa’s clothes. Two of these parts (the maidens on the shore and Europa) are normally represented by artists, but the garden finds no correspondence in art. Moreover, as acutely noticed by Harlan, the description of the garden is inconsistent with the description of the shore. For how can the garden be surrounded by walls (ὄλον ἐτείχιζε τὸν λειμῶνα περιβολῆ, 1,1,5) if one of its sides ends in the shore, where the maidens are (ἐν δὲ τῷ τοῦ λειμῶνος τέλει πρὸς ταῖς ἐπὶ θάλατταν τῆς γῆς ἐκβολαῖς τὰς παρθένους ἔταξεν ὁ τεχνίτης, 1,1,5)?⁸⁹ This inconsistency only draws more attention to the presence of the garden, which has been interpreted in different ways. On the one hand the garden, described with clearly sexual vocabulary, can be taken as a symbol of pleasure (and its walls as a symbol of virginity), which is connected both to the calmly kidnapped Europa and the compliant kidnappee Leucippe (cf. 2,30).⁹⁰ On the other hand, the garden has been seen as a metaliterary place, especially in the presence of the gardener digging a channel (ὄχετηγός τις ἐγέγραπτο δίκηλλαν κατέχων καὶ περὶ μίαν ἀμάραν κεκυφῶς καὶ ἀνοίγων τὴν ὁδὸν τῷ ρεύματι, 1,1,6). There is here a strong, verbal reminiscence of *Iliad* 21, 257 ff., where Achilles fights against the river Scamander.⁹¹ The reference to the *Iliad* would symbolise Homeric influences in Achilles

⁸⁸ But would not his imagination in turn have been influenced at some point by, among other factors, the vision of one or a number of works of art of Europa?

⁸⁹ Harlan 1965, 104 ff.; see also Bartsch 1989, 52-3.

⁹⁰ Littlewood 1979. See also Bartsch 1989, 53 ff.

⁹¹ The Homeric reference is noticed by Whitmarsh in Whitmarsh and Morales 2001, 146.

Tatius, but the figure of the gardener also serves as an image for the author, as Martin has pointed out:

If the novelist, as weaver of words, is like the one who arranged this cultured, cultivated bower of intersecting leaves and trees, then the Brueghel touch of the little man with a pick directing the stream of water within the meadow is nothing other than a generic self-portrait.⁹²

The metaliterary aspect of the passage can be expanded, if one considers the particular garden in question: not any garden, but one very close to that in Moschus' Europa. By adding Moschus' meadow to the common iconography of Europa, Achilles Tatius is first of all exemplifying the union of literature and figurative arts that characterised the transmission of Europa's tale; secondly, he is hinting at the fact that the union of literature and figurative arts is exactly what his novel is going to be about; thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, by using Moschus in the first *ekphrasis* of a work of art in the novel, he is pointing to his main model for the use of *ekphrasis*. For the bucolic poet did not just tell the story of Europa, but inserted in his poem the description of a work of art, the basket representing the story of Io, meant to establish precise links with the main story. Both stories tell of one of Zeus' seductions, of metamorphosis, and of an animal crossing the sea. Thus the events represented in the basket reflect what is going to happen to Europa, although not unequivocally, for in the story of Io it is Io who is turned into a heifer, whereas in that of Europa it is Zeus who turns himself into a bull. Borrowing Perutelli's words, the relationship between the story in the basket and the main story can be defined as 'specular inversion',⁹³ and this, with the due variations, is exactly the use of description of works of art that Achilles Tatius will display. The

⁹² Martin 2002, 146. I owe to Ian Repath a number of ideas concerning this passage, springing from the use of aquatic metaphors, in particular of rivers and streams, to indicate works of literature (for which see for instance Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, 105-12 and *AP* 12,43; interesting is also the image of the good orator as a great torrent in Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* 12,10,61). Among others: the idea that a gardener digging a channel is an image both for literary influences and for the author's control over his narrative (as opposed to Achilles overwhelmed by Scamander –the homonymy here would be no coincidence: Achilles Tatius is reflecting himself in the image of a gardener, who in Homer is used as an image to reflect Achilles); the idea that a number of passages present a metaphorical use of ὀχετεύω or ὀχετηγός (e.g. Lucian, *VH* 1,33, Philostratus, *Her* 3,1; particularly interesting in this sense are passages of literary criticism, e.g. Dion. Hal., *De imitatione* 1, Ps-Long., *On the Sublime* 13,3); finally, the idea that a different but not unrelated use of ὀχετεύω is found in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 251e ff., which is an important hypotext for *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and especially for Book One. All of this was presented and discussed in a KYKNOS seminar held in Swansea University in November 2010 (*A Metaliterary Meadow: Irrigation and Influence in Achilles Tatius*). The image of gardeners and channels can symbolise not just influence, but also creation. In *Timaeus*, trying to provide a scientific explanation of sight, Plato speaks of it in terms of a stream (τὸ τῆς ὀψεως ῥεῦμα, 45 c). Again in *Timaeus*, Plato develops the metaphor of a garden crossed by channels to describe human anatomy: Ταῦτα δὴ τὰ γένη πάντα φυτεύσαντες οἱ κρείττους τοῖς ἥττοσιν ἡμῖν τροφήν, τὸ σῶμα αὐτὸ ἡμῶν διωχέτευσαν τέμνοντες οἷον ἐν κήποις ὀχετοῦς, ἵνα ὡς περ ἐκ νάματος ἐπιόντος ἀρδοίτο, 'And when our Superiors had generated all these kinds as nutriment for us inferior beings, they channelled out our body itself, like as if they were cutting channels in gardens, to the end that it might be irrigated as it were by an inflowing stream' (77 c, trans. Bury). It would be tempting to see in Achilles Tatius' ὀχετηγός not only someone who directs and has control over literary influences, but also someone who creates, like οἱ κρείττους who created the human body.

⁹³ Perutelli 1979.

models used in the composition of the *ekphrasis* of the painting of Europa, Moschus in particular, are programmatic of one of the main narrative strategies adopted by the novelist, who is therefore using the first painting as a sort of manifesto of his approach to description of art. Perhaps noticing the addition of Moschus' meadow to the painting, the readers would have made the connection with the bucolic poet, who wrote one of the famous examples of a description of art,⁹⁴ and, having in mind what happened in Moschus, would have been prepared to look for something similar in Achilles Tatius.

The painting and the main story

We have already noticed that the fact that some chromatic details found in the first *ekphrasis* recur further on in the novel might be a signal from the author to the readers, something to capture their attention and make them remember what was portrayed in the painting. The first of these signals re-surfaces when Clitophon, at the beginning of his narration, tells the narrator how he felt when he first saw Leucippe:

ὡς δὲ ἐνέτεινα τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς κατ' αὐτήν, ἐν ἀριστερᾷ παρθένος ἐκφαίνεται μοι καὶ καταστράπτει μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῷ προσώπῳ. τοιαύτην εἶδον ἐγὼ ποτε ἐπὶ ταύρῳ γεγραμμένην Σελήνην· ὄμμα γοργὸν ἐν ἡδονῇ· κόμη ξανθή, τὸ ξανθὸν οὖλον· ὄφρυς μέλαινα, τὸ μέλαν ἄκρατον· λευκὴ παρειά, τὸ λευκὸν εἰς μέσον ἐφοινίσσετο καὶ ἐμιμεῖτο πορφύραν, εἰς οἷαν τὸν ἐλέφαντα Λυδία βάπτει γυνή· τὸ στόμα ῥόδων ἄνθος ἦν, ὅταν ἀρχηται τὸ ῥόδον ἀνοίγειν τῶν φύλλων τὰ χεῖλη.

When I had aimed the shafts of my eyes at her (Leucippe's mother), a maiden on her left suddenly came into my view, and the vision of her face struck my eyes like lightning. She looked like a picture I had once seen of Selene on a bull: her eyes were blissfully brilliant; her hair was blonde, curling blonde; her brows were black, unadulterated black; her cheeks were white, a white that blushed towards the middle, a blush like a purple pigment used by a Lydian woman to dye ivory. Her mouth was like the bloom of a rose, when the rose begins to part the lips of its petals.

(1,4,2-3)

Despite the fact that Clitophon, and not the primary narrator, is the one who is narrating here, the description of Leucippe's appearance uses the same style seen in the description of the painting. Characteristic of this is the repetition of the formula noun-colour-colour-adjective: κόμη ξανθή, τὸ ξανθὸν οὖλον (a-b-b-c), and ὄφρυς μέλαινα, τὸ μέλαν ἄκρατον (again, a-b-b-c). A variation occurs when the description goes into more elaborated details (λευκὴ παρειά, τὸ λευκὸν ...), and

⁹⁴ On which see also Friedländer 1912, 15, and Palm 1965-66, 147-8.

the following association of white and red recalls the painting, as well as the rose and the act of opening the petals (ἀνοίγειν τῶν φύλλων τὰ χεῖλη; τῆς τῶν φύλλων κόμης ἀνέωξεν ὁ γραφεύς, in 1,1). However, the most interesting part of Leucippe's presentation is the reference made by Clitophon to the painting of Selene. Unfortunately, it is also controversial, since an intriguing variant exists beside Σελήνην, and that is Εὐρώπην. Σελήνην is supported by the manuscripts belonging to family α and codex F, whereas the MSS of family β read Εὐρώπην.⁹⁵ The reason for the confusion is easy to understand, for, after having just read an *ekphrasis* of Europa on the bull, a reference to Europa would be perfectly reasonable. Vilborg has pointed out sound philological reasons to read Σελήνην:

1) it is the *lectio difficilior*; 2) it has a stronger support in the MSS; 3) the particle ποτε would be inapt if the picture just described is meant. [...] The verb καταστράπτει also appears more elaborate if one reads Σελήνην here.⁹⁶

Against the last point one could say that presentation of the heroines in the Greek novels displays abundance of images of light which are unrelated to divinities of light,⁹⁷ thus making the reference to Selene appropriate yet by no means necessary, but the other arguments, especially the third one, are completely accurate. Be that as it may, how is the reference to Selene explainable?

Harlan does not seem to see the problem related to Europa/Selene, but points directly to the overall function of the passage:

Leucippe is explicitly likened to the figure of the painting (here called Selene, who is identical with Europa) to dispel any doubt about the significance of the opening scene: just as Europa's perilous journey across the sea will lead to the sacred marriage in Crete, Leucippe's trials are destined to be resolved in a happy union with her lover. The rape of Calligone, who is mistaken for Leucippe, contains another clear echo of the Europa myth: she is snatched away from her companions on the seashore in much the same way as Europa was.⁹⁸

On the whole, her view is not wrong, but a bit simplistic. First of all, Leucippe is, if anything, explicitly likened to a figure which is not the one in the painting of Europa. Secondly, as we will see, the happy reunion is less obvious than it seems. However, the fact that the events in the painting of Europa are to be connected to events that will happen in the main story is correct.

⁹⁵ Following the denominations of manuscripts adopted by Vilborg 1955.

⁹⁶ Vilborg 1962 p. 21-22.

⁹⁷ Cf. Chariton 2,2,7, 4,1,8, and 5,9,1; Achilles Tatius 1,19,1; Heliodorus 1,21,3, 2,4,3, 4,1,2, and 10,9,3.

⁹⁸ Harlan 1965, 105.

Bartsch has rectified the way in which this connection works.⁹⁹ The readers are meant to link Leucippe with Europa through the association of both of them with a similar garden (the one in the painting and the one in Clitophon's house that is described in 1,15, as will be analysed shortly), and expect the former to be abducted, following the story of the mythical heroine. When in 2,18 it so happens that an abduction indeed takes place, but involving Clitophon's sister, Calligone, taken by the Byzantine Callisthenes (who mistakes her for Leucippe), the readers see their predictions frustrated.¹⁰⁰ Finally, when in 2,31 Leucippe elopes by sea with Clitophon, they realise that the clue constituted by the painting has in fact been fulfilled, though not in the way they had expected. Bartsch's explanation of the proleptic function of the painting, and of the author's play with the readers' expectation, is fundamentally correct, and, among its merits, has greatly changed the way in which scholars read the *ekphraseis* of paintings in *Leucippe and Clitophon*.¹⁰¹ Bartsch's reading, however, completely overlooks the Europa/Selene problem in 1,4, for she reads the text as saying: 'she was such a one as the painted Europa on the bull I saw just now'.¹⁰² In spite of this, as she connects Leucippe and Europa via the association with similar gardens and not just via Clitophon's reference in 1,4, the reading Selene does not change her argument dramatically.

Mignogna draws from Bartsch while defending Vilborg's reading of Σελήνην.¹⁰³ She highlights the inspiration that Achilles drew from Moschus' poem, suggesting that just as in the poem the relation between the subject portrayed in the basket and the metamorphosis of Zeus into a bull follows the scheme of a reversed symmetry,¹⁰⁴ so in the novel the same thing happens with Europa's role being played by Clitophon. Mignogna, perhaps realizing that the parallelism between Europa and Clitophon is not one of the strongest, specifies that this is just one of the possible interpretations of what Achilles Tatius could have wanted to express in this passage. When it comes to explaining why Clitophon mentions Selene and not Europa, she concludes that the novelist is playing with the reader's expectations, producing a complacent effect of *aprosdokêton*.¹⁰⁵ Morales proposes that Achilles Tatius deliberately designed the first *ekphrasis* to be ambiguous: where the primary narrator sees the depiction of Europa, Clitophon sees one of

⁹⁹ Bartsch 1989, 52 ff. and especially 63-5.

¹⁰⁰ Signals that something Europaesque is bound to happen precede the kidnapping of Calligone: in 2,11 Calligone's wedding ornaments are described, and they include a necklace that contains the chromatic association, among other colours, especially of white and red, and a purple dress, the same colour as Europa's robe. Moreover, a reference to the kind of bull Zeus changed his form into when he abducted Europa is made shortly before Calligone is abducted (2,15,4).

¹⁰¹ A hint to the proleptic function of the painting was already in Friedländer 1912, 49. See Reeves 2007 for how the painting foreshadows not just the main events, but also the mini-episodes of the novel.

¹⁰² Bartsch 1989, 165.

¹⁰³ Mignogna 1993.

¹⁰⁴ In saying this the author refers to Perutelli 1979.

¹⁰⁵ In doing this she seems to be indebted to the general theory expressed in Bartsch 1989.

Selene.¹⁰⁶ This would also reflect the ‘resistance to identification’ of the temple of the goddess in Sidon that can be inferred from a passage in Lucian’s *De Dea Syria*.¹⁰⁷ Morales’ conclusion is that ‘the painting of Europa/Selene is programmatic in its foregrounding of visual appearance as a site of error’.¹⁰⁸

In summary, even though Σελήνην is probably the original reading, it appears to be generally difficult to shed light on Clitophon’s statement. Since it is paintings we are dealing with, it is worth taking a look at Selene’s iconography.¹⁰⁹ By association with her brother Helios, Selene is often depicted while driving a chariot pulled by horses, bulls or rams. Otherwise, she is seen riding a horse (in the majority of cases), a mule, a ram or, rarely, a bull. The connection with the bull seems to come as a consequence of the resemblance between the animal’s horns and the crescent which is a natural attribute of the goddess. Selene is always depicted fully dressed, and when she is riding an animal her garments are blown by the wind, with her veil forming a semicircle over her head (representation of a crescent or of the vault of heaven). In this particular image, even when riding a horse, she is undoubtedly very similar to the usual image of Europa. One fact that has to be noted, however, is that, whilst the painting of Europa is renowned to the point that it can be compared in detail with existing artistic models, a painting of Selene riding the bull would find here its one and only occurrence.¹¹⁰ Were Εὐρώπην the correct reading, it would be highly unlikely that an ancient scribe believed that what the author had wanted to say was Σελήνην, because a painting of Europa was a common thing to see, but one of Selene riding a bull was not.¹¹¹

The author seems to have slightly forced Selene’s iconography, which was already similar to Europa’s, in order to bring it even closer. He may have done this with an eye on how people with different backgrounds would look at similar pictures, which would lead one to think, with Selden and Morales; that the same picture could really have been read from two different points of view, that of the Greek (the narrator, accustomed to the myth of Europa) and that of the Phoenician

¹⁰⁶ Morales 2004, 38-48. The same argument was used by Selden 1994, 50. On cultural differences related to this passage see Whitmarsh 2011, 75 ff.

¹⁰⁷ Morales 2004, 45. According to Lucian’s account, the same temple in Sidon can be attributed to Astarte, Selene or Europa, depending on the source of the information: the Sidonians say it is Astarte’s, the author believes Astarte is Selene, and one of the priests claims it is Europa’s (*De Dea Syria*, 4). See also Lightfoot 2003, 297-303.

¹⁰⁸ Morales 2004, 48. On the Europa/Selene problem see also Whitmarsh 2013, 275-8.

¹⁰⁹ See LIMC s.v. *Selene*, *Luna* and EAA s.v. *Selene*.

¹¹⁰ Gury 1994, 714 reports only one terracotta with Selene riding a ram, and refers to Roscher 1884, 3140, fig. 11, for an example of Selene riding a bull. Roscher, though stating that such an image is quite recurrent (mainly in the type of *Artemis Tauropolos*), admits his knowledge of only three examples of images of Selene riding a bull, one of which is this passage by Achilles Tatius. Of the other two, one is a coin with Sun-Apollo on one face and Moon-Diana on the other (3137, fig. 9); the other (the aforesaid fig. 11) is a gem representing a bull with a crescent over the horns and a winged goddess on the back, who could as well be a Nike. Nothing tells us that a painting of Selene riding a bull ever existed.

¹¹¹ Morales 2004, 40 summarises: ‘We can see why a reader might change the text from ‘Selene’ to ‘Europa’, but not from ‘Europa’ to ‘Selene’.’

(Clitophon, culturally closer to the image of Selene). Nevertheless, Morales' argument for the ambivalence of the same painting forces her to dismiss the value of the particle ποτε,¹¹² the meaning of which however does not seem to depart from its usual reference to an unknown point in the past, and therefore indicates that the painting to which Clitophon is referring is not the one he and the primary narrator have just observed.¹¹³ Clitophon had been in front of the painting the entire time (καὶ αὐτὸς παρεστῶς, 1,2,1) and had therefore been able to enjoy the same show, which was unmistakably a painting of Europa. If now he refers to a painting of Selene he once saw, we cannot but assume that he is telling the simple truth: he once saw a painting of a shining Selene (which the readers are not shown), and Leucippe reminded him of it.

Clitophon's vision of the painting of Selene on a bull took place at an undetermined point in Clitophon's past, before the start of the adventures that occupy his narration. It is also, chronologically, the first painting the young man observes (that the readers know of). The readers are prone to think that the first painting observed by Clitophon is the painting of Europa, but in the chronology of the story, the painting of Europa is seen after the end of the adventures of the young couple. This also means that, by the time he is observing the painting of Europa, Clitophon has, or should have, learnt the importance that the paintings encountered have had in his adventures, that is, the fact that they contain prophecies of what is going to happen to him and Leucippe.¹¹⁴ As will be seen, this comes as a gradual realisation for Clitophon (and the other characters), a realisation much slower than the readers', who might have understood how things are as early as when Moschus' meadow was inserted in the description of the painting of Europa. It should therefore cause no surprise that not much attention is paid to the painting of Selene, because it is met at a time when Clitophon's reading of paintings was still quite superficial, too superficial to notice that even the painting of Selene on a bull, no matter how minimally described, contained to a certain extent elements that would re-surface in the future.

In 2,15 Clitophon describes the sacrifice during which Calligone will eventually be kidnapped by Callisthenes. The flowers displayed are narcissi, roses, and myrtle (τὰ ἄνθη, νάρκισσος καὶ ῥόδα καὶ μυρρίναι, 2,15,2), which the reader cannot fail to recognise as the same flowers in Europa's garden (cf. νάρκισσος καὶ ῥόδα καὶ μυρρίναι 1,1,5). In addition to this, Clitophon describes the Egyptian bull, the most outstanding of the victims prepared for the

¹¹² Morales 2004, 42 ('despite the fact that the ποτε withholds certainty') and 46 ('the ποτε remains enigmatic').

¹¹³ Selden 1994, 50 also takes for granted that the narrator and Clitophon are talking about the same painting, without giving any explanation for the particle ποτε. Whitmarsh 2013, 275, n. 3, makes the following suggestion: 'If we read the two paintings as identical [i.e. if we read 'Europa'] (which could involve an ironic reading of *pote*, 'once'), I wonder whether we could take Clitophon to be implicitly 'correcting' the unnamed narrator in a second sense (i.e. in addition to identifying the subject as Selene rather than Europa): he supplies the face that is missing from the earlier description'.

¹¹⁴ On Clitophon's inability to read paintings see Repath, forthcoming.

sacrifice. As it turns out in Clitophon's account, the Egyptian was the kind of bull Zeus disguised himself as when kidnapping Europa: εἰ δὲ ὁ μῦθος Εὐρώπης ἀληθῆς, Αἰγύπτιον βούην ὁ Ζεὺς ἐμιμήσατο (2,15,4). Clitophon has seen the painting of Europa in Sidon at the same time the primary narrator did, but we do not know whether he noticed the same details that were brought to the readers' attention by the primary narrator in his *ekphrasis*. Therefore, the flowers and the bull are meant as the author's clues for the readers, in order for them to connect the painting with the events to come, and expect a re-enactment of Europa's abduction. It would appear that there is a game of clues going on between author and readers, of which Clitophon is completely unaware. Obviously, it is a game he cannot take part in, because it takes place at a different narrative level.¹¹⁵ To him, the painting of Europa (which he observes after the end of his story) might be analeptic, but definitely not proleptic for the events in Tyre, since they have already happened. Yet, the author provides for him as well a chance to interpret the only painting he has seen thus far, that of Selene on the bull. For a Selene on a bull reappears right before his eyes:

βούς γὰρ Αἰγύπτιος οὐ τὸ μέγεθος μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν χροιάν εὐτυχεῖ· τὸ μὲν γὰρ μέγεθος πάντῃ μέγας, τὸν αὐχένα παχύς, τὸν νῶτον πλατύς, τὴν γαστέρα πολὺς, τὸ κέρασ οὐχ ὡς ὁ Σικελικὸς εὐτελής οὐδὲ ὡς ὁ Κύπριος δυσειδής, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν κροτάφων ὄρθιον ἀναβαῖνον, κατὰ μικρὸν ἐκατέρωθεν κυρτούμενον τὰς κορυφὰς συνάγει τοσοῦτον, ὅσον αἱ τῶν κεράτων διεστᾶσιν ἀρχαί· καὶ τὸ θέαμα κυκλουμένης σελήνης ἐστὶν εἰκῶν· ἡ χροιά δὲ οἷαν Ὀμηρὸς τοὺς τοῦ Θρακῶς ἵππους ἐπαινεῖ. βαδίζει δὲ ταῦρος ὑψαυχενῶν καὶ ὡσπερ ἐπιδεικνύμενος ὅτι τῶν ἄλλων βοῶν ἐστὶ βασιλεύς. εἰ δὲ ὁ μῦθος Εὐρώπης ἀληθῆς, Αἰγύπτιον βούην ὁ Ζεὺς ἐμιμήσατο.

An Egyptian ox excels not only in size but also in colour. In size, it is vast in every respect: it is thick of neck, broad of back, capacious of belly; its horns are neither paltry like those of the Sicilian nor ugly like those of the Cyprian, but they rise up erect from their temples, with a gradual curve in from either side, bringing the tips to the same distance from one another as between the base of the horns. This sight is the very image of the crescent moon (καὶ τὸ θέαμα κυκλουμένης σελήνης ἐστὶν εἰκῶν). As for their colour, it is that praised by Homer in the horses of Thrace. The bull processes with its neck upright, as if this performance displayed its kingship over the other beasts. If there is any truth in the myth of Europa, it must have been an Egyptian bull that Zeus imitated.
(2,15,3-4)

The end of the description of the bull, as said, is meant to create a connection with the *ekphrasis* of the painting of Europa. The same kind of bull that abducted Europa is now parading in the

¹¹⁵ Alternatively, Clitophon has noticed the details of the painting of Europa and, counting on the fact that the primary narrator has noticed them too, gives a narrative of past events shaped as to contain some details of the painting recently seen, for the narratee's entertainment. This is one of a number of passages where the narrating voice is difficult to tell, for it could be Clitophon, the primary narrator, the author, or a combination of the above.

ceremony, about to be sacrificed. At the same time, however, the very same bull is also the bull that carries Selene, for the shape of its horns are ‘the image (*eikôn*) of a crescent moon (*selênê*)’. In light of 1,4, where Clitophon said he had once seen Selene depicted on a bull, it is difficult to see this particular combination of words as a coincidence.¹¹⁶

Both the comparison between Leucippe and Selene and the description of the Egyptian bull are the work of Clitophon as a narrator, but it is possible, in theory, that the former had been made first by Clitophon as a character and then reported by Clitophon as a narrator. Is Clitophon-narrator aware that he is making a connection, and a clever one at that, with something he has already said? Is he doing this for his narratee, the primary narrator, for the sake of his entertainment and intellectual stimulation? Is this the doing of the primary narrator (or the author), perhaps covertly pointing at Clitophon’s inability to read paintings? It is not possible to answer these questions, of course. Moreover, the painting of Selene on the bull does not really anticipate anything of the episode of the kidnapping of Calligone: Selene on the bull is an image that parallels that of Helios driving the chariot of the sun, and has little to do with abductions.¹¹⁷ That is to say that even if Clitophon-character had recognised the crescent moon on the head of the Egyptian bull as the enactment of what he had seen on the painting of Selene on the bull, the piece of information would have changed little or nothing. The real beneficiaries are the readers, who can reconcile the problem which emerged in 1,4 with the unexpected comparison between Leucippe and Selene: it is not a problem that Leucippe is compared to Selene and not Europa in 1,4, because they both end up on the same bull.

Unlike the painting of Europa, that of Selene on the bull is not a detail of realism. The author selected the only other image that, by slightly forcing it, could look similar to Europa’s iconography, and by doing this he created a fork in the road of the readers’ interpretation: is Leucippe going to be like Europa or like Selene? The two roads eventually rejoin in the description of the Egyptian bull in 2,15, and the answer is that she can be both, for two can ride the animal. Parallel to this doubling of the possibilities of interpretation there is also a doubling of characters: two seizable beauties, Leucippe and Calligone, and two suitors, Clitophon and Callisthenes. In 2,13, a passage that will be analysed further, the readers learn that Callisthenes has fallen in love with Leucippe by hearsay, and that he intends to kidnap her although he has never seen her. They might therefore suspect that his actions could be subject to mistake, but the fact that on the day of the

¹¹⁶ The connection between the two passages would not work if one were to follow the reading *Εὐρώπην* in 1,4. The word *eikôn* is not used in 1,4 (where we find *γεγραμμένην Σελήνην*), but seems to have been chosen precisely to evoke the presence of a painting.

¹¹⁷ There are only loose similarities between the story of Selene and that of Europa. Selene too is coveted by Zeus (but not abducted), and, according to one version (Verg., *Geor.* 3,391), she is lured by Pan who has changed himself into a white ram (a ram, not a bull).

sacrifice Leucippe will stay at home, and, consequently, that there is only one beauty left to kidnap, Calligone, was beyond foreseeing and is ultimately the author's twist. The painting of Selene does not quite anticipate events, but is, at the very least, a signal that precise connections (not just the superficial ones -Leucippe looks like the Selene I once saw, but the hidden ones too -Selene on the bull and the half moon on the bull) between painting and reality occur early in Clitophon's story, before the encounters with paintings that are objects of *ekphrasis*.

Clitophon's garden

We have noticed that in the description of the painting of Europa Achilles Tatius follows with full particulars the heroine's iconography. We have also noticed that the initial description of the meadow does not belong to this iconography, and seems to have been added by the author, perhaps as an expansion of the meadow in Moschus. If the general attitude is that of faithful adherence to the pictorial model, then every variation must be intended as a deliberate choice made by the author.¹¹⁸ In other words, Achilles Tatius wanted the reader to receive the additional impression of a garden associated with the picture of Europa, and its position at the beginning of the description makes it all the more relevant. So, when in 1,15 the reader comes across another description of a garden it is difficult to see the two places as unrelated. To begin with, one must consider the author's overall organization of the novel. Compared with the distribution of the events in the first book, if not in the entire novel, a description as long as that of the painting of Europa has already a considerable weight in terms of space occupied. To add in the same book another description almost as long as the first one could be perceived as a hazard to the narrative's fluency, especially since its contents appear to be the reprise and closer examination of what had already been seen just a while before. The only way to save Achilles Tatius from the charge of being tedious is to understand the purpose for which this second *ekphrasis* was meant, its function in the narration.

Clitophon has just attended the funeral of Charicles, his cousin Clinias' young lover, and at his arrival back home he finds Leucippe wandering about the garden of the house. The garden is introduced with the vocabulary of a *locus amoenus*: ἡ δὲ ἦν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τῆς οἰκίας. ὁ δὲ παράδεισος ἄλλος ἦν, μέγα τι χρῆμα πρὸς ὀφθαλμῶν ἡδονήν, 'the garden was in fact a grove, a substantial affair, a pleasure to the eyes' (1,15,1).¹¹⁹ The garden is surrounded on four sides by a wall, and above it runs a roof supported by columns. The trees inside the garden are described with the intertwinement of their branches and the ivy and smilax attached to them. The vines' foliage

¹¹⁸ Bartsch 1989, 54.

¹¹⁹ Longus introduces the garden of Dionysophanes in a very similar way: Ἦν δὲ ὁ παράδεισος πάγκαλόν τι χρῆμα καὶ κατὰ τοὺς βασιλικούς (4,2,1).

creates effects of light and shadow on the ground. We find flowers, narcissus, roses and violets, and each of them is thoroughly examined. There is a spring in the middle of the flowers, and the water flowing out of it is contained in a squared basin. Finally, birds are described. The *ekphrasis* is rich with details, and although the overall style seems to be less sophisticated if compared with the description of the painting (a reflection of the switch from the primary to the secondary narrator?), it is still possible to find the same kind of alliterations and plays on words that characterized the first *ekphrasis*. Take for instance the passage where Clitophon is describing the branches of the trees:

ἔθαλλον οἱ κλάδοι, συνέπιπτον ἀλλήλοις ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλον· αἱ γείτονες τῶν πετάλων περιπλοκαί, τῶν φύλλων περιβολαί, τῶν καρπῶν συμπλοκαί. τοσαύτη τις ἦν ὁμιλία τῶν φυτῶν.

Branches abounded, interlocking, one on top of another: leaf caressed leaf, beside frond embracing frond, beside fruit coiling around fruit, so intimate was this kind of mingling of trees.
(1,15,2)

Their proximity and superposition of the branches is underlined first by the anaphora ‘ἀλλήλοις ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλον’,¹²⁰ and then the sequence ‘αἱ τῶν πετάλων περιπλοκαί, τῶν φύλλων περιβολαί, τῶν καρπῶν συμπλοκαί’, with the triple repetition of the association Genitive + Nominative, playing with the order of the compounds of πλοκή (περιπλοκαί, συμπλοκαί) and the prefix περι- (περιπλοκαί, περιβολαί), effectively evokes their intertwinement. This tripartite formula echoes closely the description of the branches in the painting of Europa: συνεχῆ τὰ δένδρα· συνηρεφῆ τὰ πέταλα· συνηπτον οἱ πτόρθοι τὰ φύλλα (1,1,3). As analysed by Bartsch, this is but one of the many similarities between the two gardens.¹²¹ Europa’s garden is surrounded by a wall (ὄλον ἐτείχιζε τὸν λειμῶνα περιβολή, 1,1,5), as is Clitophon’s (καὶ περὶ τὸ ἄλσος τειχίον ἦν, 1,15,1); the branches interlace in a similar way and, as seen, are described through the use of a similar style; the trees’ leaves filter the sunlight depicting shadows on the ground in Europa’s garden (1,1,4), as they do in Clitophon’s (1,15,4); likewise, there is little difference between the flowers in the two gardens (narcissus, rose and myrtle in Europa’s, and narcissus, rose and violet in Clitophon’s); both gardens have a spring in the middle of the meadow, though in the first one a gardener is digging a channel, whereas in the second one we find something similar to a fountain.

¹²⁰ Cf. Longus, 4,2,4: οἱ κλάδοι συνέπιπτον ἀλλήλοις καὶ ἐπήλλαττον τὰς κόμας.

¹²¹ See Bartsch 1989, 50-52.

In these cases (the wall, the branches, the shadow, the spring) we seem to be dealing with very slight variations on the same theme. As for the rest, Clitophon's garden shows more plants (ivy, smilax, vines), a more particularised description of the flowers, and the presence of animals. We could compare the two gardens by saying that almost every element in the first is there in the second one as well (all except the myrtle, substituted by violets), with the addition of more examples of flora and fauna in the latter. The only exception appears to be the ὄχρητος, whom we find only in Europa's garden. It has been said before that the ὄχρητος (as well as the γραφεύς or the τεχνίτης) mentioned in the *ekphrasis* of the painting of Europa can be seen as an image of the author himself, based on the well attested use of streams of water as a metaphor for narration.¹²² This explains why there is no trace of this figure in the description of Clitophon's garden, since, as a narrator unaware of the fact that his narration is going to constitute a novel, he is not supposed to think of himself as an author and make metaliterary connections. Anyway, there is enough to say, beyond doubt, that the two gardens look alike and that they were meant to look alike to the eyes of the readers.

How are we to account for the similarities between Europa's garden, described by the primary narrator, and Clitophon's, described by Clitophon? Clitophon is unaware of the primary narrator's description of the garden of Europa, so he has no reason to repeat similar images almost with the same words. Following this line of thought, we are led to believe that the similarities are a net of connections established by the primary narrator (or the author), who is retelling Clitophon's account but adding to it a game of recognition designed for the readers. Alternatively, as Clitophon too has seen the painting of Europa, he could be purposely shaping the description of his garden for his narratee (the primary narrator), for him to make the connections and feel more involved in the narration. However, this does not explain the similarity of vocabulary between the two descriptions. The problem is the same observed for the flowers and the Egyptian bull in 2,15, and, just like in that case, there is no definitive answer. When Achilles Tatius conceived the embedded narration of Clitophon he created a loophole that granted him plenty of narrative freedom and his readers plenty of headaches. Having said this, there are other reasons outside Europa's garden why Clitophon describes his garden in that way, but we will turn to them after looking at the third, and last, description of a garden in Book One.

The stress on gardens finds its fulfilment in 1,19, when, after more talk about love in nature, Clitophon describes Leucippe's face through a comparison with a garden:

¹²² See above n. 74.

Ταῦτα λέγων ἔβλεπον ἅμα τὴν κόρην, πῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὴν ἀκρόασιν τὴν ἐρωτικήν· ἡ δὲ ὑπεσήμαινεν οὐκ ἀηδῶς ἀκούειν. τὸ δὲ κάλλος ἀστράπτει τοῦ τὰ ἡττον ἐδόκει μοι τοῦ Λευκίππης εἶναι προσώπου. τὸ γὰρ τοῦ σώματος κάλλος αὐτῆς πρὸς τὰ τοῦ λειμῶνος ἤριζεν ἄνθη. ναρκίσσου μὲν τὸ πρόσωπον ἔστιλβε χροιάν, ῥόδον δὲ ἀνέτελλεν ἐκ τῆς παρεΐας, ἴον δὲ ἡ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐμάρμαιρεν αὐγή, αἱ δὲ κόμαι βοστρυχούμεναι μᾶλλον εἰλίττοντο κιττοῦ· τοιοῦτος ἦν Λευκίππης ἐπὶ τῶν προσώπων ὁ λειμῶν. ἡ μὲν οὖν μετὰ μικρὸν ἀπιούσα ὤχετο· τῆς γὰρ κιθάρας αὐτὴν ὁ καιρὸς ἐκάλει. ἐμοὶ δὲ ἐδόκει παρῆναι· ἀπελθούσα γὰρ τὴν μορφήν ἐπαφῆκέ μου τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς.

During this exposition, I was eyeing the girl to see how she reacted to hearing about desire. She seemed to be signalling that the experience was not without a certain pleasure. The effulgent 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: her face gleamed with the complexion of narcissus, the rose bloomed forth from her cheeks, violet was the radiance that shone from her eyes, the cluster of her locks coiled more than ivy. Thus was the brilliant meadow that lay on Leucippe's face. After a short while, she set off to go, as it was time for her to play the lyre. To me, though, she seemed still present: though departed, she had left behind her image in my eyes.

(1,19,1-2)

Given the coincidence of the flowers and plants here mentioned (narcissus, rose, violet, ivy) with the flowers and plants in Clitophon's garden, Bartsch asserts that a clear connection between Leucippe and his lover's garden is being made.¹²³ She underlines the symmetry between this case and Europa and her garden in the painting, highlighting that both gardens are described 'in equally erotic terms' and associated with equally 'acquiescent kidnapes'. Finally, she sees in this passage more evidence of the relation between Europa and Leucippe, and the foreshadowing of Leucippe's 'laxity concerning her own virginity'.¹²⁴ De Temmerman puts the stress on the fact that, regardless of the coincidence of the flowers, Clitophon's garden is not the main one to be associated with Leucippe.¹²⁵ He notices that Leucippe's face is said to be a λειμῶν, something which so far has only, and repeatedly, been said of Europa's garden, whereas Clitophon's garden is defined as a παράδεισος, or ἄλσος.¹²⁶ To De Temmerman, Leucippe and Europa are connected not only through their association with the parallel descriptions of the two gardens, but also through 'their common association with the *same* vegetative setting (that is, the meadow in the painting)'.¹²⁷ According to the author, this fact testifies to the use of metalepsis in Achilles Tatius, and shows in his narration a point that 'blurs, at least for a moment, the allegedly impermeable border between

¹²³ Bartsch 1989, 52; Zimmerman 1999, 71.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

¹²⁵ De Temmerman 2009.

¹²⁶ Also in Harlan 1965, 103.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 670 (author's italics).

narrative levels'.¹²⁸ The coincidence of plants (narcissus, rose, violet, ivy) in Clitophon's garden and on Leucippe's face would indicate a stronger connection between the latter and Clitophon's garden rather than Europa's, but as Clitophon's garden is linked to Europa's anyway, the three gardens should be considered together. So far, the similarities between gardens have been mostly justified with narrative reasons: the recurrent vocabulary is meant to stimulate associations in the minds of the narratees (the primary narrator and the readers). There are, however, other events in Book One (therefore not directly connected to the painting of Europa, which is outside the story) that justify the way in which Clitophon as a character should describe his garden like this, and Leucippe as an image of his garden, at this precise point of the story.

First of all, it is difficult not to notice a certain struggle on his part when he is trying to describe Leucippe.¹²⁹ His first attempt results in the comparison with the painting of Selene (1,4), and the second one in the comparison with the garden (1,19). Both cases deal with the way in which Clitophon perceives Leucippe, and, as we have seen, both give rise to doubts and interpretative perplexities. It appears that the heart of the matter lies in the young man's inability to approach the direct description of his beloved. This can be attributed to two facts, the girl's astonishing beauty and the boy's lack of experience on the subject of love. His first experience of the vision of Leucippe is a traumatic one (1,4,2-5): he is blinded (καταστράπτει μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς), lost (εὐθύς ἀπωλώλειν), wounded (κάλλος... τιτρώσκει), shaken (ἐκπεπλήγμην τὸ κάλλος), in a word, at a loss as to what is happening to him (πάντα δέ με εἶχεν ὁμοῦ). A consequent confused and dreamlike state of mind follows him during and after the first dinner with the girl: he eats as in a dream (ἐώκειν γὰρ τοῖς ἐν ὀνείροις ἐσθίουσιν, 1,5,3), his dinner is in his eyes (τὴν εὐωχίαν ἐν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς φέρων, 1,6,1), he is drunk with love (μεθύων ἔρωτι, 1,6,1). If during the day he is living as in a dream, at night he confuses his dreams with reality:

πάντα δὲ ἦν μοι Λευκίππη τὰ ἐνύπνια· διελεγόμην αὐτῇ, συνέπαιζον, συνεδείπνου, ἠπτόμην, πλείονα εἶχον ἀγαθὰ τῆς ἡμέρας· καὶ γὰρ κατεφίλησα, καὶ ἦν τὸ φίλημα ἀληθινόν.

All my dreams were of Leucippe. I was talking with her, frolicking with her, eating with her, touching her, and having more successes than I did by the day: for I even kissed her, and the kiss was real.¹³⁰
(1,6,5)

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 670. On metalepsis in Achilles Tatius see also Whitmarsh 2011, 85.

¹²⁹ Cf. Dubel 2001. Relevant to this is also Kauffman 2014, which, however, came out too late to be included here.

¹³⁰ *Mutatis mutandis*, the actions described by Clitophon are similar to those described by Aegialeus in Xenophon's *Ephesiaca* 5,1.

The first lesson about love and vision is given to him in 1,9 by his cousin Clinias, whose whole speech is filled with Platonic wisdom, in particular with reference to *Phaedrus*.¹³¹ In this dialogue, starting from paragraph 249, Socrates analyses how the vision of beauty on earth affects the soul by virtue of the recollection of the true beauty contemplated by the soul in the *hyperuranium*. Socrates describes this process in terms of madness (μανία), consternation and out-of-body experience (ἐκπλήττονται καὶ οὐκέτ' ἐν αὐτῶν γίγνονται, 250 a), and bewilderment of senses (τὸ μὴ ἱκανῶς διαισθάνεσθαι, 250 a). So far all these sensations can be well attributed to Clitophon's behaviour. Socrates goes on by focusing on sight, the sharpest among the senses, and saying that the beauty of a godlike face flows through the eyes (τοῦ κάλλους τὴν ἀπορροὴν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων, 251 b).¹³² The same concept is repeated in 255 c, shortly before Socrates says that, to the lover, the beloved one acts like a mirror where he can see himself (ὡςπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ἐν τῷ ἐρῶντι ἑαυτὸν ὁρῶν, 255 d). In trying to console Clitophon for his pains, Clinias explains to him how lucky he is in being able to see his beloved:

οὐκ οἶδας οἷόν ἐστιν ἐρωμένη βλεπομένη· μείζονα τῶν ἔργων ἔχει τὴν ἡδονήν. ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντανακλώμενοι ἀπομάττουσιν ὡς ἐν κατόπτρῳ τῶν σωμάτων τὰ εἶδωλα· ἡ δὲ τοῦ κάλλους ἀπορροή, δι' αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν καταρρέουσα, ἔχει τινὰ μίξιν ἐν ἀποστάσει· καὶ ὀλίγον ἐστὶ τῆς τῶν σωμάτων μίξεως· καινὴ γάρ ἐστὶ σωμάτων συμπλοκή.

You do not understand the value of the sight of the beloved: it yields more pleasure than the act itself. You see, when two pairs of eyes reflect in each other, they forge images of each other's body, as in a mirror. The effluxion of beauty floods down through the eyes to the soul, and effects a kind of union without contact. It is a bodily union in miniature, a new kind of bodily fusion.
(1,9,4)

This analysis of the connection between vision and love seems to owe much to Socrates' speech, both in the concepts expressed and in the words used. Clitophon is being given some rudiments of love education following Plato's tracks, and it is therefore only natural that his future perception of what he sees will be influenced by his cousin's teachings, and the garden appears to be a manifest example of this.

¹³¹ On this see Morales 2004, 50-60; on the *Phaedran* setting see Maeder 1991, 13-6, Martin 2002, and Ní Mheallaigh 2007; on another use of Plato in the novels see Repath 2007. Aside from 1,9, the *Phaedrus* is recalled in some passages of the first book, starting from the choice of the most adapt natural setting in order to favour the speech (cf. *Phaedrus*, 230 b), to the description of the death of Charicles by a horse and the name itself of Leucippe: white horse (Morales 2004, 66 and Repath 2007, 74, n. 82), both of which seem to represent Socrates' myth of the soul as a winged chariot pulled by two horses, one good and the other bad (cf. *Phaedrus*, 246 a-b).

¹³² Plato's 'τοῦ κάλλους τὴν ἀπορροὴν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων' seem to be echoed quite closely by Clinias' 'ἡ δὲ τοῦ κάλλους ἀπορροή, δι' αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν καταρρέουσα'. In Plato the flow of beauty has an effect on the soul: the stream sprinkles and heats the channels that facilitate the growth of the wings of the soul (*Phaedrus*, 251 d-e).

Almost following Clinias' words, the description of the garden starts with a remark concerning the eyes and pleasure (μέγα τι χρῆμα πρὸς ὀφθαλμῶν ἡδονήν, 1,15,1). What Clinias describes as μίξις and συμπλοκή with reference to the bodies is everywhere to be seen in the intertwinement of the plants (cf. ἔθαλλον οἱ κλάδοι, συνέπιπτον ἀλλήλοις ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλον· γείτονες αἱ τῶν πετάλων περιπλοκαί, τῶν φύλλων περιβολαί, τῶν καρπῶν συμπλοκαί. τοσαύτη τις ἦν ὁμιλία τῶν φυτῶν, 1,15,2). Also the metaphor of the mirror taken from Socrates is not absent from the garden (cf. τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ τῶν ἀνθέων ἦν κάτοπτρον, 1,15,6). Finally, the idea of flowing (ἀπορροή; καταρρέουσα) can be represented by the spring of water (cf. ἐν μέσοις δὲ τοῖς ἀνθεσι πηγὴ ἀνέβλυζε καὶ περιεγέγραπτο τετράγωνος χαράδρα χειροποίητος τῷ ρεύματι, 1,15,6).¹³³ At this point it is reasonable to ask ourselves whether Clitophon's description moves from an objective or rather a biased observation. His is the point of view of the man possessed by love, whose senses have been strongly upset and who has only learnt but the basics of how to look at his beloved one. The garden appears as erotic because Clitophon is looking at it with erotic eyes,¹³⁴ and the only thing that is left for him to do when he turns his eyes to Leucippe is to transfer on her the visual experience just gained, hence the comparison with the garden in the attempt to capture Leucippe's figure (τὴν μορφήν ἐπαφῆκέ μου τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, 1,19,2).¹³⁵ Had Clinias not influenced his mind with speeches on love, then Clitophon's perception of the garden might perhaps have been different.¹³⁶ If so, what is then the real appearance of Clitophon's garden? We do not know, or, rather, we are not supposed to know, as can be inferred by the following passage:

τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ τῶν ἀνθέων ἦν κάτοπτρον, ὡς δοκεῖν τὸ ἄλλος εἶναι διπλοῦν, τὸ μὲν τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ δὲ τῆς σκιᾶς.

The water served as a mirror for the flowers, so that there seemed to be a double grove, one of truth and one of shadow.
(1,15,6)

¹³³ In *Phaedrus* 251 c, Socrates explains the etymology of the word 'desire', ἵμερος, as a derivation from 'sending' (ἰέναι), 'particles' (μέρη), and 'flowing' (ρέειν). In 255 c he recalls the same idea, describing the affection for the lover as 'ἡ τοῦ ρεύματος ἐκείνου πηγὴ, ὃν ἵμερον Ζεὺς ... ὠνόμασε', 'the spring of that stream which Zeus called desire'. In this sense it is interesting to notice that Achilles Tatius uses πηγὴ, only in the garden of Clitophon and not in that of Europa (where Clitophon says: ὕδωρ κατὰ μέσον ἔρρει τοῦ λειμῶνος, 1,5), as if Clitophon were reacting directly to Platonic stimuli instilled by Clinias (but not the primary narrator, who has not heard Clinias' speech).

¹³⁴ The primary narrator, too, is, by his own definition, *erōtikos* (1,2,1).

¹³⁵ Clitophon reapplies the same mental process shortly after, when, after having heard the praise of the rose, he thinks he sees the rose leaving its μορφή on the girl's lips: 'ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδόκουν τὸ ῥόδον ἐπὶ τῶν χειλέων αὐτῆς ὄραν, ὡς εἴ τις τῆς κάλυκος τὸ περιφερὲς εἰς τὴν τοῦ στόματος ἔκλεισε μορφήν' 'I thought I could spy the rose on her lips, as if someone had enclosed the outline of the calyx within the shape of her mouth' (2,1).

¹³⁶ At the beginning of chapter 19 Clitophon gives another example of his very partial interpretation when he assumes that Leucippe is listening to him with pleasure (ἡ δὲ ὑπεσήμενεν οὐκ ἀηδῶς ἀκούειν, 'she seemed to be signalling that the experience was not without a certain pleasure').

Far from leading towards its solution, these words are the author's clue to the existence of a mystery. The water naturally reflects like a mirror the objects that surround it, but this mirror also suggests the possibility of an alternative to truth and raises the doubt whether what we are witnessing is in fact reality or appearance. Ultimately, two groves can be seen, and two are the gardens that are described in the first book. The first one of these is a painted one, and it is recalled in the water's mirror not only because of its contents (Europa's garden being similar to Clitophon's), but also because of its form, since the surface of the water provides the same bidimensional representation as the painting. Thus, the description of the painting of Europa frames the entirety of Book One, introducing Clitophon's narration without ever entirely leaving it.

3.3.2. Andromeda and Prometheus¹³⁷

At the beginning of Book Three of Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*, the protagonists survive a shipwreck and arrive on the coast at Pelusium, where they go to the temple to express gratitude for their safety and ask for a response regarding their friends lost in the storm. They visit the inner chamber of the temple, where the statue of Zeus Casius is kept:

Ἔστι δὲ ἐν τῷ Πηλουσίῳ Διὸς ἱερὸν ἄγαλμα Κασίου. τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμα νεανίσκος, Ἀπόλλωνι μᾶλλον εἰκῶς· οὕτω γὰρ ἡλικίας εἶχε. προβέβληται δὲ τὴν χεῖρα καὶ ἔχει ῥοιᾶν ἐπ' αὐτῇ· τῆς δὲ ῥοιᾶς ὁ λόγος μυστικός.

There is in Pelusium a temple dedicated to Zeus Casios. The cult statue is of a boy, looking rather like Apollo because of his similar age. His hand is stretched out and bears a pomegranate (the pomegranate has a mystic meaning).
(3.6.1)

Interest has been raised by the fact that, in contrast to the length and accuracy of the descriptions of other works of art (not only the paintings in 1,1, here, and 5,3, but also the crystal cup in 2,3 and the jewels in 2,11), the description of the statue of Zeus Casios is striking for its concision and vagueness. To begin with, Clitophon seems to be less than certain about the identification of the statue: the statue is of Zeus, but it represents a boy, and he looks like Apollo. Second, the intriguing presence of the pomegranate and of the mystical tale attached to it leaves the readers empty-handed. Not only is this the only known reference to a work of art in which Zeus is holding this fruit,¹³⁸ but also the hope that an explanation for this oddity will come from the *λόγος μυστικός* is soon

¹³⁷ A version of this section has already been published (D'Alconzo 2014).

¹³⁸ See M. Tiverios in LIMC s.v. Zeus, no. 164 and commentary.

disappointed, for the mystical tale will never be told. This fact has reasonably led to the suspicion that there could be a hidden meaning behind the novelist's words. Anderson has underlined that the pomegranate symbolises death and rebirth, which is particularly fitting if we consider that the main event in Book Three will be the sacrifice and resurrection of Leucippe.

Artemidorus (I.15) associates the pomegranate in dreams with τὸν ἐν Ἐλευσίνι λόγον: (as in Pesephone's case) it symbolises slavery and subjection: Leucippe is certainly captured almost immediately by pirates. One might reasonably argue that it would also symbolise *Scheintod*, since Persephone comes back to life.¹³⁹

Moreover, the pomegranate could refer to a specific detail involved in Leucippe's *Scheintod*: the use of a sheep's skin filled with animal's entrails and blood as the fake belly in the sacrifice. Anderson mentions a passage in John Chrysostom's homily against Vainglory (56 ff.), where vainglory is compared to the deceiving nature of the pomegranate: 'on the outside it is a ripe fruit, but when burst the deceptive inside disintegrates into dust and ashes.' According to Anderson, then, 'the fake, collapsible, decaying fruit anticipates the sheep's-pouch trompe-l'oeil.'¹⁴⁰ The λόγος μυστικός is therefore not profound nor sacral, and the only mystical thing will in fact be Leucippe's belly, referred to twice in the same paragraph as 'τῆς γαστρὸς τὰ μυστήρια' and 'τροφῶν καινὰ μυστήρια' (3,16). It is a trick played by Menelaus on the band of robbers, and, ultimately, a rick played by the author on the readers through the statue of Zeus Casios.

In her effort to explain the foreshadowing and at the same time misleading function of the paintings, Bartsch takes Anderson's interpretation a step further. In her opinion, the double pairing of Andromeda and Prometheus, which anticipates Leucippe's sacrifice and disembowelment, tells only half of the truth.¹⁴¹ The other half, that is the fact that Leucippe is only apparently dead, catches the readers by surprise, wondering whether they were given any clue that could have suggested this turn of events. The pomegranate is that clue, in its representation of the difference between reality and appearance:

The ecphrasis of the statue, coming immediately before that of the paintings, in effect tells the readers how to interpret the descriptions of Andromeda and Prometheus.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Anderson 1979, 517.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 518.

¹⁴¹ Bartsch 1989, 55-63. On the connections between the elements in the painting see also Friedländer 1912, 49 and Harlan 1965, 107.

¹⁴² Bartsch 1989, 62.

This interpretation is surely coherent with the events that follow, and with Achilles Tatius' evident strategy of leaving clues for the forthcoming narrative throughout the whole novel. However, one might still wonder how probable it is for the readers to be not only able to remember a minor detail such as the pomegranate, but also to interpret it as univocally as Bartsch thinks Achilles Tatius expected them to do. It is true that, if there is any symbolism to be seen behind the pomegranate, the ancient reader would be the most likely to understand it, perhaps to the point of noticing the connection with the sheep's-pouch. Nevertheless, foreseeing that Leucippe will not die, or, afterwards, realising that she did not, because a pomegranate was mentioned, seems hardly to be within the reader's reach. Hence Bartsch's admission that 'it is unlikely that they will see this the first time they read the work through.'¹⁴³

Clitophon himself, for a start, does not seem to be concerned at all, providing us with the perfect paradigm of what at the moment is also happening to the readers. Without manifesting even little surprise for the most unusual iconography, he proceeds with the tour of the temple, reaching the *opisthodomos* where the double painting is. After the cursory treatment of the statue of Zeus Casius, the double painting of Andromeda and Prometheus is given particular attention:

Κατὰ δὲ τὸν ὀπισθόδομον ὀρώμεν εἰκόνα διπλῆν. καὶ ὁ γραφεὺς ἐγγέγραπτο. Εὐάνθησ μὲν ὁ γραφεὺς· ἡ δὲ εἰκὼν Ἀνδρομέδα καὶ Προμηθεύς, δεσμῶται μὲν ἄμφω (διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ αὐτούς, οἶμαι, εἰς ἓν συνήγαγεν ὁ ζωγράφος)· ἀδελφαὶ δὲ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην τύχην αἰ γραφαί. (4.) πέτραι μὲν ἄμφοῖν τὸ δεσμωτήριον, θῆρες δὲ κατ' ἄμφοῖν οἱ δῆμιοι, τῶ μὲν ἐξ ἀέρος, τῇ δὲ ἐκ θαλάττης· ἐπίκουροι δὲ αὐτοῖς Ἀργεῖοι δύο συγγενεῖς, τῶ μὲν Ἡρακλῆς, τῇ δὲ Περσεύς, ὁ μὲν τοξεύων τὸν ὄρνιν τοῦ Διός, ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ κῆτος τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος ἀθλῶν. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν ἰδρυταὶ τοξαζόμενος ἐν γῆ, ὁ δὲ ἐξ ἀέρος κρέματα τῶ πτερωῶ. 3.7. Ὀρώρκεται μὲν οὖν εἰς τὸ μέτρον τῆς κόρης ἢ πέτρα· θέλει δὲ τὸ ὄρυγμα λέγειν ὅτι μὴ τις αὐτὸ πεποίηκε χεῖρ, ἀλλ' ἔστιν αὐτόχθον· ἐτράχυνε γὰρ τοῦ λίθου τὸν κόλπον ὁ γραφεὺς, ὡς ἔτεκεν αὐτὸν ἡ γῆ. (2.) ἡ δὲ ἐνίδρυται τῇ σκέπη· καὶ ἔοικε τὸ θέαμα, εἰ μὲν εἰς τὸ κάλλος ἀπίδοις, ἀγάλματι καινῶ, εἰ δὲ εἰς τὰ δεσμὰ καὶ τὸ κῆτος, αὐτοσχεδίῳ τάφῳ. ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν προσώπων αὐτῆς κάλλος κεκέρασται καὶ δέος· (3.) ἐν μὲν γὰρ ταῖς παρειαῖς τὸ δέος κάθηται, ἐκ δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀνθεὶ τὸ κάλλος. ἀλλ' οὔτε τῶν παρείων τὸ ὠχρὸν τέλεον ἀφοίνικτον ἦν, ἡρέμα δὲ τῶ ἐρεύθει βέβαπται, οὔτε τὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀνθος ἔστιν ἀμέριμνον, ἀλλ' ἔοικε τοῖς ἄρτι μαραινόμενοις ἴοις· οὕτως αὐτὴν ἐκόσμησεν ὁ ζωγράφος εὐμόρφῳ φόβῳ. (4.) τὰς δὲ χεῖρας εἰς τὴν πέτραν ἐξεπέτασεν, ἄγχει δὲ ἄνω δεσμὸς ἐκατέραν συνάπτων τῇ πέτρᾳ· οἱ καρποὶ δὲ ὡσπερ ἀμπέλου βότρυες κρέμανται. καὶ αἰ μὲν ὠλέναι τῆς κόρης ἄκρατον ἔχουσαι τὸ λευκὸν εἰς τὸ πελιδνὸν μετέβαλλον, καὶ εἰκόσασιν ἀποθνήσκουσι οἱ δάκτυλοι. (5.) δέδεταί μὲν οὕτω τὸν θάνατον ἐκδεχομένη· ἔστηκε δὲ νυμφικῶς ἐστολισμένη, ὡσπερ Ἀιδωνεὶ νύμφη κεκοσμημένη. ποδήρης χιτῶν, λευκὸς ὁ χιτῶν· τὸ ὕφασμα λεπτὸν, ἀραχνίων εἰκόσος πλοκῆ, οὐ κατὰ τὴν τῶν προβατείων τριχῶν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν τῶν ἐρίων τῶν πτηνῶν, οἷον ἀπὸ δένδρων ἔλκουσαι νήματα γυναῖκες ὑφαίνουσαι Ἰνδαί. (6.) τὸ δὲ κῆτος ἀντιπρόσωπον τῆς κόρης κάτωθεν ἀναβαῖνον ἀνοίγει τὴν θάλασσαν· καὶ τὸ μὲν πολὺ τοῦ σώματος περιβέβληται τῶ κύματι, μόνη δὲ τῇ κεφαλῇ τὴν θάλατταν ἀποδύεται. ὑπὸ δὲ τὴν ἄλμην τοῦ κύματος ἢ τῶν νώτων ἐγγέγραπτο φαινομένη σκιά, τὰ τῶν φολίδων ἐπάρματα, τὰ τῶν αὐχένων κυρτώματα, ἢ λοφία τῶν ἀκανθῶν, οἱ τῆς οὐράς ἐλιγμοί. (7.) γένυς πολλὴ καὶ μακρὰ· ἀνέωκτο δὲ πᾶσα μέχρι τῆς τῶν

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 62.

ᾧμων συμβολῆς, καὶ εὐθύς ἡ γαστήρ. μεταξύ δὲ τοῦ κήτους καὶ τῆς κόρης ὁ Περσεὺς ἐγγράπτο καταβαίνων ἐξ ἀέρος· καταβαίνει δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ θηρίον γυμνὸς τὸ πᾶν· χλαμὺς ἀμφὶ τοῖς ᾧμοις μόνον καὶ πέδιλον περὶ τῶ πόδε πλησίον τοῦ πτεροῦ. πῖλος δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν καλύπτει· ὁ πῖλος δὲ ὑψηλότερο τὴν Αἴδος κυνέην. τῇ λαιᾷ τὴν τῆς Γοργούης κεφαλὴν κρατεῖ καὶ προβέβληται δίκην ἀσπίδος. ἡ δὲ ἐστὶ φοβερὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς χρώμασι· (8.) τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξεπέτασεν, ἔφριξε τὰς τρίχας τῶν κροτάφων, ἤγειρε τοὺς δράκοντας· οὕτως ἀπειλεῖ καὶ τῇ γραφῇ. ὄπλον μὲν τοῦτο τῇ λαιᾷ· ὠπλισται δὲ καὶ τὴν δεξιὰν διφυεῖ σιδήρῳ εἰς δρέπανον καὶ ξίφος ἐσχισμένῳ. (9.) ἄρχεται μὲν γὰρ ἡ κώπη κάτωθεν ἀμφοῖν ἐκ μιᾶς, καὶ ἐστὶν ἐφ' ἡμισυ τοῦ σιδήρου ξίφος, ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ἀπορραγὲν τὸ μὲν ὀξύνεται, τὸ δὲ ἐπικάμπτεται. καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀπώξυμμένον μένει ξίφος, ὡς ἦρξαστο, τὸ δὲ καμπτόμενον δρέπανον γίνεται, ἵνα μιᾷ πληγῇ τὸ μὲν ἐρείδῃ τὴν σφαγὴν, τὸ δὲ κρατῇ τὴν τομὴν. τὸ μὲν τῆς Ἀνδρομέδας δράμα τοῦτο. 3.8. Ἐξῆς δὲ τὸ τοῦ Προμηθέως ἐγεγόνει. δέδεταί μὲν ὁ Προμηθεὺς σιδήρῳ καὶ πέτρᾳ, ὠπλισται δὲ Ἡρακλῆς τόξῳ καὶ δόρατι. ὄρνις ἐς τὴν τοῦ Προμηθέως γαστέρα τρυφᾷ· ἔστηκε γὰρ αὐτὴν ἀνοίγων, ἤδη μὲν ἀνεωγμένην, (2.) ἀλλὰ τὸ ράμφος ἐς τὸ ὄρυγμα κεῖται, καὶ ἔοικεν ἐπορύττειν τὸ τραῦμα καὶ ζητεῖν τὸ ἦπαρ· τὸ δὲ ἐκφαίνεται τοσοῦτον, ὅσον ἠνέωξεν ὁ γραφεὺς τὸ διόρυγμα τοῦ τραύματος· ἐρείδει τῷ μηρῷ τῷ τοῦ Προμηθέως τὰς τῶν οὐχῶν ἀκμάς. (3.) ὁ δὲ ἀλγῶν πάντῃ συνέσταλται καὶ τὴν πλευρὰν συνέσπασται καὶ τὸν μηρὸν ἐγείρει καθ' αὐτοῦ· εἰς γὰρ τὸ ἦπαρ συνάγει τὸν ὄρνιν· ὁ δὲ ἕτερος αὐτῷ τοῖν ποδοῖν τὸν σπασμὸν ὀρθιον ἀντιτείνει κάτω καὶ εἰς τοὺς δακτύλους ἀποξύνεται. (4.) τὸ δὲ ἄλλο σχῆμα δείκνυσι τὸν πόνον· κεκύρτωται τὰς ὀφρῦς, συνέσταλται τὸ χεῖλος, φαίνει τοὺς ὀδόντας. ἠλέησας ἂν ὡς ἀλγοῦσαν τὴν γραφὴν. (5.) ἀναφέρει δὲ λυπούμενον Ἡρακλῆς· ἔστηκε γὰρ τοξεύων τοῦ Προμηθέως τὸν δῆμιον· ἐνήρμοσται τῷ τόξῳ βέλος, τῇ λαιᾷ προβέβληται τὸ κέρασ ὠθῶν, ἐπὶ μαζὸν ἔλκει τὴν δεξιὰν, ἔλκων τὸ νεῦρον κεκύρτωται κατόπιν τὸν ἀγκῶνα. (6.) πάντα οὖν ὁμοῦ πτύσσεται, τὸ τόξον, τὸ νεῦρον, τὸ βέλος. συνάγεται μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ νεύρου τὸ τόξον, διπλοῦται δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς χειρὸς τὸ νεῦρον, κλίνεται δὲ ἐπὶ μαζὸν ἡ χεῖρ. (7.) ὁ δὲ Προμηθεὺς μεστός ἐστὶν ἐλπίδος ἅμα καὶ φόβου· πῆ μὲν γὰρ εἰς τὸ ἔλκος, πῆ δὲ εἰς τὸν Ἡρακλέα βλέπει, καὶ θέλει μὲν αὐτὸν ὅλοις τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἰδεῖν, ἔλκει δὲ τὸ ἡμισυ τοῦ βλέμματος ὁ πόνος.

In the inner chamber of the temple we saw a painting with two levels, signed by the artist, Evanthes. The painting represented Andromeda and Prometheus, both chained. This was the reason, I suppose, why the artist had combined the two subjects onto one canvas, but the situations depicted by the pictures were also akin in other respects: (4.) each victim had a rock as a prison; each had a beast as a torturer (his coming from the air, her's from the sea); their rescuers were both Argives, and related to each other, Heracles in the one case (who shot the bird sent by Zeus), Perseus in the other (who contended with the sea-monster sent by Poseidon). Heracles, though, was firmly planted on the ground when he shot, while Perseus was suspended by wings in the air.

3.7. The rock was hollowed out enough to fit the maiden. This cleft seemed to say: 'No human hand made me: this painting is the spontaneous creation of nature!' For the artist had roughened the pleats of the stone, just as it is when the earth has given birth to it. (2.) She was crouched in this shelter: the spectacle resembled a novel kind of graven image if you focused on her beauty, or an impromptu grave if you focused on the chains and the monster. In her face were combined beauty and fear: (3.) the fear resided in her cheeks, while the beauty bloomed from her eyes. Yet her pallid cheeks were not altogether without colour, tinged as they were with a gentle blushing; nor were her florid eyes without anxiety, resembling as they did violets in the first stage of wilting. Such was the comely fear with which the artist had embellished her. (4.) Her hands were spread out over the rock, each fastened to it by a clamp that shackled them from above, and dangling like clusters of grapes from the wrist. The pure white of the girl's arms shaded into a discoloured bruising: her fingers looked as if they were dead. (5.) Thus was she bound, awaiting death. She stood there dressed in bridal clothes, done up as if she were a bride for Hades. Her robe was full-length, her robe was white: the weft was delicate like a spider's web, woven in the style not of sheepswool but of the moths' wool that Indian women tease down from the trees and weave into strands. (6.) The monster rose up

from below to face the girl, cleaving the sea in two: most of its body was shrouded in waves, and only its head stood clear of the sea. Beneath the briny wave, the outline of its shadowy back was drawn so as to be visible: its protuberant scales, its sinuous neck, its spinous crest, its twisting tail. (7.) Its jaws were enormous and capacious, an all-encompassing hole reaching down to a point where the shoulders met; and at that point the belly immediately took over.

In the mid-point between the monster and the maiden was drawn Perseus, descending from the air. He was entirely naked as he descended to do battle with the beast, except for a mantle around his shoulders and winged sandals on his feet. His head was protected by a cap, which signified the helmet of Hades. In his left hand he wielded the Gorgon's head, which he held out like a shield. Even when represented by pigments, she was terrifying: (8.) her eyes were gaping and her hair bristling from her temples, the serpents erect. Even in a painting this was a threatening sight. This, then, was the weapon in his left hand. In his right hand he was armed with a double weapon, split between a sickle and a sword; (9.) thereupon it diverged into two, the one part sharpening in a line, the other curving. The part that sharpened remained a sword as before, while the part that curved became a sickle, so that with a single blow the one blade could drive home the lethal stab and the other could complete the decapitation. This was how the scene was set for Andromeda.

3.8. Next to it was the Promethean scene. Prometheus was bound by both iron and stone, while Heracles was armed with both bow and spear. A bird was feasting on Prometheus' belly. It stood there prising it apart: (2.) the belly had already been prised apart, but the bird's beak was buried in the trench, seemingly digging further into the gash in search for the liver. The latter was just visible, inasmuch as the artist had sundered the trench of the wound. The tips of the bird's claws were sunk into Prometheus' thigh. (3.) Prometheus himself was hunched in agony at this, one side of his body doubled up as he raised his thigh towards it; in this way, he only brought the bird closer to his liver. The other leg had been stretched out downwards in the opposite direction with a jerk, in a straight line that narrowed towards the toes. (4.) The rest of his posture also indicated his pain: his eyebrows were contracted and his lips pursed, revealing his teeth. A pitiable spectacle, as though the very painting were suffering.

(5.) Heracles, though, was in the process of releasing him from his woes: he stood there in the act of shooting Prometheus' torturer, arrow fitted to the bow, the handle extended in his left hand as he thrust it forwards, right hand drawn back to his breast, his elbow flexed behind as he drew back the string. (6.) All the details –bow, string, and arrow–were alike poised in contracted tension: the stringing of the bow had arched it, the hand had doubled up the string, and the hand was bent in against the breast. (7.) Prometheus could barely contain his simultaneous hope and fear. He was gazing both at the wound and at Heracles: he wanted to devote his full attention to the latter, but half of his gaze was distracted by the pain.

(3,6-8)

Among the paintings described in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*, the paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus constitute a unique case for two main reasons. To begin with, in spite of the fact that the description concerns not only one but two separate subjects,¹⁴⁴ the paintings are not referred to as 'two paintings', but as one 'double painting' (εἰκόνα διπλήν). Second, the pictures are ascribed to a painter, namely Evanthes, a fact that finds no parallel in the rest of the novel. These two facts cannot be ignored, for they suggest not only that real works of art might have stood behind Achilles Tatius' *ekphrasis*, but also that what connects them to the narration are not just parallel contents, but the very nature of the works of art themselves.

¹⁴⁴ Unlike the painting of Europa and that of Philomela and Procne (5,3).

For the first and last time in this novel, and in the Greek novels in general, the name of the artist is mentioned.¹⁴⁵ Gaselee translates ‘signed by the artist’,¹⁴⁶ but it is difficult to say whether what Clitophon sees is the actual signature of the painter, for the Greek text literally says ‘the painter had been written’ (ὁ γραφεὺς ἐγγέγραπτο), which might simply indicate that someone else had tagged the painting with the name Evanthes. It is even more difficult to say whether Evanthes is a product of Achilles Tatius’ fiction or a painter who actually existed: the latter would shed an interesting light on the relationship of the contents of his novel with real artworks. Things are, of course, complicated by the fact that this is the only time a painter named Evanthes is mentioned. Not much attention has been paid by scholars to this question. Considering that the *hapax legomenon* of the name of the painter Evanthes occurs in a work of fiction, the likelihood of him being fictitious is perhaps stronger than the will to discover if he is real. Thus, in the absence of other references, Evanthes has been put aside. Gaselee does not take the problem into consideration. Vilborg and Whitmarsh agree that the name is fictitious.¹⁴⁷ Even so, and supposing that Achilles Tatius decided to invent Evanthes in order to confer authority upon the double painting, there is no reason why he should not have done the same with the other paintings in the novel.

On the other hand, art historians and archaeologists give him a very different treatment. Since they are not concerned about fiction they have no reason to doubt Achilles Tatius’ account, and since much of ancient painting is missing they are happy to welcome his descriptions as safe substitutes for lost testimonies. In a famous book published in 1929, Mary Swindler introduces Evanthes maintaining that he was ‘the last important artist connected with Alexandria who can be more than a name to us’.¹⁴⁸ She still shows reservations about the genuineness of the double painting,¹⁴⁹ but does not hesitate to consider Evanthes a real person: to her, he is a recognised artist who can even be connected to a specific place, Alexandria. Considering the amount of information we are given about him (i.e. his name), this seems to be an overstatement. Nevertheless, Evanthes’ paintings are included among extant works of art in the major encyclopaedic sources for ancient iconography.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ On the Latin front there is the case of the art gallery in Petronius’ *Satyrica* 83, where Zeuxis, Protogenes and Apelles are mentioned, but Encolpius’ spouting of the biggest names of Greek painting is rather different from Clitophon’s observation of the signature on the paintings in Pelusium. On this episode see Elsner 1993, who especially highlights the wordplays on the painters’ names, a signal of Encolpius’ ridiculous approach to art, in fact a projection of his own disappointed state of mind.

¹⁴⁶ Followed by Whitmarsh 2001.

¹⁴⁷ Vilborg 1962, 69, Whitmarsh 2001, 154. Surprisingly, Evanthes is not even mentioned in Bartsch 1989.

¹⁴⁸ Swindler 1929, 307. As to why he should be connected with Alexandria and not Pelusium, where his painting is said to be, the reason might be that Achilles Tatius, who describes it, is said to be from Alexandria, which was not too far from Pelusium.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: ‘The paintings may even be fictions of Achilles Tatius, but as he came from Alexandria, they may have existed, though they were not certainly painted in his time’. The logic of this statement is dubious.

¹⁵⁰ See Rocchetti 1958, 362 and Schauenberg 1981, 778, n. 24.

Early scholarship was much more worried than we are now about the actual existence of paintings described in ancient art-related prose fiction. To the modern eye, late 1800 and early 1900 studies seem to have used these texts as some sort of treasure maps in their hunt for the true origin of works of art, sometimes forgetting that telling the truth-like is not the same as telling the truth. With time came the opinion that such a debate was an end in itself, that the stress in 'art-related prose fiction' should be on 'fiction' rather than on 'art', and that one could not measure two authors like Philostratus and Pausanias with the same scale. Thus came a tendency to put as little trust as possible on the alleged clues in the text and focus not on the possible links with an unverifiable outside reality but with the only reality available to us, that of the text itself.¹⁵¹ The main question to answer became 'why?' rather than 'where from?', with focus on function and intended effect on the readers. In the world of the ancient novels this has led to excellent studies, such as Bartsch's, that have widened our perception of the author's narrative strategy and added a lot to our understanding and enjoyment of the texts. As for the subordinate question of the origin of the works of art described and how they might have got into the mind of the author, the common answer remained the one of old: the schools of rhetoric, the *mare magnum*, in fact little navigated, whence the novelists are supposed to have drawn more or less everything that cannot be otherwise accounted for. Besides, the question lost importance in view of the consideration that the abundance of details of the description should not point to the conclusion that the object was real, but that it was the author's intention to make it appear so.

It is a limitation to see these two approaches as mutually exclusive. The information gained from comparing the description of a painting with the attested ancient iconography can provide insight into the author's choice of that particular piece for that particular part of his work, and therefore into its intended function. This methodology is no different from the one applied in studies on intertextuality, which result both in a deeper understanding of the text at stake through the identification and contextualisation of the sources of its allusions, and in a deeper understanding of the author through the observation of the literary implements that were available to him in the composition of his work, and thus his *modus operandi*. However, just as textual similarities must be sifted out carefully in order to differentiate between cases of intertextuality and less relevant lexical coincidences, so should descriptions of works of art not all be put in the same basket. Indeed, we cannot measure Pausanias and Philostratus with the same scale, but the validity of this principle should be extended to other authors, and the fact that the pictures in the *Imagines* are fictional, as it is now widely believed, should not lead to the a priori assumption that the same must be said about the paintings in Achilles Tatius, because they are two different authors who aim for different things.

¹⁵¹ Compare for example Lehmann-Hartleben 1941 and Bryson 1994 for a discussion related to Philostratus.

What is more, cautious differentiation needs to be applied even within the work of a single author, especially if that author happens to be Achilles Tatius. In *Leucippe and Clitophon* there are three descriptions of paintings, which is not the same as saying that the author repeats the exact same thing thrice. With regards to this, let us here just highlight a few aspects that should not be disregarded: the paintings belong to three different types;¹⁵² they are described according to three different modes of narration;¹⁵³ even their common role, the proleptic function, seems to follow a different rule every time.¹⁵⁴ It should cause no surprise, then, if the answer to the question of the origin of the paintings varied in each case, and a few of these variables, the aforementioned unique fact that the paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus constitute a diptych and that they are attributed to a named painter, indicate that Achilles Tatius is not doing with these painting the same thing he did with the painting of Europa. Before we decide on the plausibility of these elements, however, let us verify the accuracy of the images described.

Iconography

The earliest representation of Andromeda and Perseus that we have dates back to the sixth century BC. It is an amphora showing a unique image of Andromeda unchained helping Perseus in the fight against the sea monster.¹⁵⁵ Later representations from the fifth century BC show the influence of the Athenian tragedians. Andromeda is chained to posts in oriental clothes, as is supposed to have happened in the lost *Andromeda* by Sophocles.¹⁵⁶ The scene depicted can take place before, during, or after the enchainment. Ethiopian slaves can also be present, carrying Andromeda, fastening her to the posts, or carrying gifts. Perseus is represented wearing a mantle that either covers his body or shows him naked beneath, and carrying some or all of his typical items: the winged helmet, the winged sandals (when the wings are not directly attached to his ankles), and the sickle. Regarding his weapons, the sickle is constantly present and almost always held in his right hand, whereas the left hand is sometimes holding one or two spears, or a sword. The simple sickle will later become the double sword, namely a sickle with a point. There is so far no trace of the Gorgoneion, the head

¹⁵² The painting of Europa is described as one painting representing one scene; the paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus are joined in a diptych; the painting of Philomela and Procne seems to be one painting including different scenes.

¹⁵³ The painting of Europa is described by the primary narrator, the painting of Andromeda and Prometheus by Clitophon as a narrator, and the painting of Philomela and Procne by Clitophon, perhaps, as a character. Consequently, the speed of the narration is zero in the first two cases, whilst it is simply slowed down in the third one. More will be said on the last case.

¹⁵⁴ Bartsch 1989, 62, notices that ‘the descriptions of the painting of Europa, the first picture described, and of Philomela, the last, play similar tricks [to the paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus] upon the expectations aroused by the interpretative act, yet in a completely different way.’

¹⁵⁵ *LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, n. 1.

¹⁵⁶ See Schauenberg 1981, 787, and Trendall – Webster 1971, 63, 79.

of Medusa. The hero is either contemplating (or perhaps talking to) Andromeda, or talking to Cepheus, Andromeda's father, presumably to arrange the wedding in return for the deed. Starting from the fourth century the arched entrance of a grotto becomes an alternative for the posts, a fact that has been connected with an innovation in Euripides' *Andromeda*, where the heroine was chained to a grotto or a rocky cliff from the beginning of the play. Also, Andromeda's oriental clothes give way to white (sometimes transparent) garments, either covering or revealing parts (sometimes all) of her body.

In the second half of the fourth century BC the subject is particularly popular in southern Italy, especially Apulia, where we find a consistent production of vases representing Andromeda and Perseus. It must be said that it is difficult to arrange the examples in precise categories that account at the same time for the moment in the story, the position of the characters, the clothes and the objects displayed. Details may vary from vase to vase, but in general terms it is possible to say that in the course of time some elements became neglected (the oriental robes, the posts, the alternative weapons), whilst others became popular (white clothes for Andromeda, the grotto, Perseus' pointed sickle). The fight between the hero and the sea monster is given more attention, and Perseus is depicted in the act of slaying the beast, sometimes grasping its neck with his left hand. Surprisingly, the Gorgoneion did not become a regular part of Perseus' equipment until late. A bag, possibly containing the Gorgoneion, can be noticed in the sixth-century amphora, but the head itself of Medusa is nowhere to be seen until some Etruscan urns of the middle of the second century BC, before becoming a constant in the wall paintings in Pompeii. There, we find a considerable number of wall paintings that cover different moments in the temporal sequence of events of the myth. We have the type with Andromeda chained to the rock, and Perseus descending from the sky, holding the pointed sickle with the right hand and the Gorgoneion with the left;¹⁵⁷ the type with Perseus on the water, fighting the sea monster;¹⁵⁸ the type with the hero helping the heroine to descend from the rocks;¹⁵⁹ the type with Andromeda finally freed, sitting with Perseus, who is holding the Gorgoneion.¹⁶⁰

Phillips connects the different types of frescoes in Pompeii to the examples found in Apulian vases, showing how the Tarentine masters of the fourth century BC were the ones who produced the main innovations in Andromeda's iconography, namely the shift from the posts to the grotto, and

¹⁵⁷ Fresco from Boscotrecase (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 32), fresco from House IX 7.16 (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 40), fresco from House VII 15.2 (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 38).

¹⁵⁸ Fresco from house in Region VI (Phillips 1968, pl. 3 fig. 4).

¹⁵⁹ Fresco from House VI 10.2 (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 67), fresco from House VII Is. occid. 15 (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 68), fresco from the House of the Dioscures (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 69).

¹⁶⁰ Fresco from the Casa dei Capitelli Colorati (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 104). Phillips 1968, 3 ff., identifies five main types.

finally to the rocky cliff. The only type that cannot be found in Apulian vases is the one with Perseus flying (fresco from House IX 7.16), for which he postulates Evanthes' painting to be the archetype. He then sees Tarentum as the only environment where the iconography of Evanthes' work could have been produced, and therefore proposes the end of the fourth century BC as the earliest possible dating for Evanthes.¹⁶¹

As a matter of fact, the elements described by Achilles Tatius fit well with the stage of Andromeda's iconography that is displayed in Pompeii. The maiden is chained to a grotto, wearing a tunic; the sea monster is coming out of the water; Perseus is descending from the sky, just before the beginning of the fight, wearing only a mantle, the winged sandals and the helmet, and carrying the pointed sickle in his right hand and the Gorgoneion in his left. If we exclude the grotto, which does not appear in the frescoes at Pompeii at all, the iconography of Andromeda displayed by Achilles Tatius' description of Evanthes' painting, and especially the figure of the flying Perseus, brings his painting undoubtedly close to the fresco.

With regard to Prometheus, Achilles Tatius' description captures once again the moment before the fight and the liberation. The eagle is digging with its beak inside the wound on Prometheus' belly, searching for the liver. Its claws are grasping Prometheus' thigh, which the Titan is lifting up, to his own harm, since this brings the bird closer to the wound. Prometheus, chained to the rock, is all contracted in a spasm of pain. This contraction is reflected in the figure of Heracles, who is stretching the bow, ready to shoot at the eagle. This image does not correspond to the Titan's early iconography (seventh and sixth centuries BC), where he is sitting, bending both legs at an acute angle and lifting his torso towards the eagle.¹⁶² Instead, it is connected with a later stage of the iconography, which, after some blank centuries during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, when the figure of Prometheus seems to have disappeared, became popular in the Roman period, starting from a sculptural group in Pergamon.¹⁶³ Here Prometheus, who was probably placed in a niche, is naked, standing, his arms lifted in the air and chained to the rock, as if he were crucified. His right leg, which the eagle is clawing, is lifted. Heracles is standing on the ground just below him, about to shoot the arrow. The same image is depicted in a fresco from Pompeii, *Casa dei Capitegli Colorati*.¹⁶⁴ A painting now lost but popular in antiquity has been supposed as the archetype for this iconography, and the choice has fallen on Evanthes' *Prometheus*.¹⁶⁵ What is interesting here is that, were this true, we would have a *terminus ante quem* for Evanthes' dating,

¹⁶¹ However, given the presence of the Gorgoneion in his painting, the earliest dating should be moved to the second century BC.

¹⁶² See Paribeni 1965, 485, and Gisler 1994, 548.

¹⁶³ Winter 1908, no. 168, 175-180, pl. 25, and fig. 168a; *LIMC* s. v. Prometheus, no. 73.

¹⁶⁴ Dawson 1944, no. 63, 110; *LIMC* s. v. Prometheus, no. 59.

¹⁶⁵ Phillips 1968, 5, affirms that 'the sculptural group is a translation of Evanthes' Prometheus and Heracles into stone.'

for the figure of Heracles in the sculptural group in Pergamon seems to be the portrait of Mithridates VI, which would allow us to place the group between the years 88-85 BC, and therefore Evanthes before the year 88 BC.¹⁶⁶

The archaeological evidence adduced so far tells us that the paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus in Achilles Tatius can both be inscribed in the iconographical history of their figures, which means that their existence might have been possible. There are, however, two problems. The first comes from the argument that they are both the archetypes of their respective image, so instead of finding an antecedent to prove the genuineness of the works of Evanthes, Evanthes has become the proof that justifies the existence of other works of art. The second problem is that they have always been considered individually.¹⁶⁷ The painting of Andromeda may link Evanthes with Tarentum and the end of the fourth century BC, and the painting of Prometheus may provide the *terminus ante quem* through the comparison with a group in Pergamon, but there is no evidence of their association.¹⁶⁸ However, if Achilles Tatius' account of the paintings is to be trusted to the point of constituting an artistic testimony, it should also be trusted in respect of the fact that the paintings had been associated by the painter himself, who considered them as two halves of the same work of art (διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ αὐτούς, οἶμαι, εἰς ἓν συνήγαγεν ὁ ζωγράφος, 'and this was the reason, I suppose, why the artist had associated the two subjects' 3,6).¹⁶⁹ Since it is the first thing we are told about the paintings, it seems odd that not much attention has been given to the fact that the two of them constituted a double painting. Almost without exception, scholars have either ignored this fact or only interpreted it as dependent upon the events to come in the plot. On this view, the two paintings were chosen simply because they represent the two aspects of the next episode, that is the sacrifice (Andromeda) and disembowelment (Prometheus) of Leucippe in 3,15.¹⁷⁰ Such a view, however sound, implies that the association of Andromeda and Prometheus in a double painting is a product of the novelist, and does not really take into consideration the possible existence of an actual double painting. A diptych, moreover, is something

¹⁶⁶ Bieber 1961, 122; Phillips 1968, 4-5.

¹⁶⁷ This seems to be the only fact on which classicists and art historians agree, for they both take for granted that at least the union of the paintings must have been a product of Achilles Tatius' invention. Mentioning Achilles Tatius in relation with the frescoes in Pompeii, Schefold talks about '*gedankliche Bildverbindung*'. See Schefold 1962, 81.

¹⁶⁸ It is interesting to notice that the same house in Pompeii, the Casa dei Capitelli Colorati, contained the fresco with Prometheus and one of the frescoes with Andromeda (belonging to the type with Perseus helping her down the rock). However, the two should not be considered specifically associated, since they were in different parts of the building.

¹⁶⁹ Winter, perhaps having this in mind, says that the decoration to which the Prometheus group in Pergamon belonged was not constituted by that piece alone, and hypothesizes that it might have included, opposite to Prometheus, a group with Andromeda, as in Evanthes' double painting. This is an example of rather naïve exploitation of the novelist's descriptions. See Winter 1908, 178.

¹⁷⁰ Bartsch 1989, 55.

unprecedented.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, in Clitophon's words there is no doubt that the paintings were meant to be together, for he even provides the reasons for their association: the chains, the rocks, the beasts, the saviours. Was, then, Achilles Tattius the first to connect Andromeda and Prometheus? If that were the case, then the fictionality of the diptych, regardless of the accuracy of the pictures, would be hard to question. If, on the other hand, that were not the case, and if there were a precedent for the association of the two figures, then pondering over such precedent as a possible source for the diptych in the novel seems a sensible approach. It is therefore worth examining both literature and art in order to see if it is possible for such a union to have occurred, and how.

Art and theatre

Greek tragedy is the only common ground for Andromeda and Prometheus in literature. With regard to Prometheus, the main reference is Aeschylus. Of the series of plays about Prometheus attributed to him only *Prometheus Bound* survives, but it seems that the scene described by Achilles Tattius could fit well with the lost *Prometheus Unbound*. Both Sophocles and Euripides wrote an *Andromeda*, the latter surviving in a large number of fragments, the former almost entirely lost. If we had an *Andromeda* and a *Prometheus* from the same author we could at least postulate an antecedent, although dim, for their association, but no tragedian known to us treated both subjects in his works.¹⁷² Still, we cannot rule out the possibility that the two subjects were performed in the course of the same festival.

Theatre played an important role in art, especially in vase painting, and southern Italy in the fourth century BC provides the perfect example of this.¹⁷³ It has been proved that by the end of the fifth century BC plays and vases were exported from Athens to southern Italy, particularly to Lucania and Apulia.¹⁷⁴ Given the popularity of theatrical festivals, the dramas were often a source of inspiration for artists. Being free from the temporal sequence of the theatre, painted vases showed illustrations rather than precise representations of the plays.¹⁷⁵ That is to say that although

¹⁷¹ Something very different from a sequence of connected paintings, the well attested product of the so-called continuous method (Wickhoff 1900, 11-17). In that case the sequence aims at telling a story by placing side by side the representations of its different moments, as seems to be the case of the paintings in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* (see Mittelstadt 1967). Here we are not dealing with narrative painting, but, as stated by Goldhill, with 'the first example in Western art history of a pair of paintings being analysed precisely as a diptych with significant links.'. See Goldhill 1995, 72.

¹⁷² Similarities between, once again, Achilles Tattius and Lucian (*Prometheus 1, Dialogi Marini 14*) on the subject of Andromeda and Prometheus will be analysed later on.

¹⁷³ On this topic see Trendall – Webster 1971, Trendall 1991, and Taplin 1993.

¹⁷⁴ The classic references on the Apulian vases are the works of A. D. Trendall. See especially Trendall – Cambitoglou 1978.

¹⁷⁵ Taplin 1993, 12 ff.

some elements in the images imply knowledge of the play, the painter was not expected to depict the play with exactitude, but was instead free to show some of the characters or scenes in the drama, and add or delete others. Still, some elements seem to reflect specific details from the plays. Half-open doors, as well as rocky arches, could in fact allude, if not point, to actual scenographic elements. The case of Andromeda in Apulian vases is emblematic in this sense. Apulian masters moved the heroine from the posts and started to place her in chains under a rocky arch in response to the innovation in Euripides' *Andromeda*.¹⁷⁶ Then the cave became a rocky cliff, as we find in Ovid and in the frescoes in Pompeii.¹⁷⁷ Achilles Tatius is the only other author who places Andromeda in a hollow, which means that Evanthes' painting is connected to the type of vases that show the grotto. This is crucial, because it is among those vases that we find the only connection between Andromeda and Prometheus that might have preceded Evanthes' diptych.

Trendall was the first to publish the description of a calyx-krater (Berlin 1969.9) representing Heracles freeing Prometheus.¹⁷⁸ The vase is Apulian, dated around the middle of the fourth century BC, supposedly a work coming from the atelier of the Darius Painter, the most prominent figure among Apulian vase painters of that period, who worked in Tarentum and to whom many Andromeda vases can also be ascribed. What distinguishes this vase from every other representation of Prometheus is that the Titan is depicted chained to a rocky arch. If we compare it with some of the examples of vases with Andromeda chained to a grotto, the similarity is plain to see.¹⁷⁹ The two figures occupy the same position, and the conclusion is that the Prometheus krater follows Andromeda's more common iconography.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the krater shows Heracles coming from the left to free the Titan, the eagle lying dead in the lower level of the vase, and other figures and deities. It does not require much effort to recognise that Prometheus is not the only character whose figure was inspired by Andromeda vases: Heracles plays the same role, and occupies the same place, as Perseus, and the eagle as the sea monster.¹⁸¹ Therefore, it can be plausibly maintained that the artist identified the similarities between the two myths in the enchainment to a rock, the presence of a beast, and the presence of a saviour. At one point one artist must have realised that the two myths had some points in common, and the inspiration that led to this

¹⁷⁶ See Trendall - Webster 1971, 78. It is widely accepted that fr. 118 Nauck and fr. 125 Nauck of Euripides' *Andromeda* indicate the presence of a cave. But see, against this view, Phillips 1968, 2.

¹⁷⁷ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4,668 ff. Since it is clear that he had Euripides in mind (see the comparison with the statue at 673 ff., inspired by Euripides' fr. 125 Nauck), the shift to the rocky cliff shows the influence of the new iconography.

¹⁷⁸ Trendall 1970. See also Vollkommer 1988, 61 no. 465, 63. *LIMC s. v. Prometheus*, no. 72.

¹⁷⁹ For instance a fragment of pelike from Tarentum (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 10), a loutrophoros from Fiesole (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 15), a calyx-krater from Caltagirone (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 23), a loutrophoros from Bari (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 18). See Trendall 1970, 168, n. 27.

¹⁸⁰ Moret 1975, 184-187.

¹⁸¹ Moret 1975, 186. See especially the loutrophoros from Bari (*LIMC s. v. Andromeda* I, no. 18), with Perseus in the same position as Heracles in the Prometheus krater.

association can probably be understood against a theatrical background.¹⁸² We know that the Andromeda vases derived from Euripides' *Andromeda*, and it has been suggested that the unique image depicted in the Prometheus krater could have derived from the lost *Prometheus Unbound*.¹⁸³ Even if this were not the case, that is if the krater did not refer to a lost tragedy, still the artist must have thought that the similarities between Andromeda and Prometheus justified borrowing the former's iconography for the latter's case.¹⁸⁴ If, however, the krater represents the *Prometheus Unbound*, it does not seem to be too far-fetched to suggest that the plays could have been performed in the course of the same festival, and that the scenography, that is the grotto, which could have remained the same for both plays, might have suggested the idea to the artist.¹⁸⁵ Either way, the nature of the Prometheus krater is indissolubly linked with Andromeda vases, with regard to both origin and purpose, for the conscious enjoyment of the Prometheus krater acquires significance only if associated with a vase with Andromeda in the same position. It can be appreciated in its own right, but full understanding depends on comparison with the model.

It is true that one single object, though fitting perfectly, is not enough to prove that there was a consistent group of vases representing the type of Prometheus chained to the grotto, and that these were to be placed side by side with vases representing Andromeda. However, what can be said is that in the second half of the fourth century BC, the Apulian environment (perhaps one and the same atelier, that of the Darius Painter in Tarentum), possibly inspired by theatrical plays, noticed the similarities between Andromeda and Prometheus and connected the two figures on the basis of those similarities. Thus, there had been at least one artist who associated the figures of Andromeda and Prometheus before Achilles Tatius described the diptych by Evanthes, and the elements around which this association revolved are the same as indicated by Clitophon in 3,6. The Apulian vases constitute a precedent for the conjunction of Andromeda and Prometheus in a work of art, and the translation of this subject from vase-painting to painting could easily have followed in the footsteps of Andromeda's solo iconography.¹⁸⁶ This painting cannot be produced, but in view of this

¹⁸² Trendall 1970, 168, says that Prometheus is 'fettered at the wrists to a large rock, which is drawn in the normal manner for such rocks in South Italian vase-painting, probably under the direct inspiration of the stage, since they are generally to be found on vases with dramatic themes, especially Andromeda.'. See also Trendall – Cambitoglou 1982, 477.

¹⁸³ Trendall – Cambitoglou 1982, 477, Vollkommer 1988, 61, and Gisler 1994, 550.

¹⁸⁴ Moret talks about 'motifs d'atelier' that lead the artist to apply 'le schéma à une scène sœur, pour laquelle il n'existait pas encore de tradition imagée.' Moret 1975, 186-187.

¹⁸⁵ For the presence of caves in Greek plays see Jobst 1970, especially on Aischylus' *Prometheus Bound* (30), on Sophocles' *Andromeda* (37), and on Euripides' *Andromeda* (46). Hourmouziades suggests the use of the *ekkyklema* in order to raise Andromeda above the stage, and of a panel behind her to represent the rock. See Hourmouziades 1965, 47.

¹⁸⁶ As a result, its painter is more likely to have come from the area where the joint iconography had already been established, which supports Phillips' assumption that Evanthes was Tarentine. Phillips' connection between Evanthes and Tarentum was solely based on Andromeda's iconography, but he was unaware of the Prometheus krater, the first

precedent its existence can be said to be plausible, which allows us to look further into the relationship between the novel and the work of art. As a matter of fact it is possible to postulate a connection not only between Achilles Tatius' description and a real work of art, but also between their respective contexts.

The diptych and the main story

That in Book Three of *Leucippe and Clitophon* theatre is the novelist's main interest is everywhere to be seen, for all the elements of a typical tragedy are displayed.¹⁸⁷ While Leucippe and Clitophon are being held prisoners by the robbers, Clitophon bursts into a lamentation filled with tragic *topoi* (3,10): the demand for a reason for his misfortunes, the supplication to the gods, the bewailing over the fate of the young maiden.¹⁸⁸ Were it not clear enough that we are dealing with a tragic context, Clitophon gives precise indications that he is following the path of a *thrēnos* (ἤδη τὸν θρήνον ἐξορχήσομαι, 'now I shall have to mime my lamentation!' 3,10; ἀντὶ δὲ ὑμεναίων τίς σοι τὸν θρήνον ᾄδει, 'it is a dirge that they are singing for you, not a wedding hymn' 3,10; ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἐθήρησαν ἡσυχῆ, 'such was my silently lament' 3,11). Then, we witness the sacrifice of Leucippe, gory and coldly narrated (3,15),¹⁸⁹ followed by another *threnos* of Clitophon, who this time adds to the lamentation the desire to commit suicide (3,16).¹⁹⁰ Finally, in a scene that echoes the resuscitation of Alcestis in Euripides' eponymous tragedy, Leucippe is brought back to life (3,17,5).¹⁹¹ Although it is highly unlikely that these details would pass unnoticed by the reader, at

publication of which (Trendall 1970) appeared a few years after his article. As to a question that might be raised, that is how did the diptych later arrive in North Africa to be seen by Achilles Tatius, the answer is that it could have been a copy: after all, the words 'ὁ γραφεὺς ἐγγέγραπτο' ('the painter had been written') can mean that the painting was not signed by Evanthēs, but tagged as one of his works.

¹⁸⁷ For theatrical elements in the novels see in general Fusillo 1989, 33-55, and Bartsch 1989, 109-143. For examples of connections between *Leucippe and Clitophon* and tragedy see Mignogna 1997 (with reference to Book Three), and Liapis 2006.

¹⁸⁸ This follows the motif where the tragic heroine about to be sacrificed moans over the unfulfillment of her life, especially with regard to her marriage. Usually, the elements of the wedding are turned into elements of death, to the point that the act of dying takes on the meaning of becoming the bride of Hades (see for instance Sophocles, *Antigone* 815 ff.). Here the situation is different, for still nobody knows that Leucippe will be sacrificed. Hence the elements of the wedding are transferred with a slight *variatio* into elements of captivity: 'And what fine trappings for your wedding! A prison for a nuptial chamber! The earth for your bed! Ropes and knots for your necklaces and bracelets! And there is the man to give you away: the bandit sitting outside! It is a dirge that they are singing for you, not a wedding hymn.' (3,10,5-6). Nevertheless, at this point the readers have already read the passage where Andromeda is described as the bride of Hades (3,5,7), so it is likely that the figure of a fully tragic Leucippe is taking shape in their minds.

¹⁸⁹ Connections between this episode and Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* have been underlined by Mignogna 1997.

¹⁹⁰ The pathetic tone is here accentuated by sentences such as ἀθανάτω σφαγῆ ἀποθνήσκειν με βούλεσθε 'do you prefer that I should die by a death that never dies?' (3,17,4), which, apart from the language, recalls tragedy inasmuch as it falls very close to an iambic trimeter. For iambic trimeters in Achilles Tatius see Liapis 2006, 223-227.

¹⁹¹ The role of Alcestis belongs of course to Leucippe: at first she does not speak (see *Alcestis* 1143); she is said to be a φοβερόν θέαμα ... καὶ φρικωδέστατον 'a fearful, chilling spectacle' (3,17,7), recalling the description of the Gorgoneion in 3,7 (φοβερά; ἐφριξε τὰς τριχάς), and in Euripides Admetus holding his wife's hand after the

the end of the episode Menelaus and Satyrus raise the curtain and reveal that everything about the sacrifice was a stage performance. Those who carried out the sacrifice were none other than Menelaus and Satyrus themselves, after having produced the sheep's-pouch filled with blood and entrails (3,21), and using a fake sword to disembowel the victim. Moreover, the fake sword was a scenic object belonging to an actor, found by them among the spoils of one of the robbers' assaults (3,20). As a result, what we have is an episode that appears to be a tragedy, that constantly hints at theatre, and that in the end will be explicitly revealed by the characters as a play.¹⁹²

Studies on intertextuality, as we mentioned earlier, lead to a deeper understanding of the themes underneath the surface of a text, as well as of its composition, by focusing on the sources of the literary references found in it. Take, for instance, the Platonic setting at the beginning of Book One of *Leucippe and Clitophon*, when the primary narrator chooses a grove with plane-trees and a stream of water, of all places, as the location for Clitophon to tell his story. By recognising the reference to the *Phaedrus* at the beginning we become more receptive to other references that might occur further, and by recollecting the contents of Plato's work we are able to comprehend the themes of Book One (and not only Book One) on more than just one level, because we look at them from a wider perspective, one that is a little bit closer to the author's own perspective. If, on the other hand, we overlook the primary narrator's choice of location, or consider it a simple homage to Plato and not the indicator of a more meaningful connection between texts, our appreciation of Achilles Tatius is bound to suffer. The case of the diptych is not too dissimilar. In the early chapters of Book Three we come across a description of paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus, and by carefully reading it, and the events that follow, we discover that the contents of the story, Leucippe's *Scheintod*, are foreshadowed by the contents of the paintings. But if we look further into the source of the paintings and find out that an iconographical association of the same subjects existed before Achilles Tatius' description, and that this association originated in an environment where theatre had a major role in influencing artistic tendencies, then we can activate a connection between the paintings and the story not just at the level of contents, but at the level of form, for the theatrical nature of the paintings anticipates the theatrical nature of the episode. The fact that Achilles Tatius modelled the episode connected to the paintings in that way should therefore not be seen as a coincidence, but rather as a signal that he knew the joint iconography, and thus a real work of art, and understood its origin.

resuscitation is as scared and cautious as someone who is cutting the Gorgon's head (see *Alcestis* 1118). Menelaus plays the role of Heracles: he brings Leucippe back to life; Clitophon invokes over him the duties of hospitality (see *Alcestis* 1120, 1128); Clitophon wonders whether he is a wizard (see *Alcestis* 1128). Finally, Clitophon is the unaware, incredulous and then happy Admetus (compare his words in 3,18,1 with *Alcestis* 1129 ff.).

¹⁹² The fact that the description of the Andromeda side of the diptych ends with 'τὸ μὲν τῆς Ἀνδρομέδας δράμα τοῦτο' is telling (Harlan 1965, 119, Whitmarsh and Morales 2001, 155).

In view of this, the idea that the diptych was a product of the author's imagination loses its attraction. In a plausible scenario the paintings were not a literary invention for the sake of the future events in the story, but rather the starting point for the novelist's inspiration. The author used pre-existing material (just as he used the *Phaedrus*) to support, enrich, and even model his narrative, and his readers, at least those who were familiar with the existence of this iconography and of its nature,¹⁹³ would either have taken the hint at Clitophon's introduction to the diptych, or noticed it upon second reading. Either way, the knowledge of the work of art would have greatly enhanced their appreciation of the passage and what it foreshadows.¹⁹⁴

3.3.3. Philomela and Procne

The third encounter with a painting takes place in Book Five. After travelling along the river Nile, the protagonists arrive at Alexandria, where, in a rare moment of peace, they can enjoy the beauty of the city, which is the object of an *ekphrasis* that occupies the first two paragraphs of the book. Peace is not bound to last long, since already in paragraph three the protagonists, Menelaus, and Chaereās (a recently acquired friend who has helped Leucippe escape the latest of a long list of suitors), who has just invited the small group to a trip to Pharos, witness a threatening omen: a hawk, chasing a swallow, hits Leucippe's head with a wing. Recognising this as a message from above, Clitophon prays to Zeus for a clearer sign, with the following result:

μεταστραφείς οὖν (ἔτυχον γὰρ παρεστῶς ἐργαστηρίῳ ζωγράφου) γραφὴν
ὁρῶ κειμένην, ἣτις ὑπηνίττετο προσόμοιον·

Now, on turning around I saw a picture hanging up (for I happened to be standing next to a painter's studio), and the encrypted meaning it conveyed was a similar one.
(5,3,4)

The readers probably understand that they will be the audience of yet another *ekphrasis* of a work of art as soon as they recognise the circumstances that are at this point familiar, namely the position at the beginning of an odd-numbered book, the arrival in a new city (previously Sidon and Pelusium), and a break in between a series of dramatic events (the calm after storms in Book One and three). The presence of the painting comes quite clearly as the result of a prayer for an omen, so its foreshadowing function is expected already from the beginning. Unlike the previous paintings,

¹⁹³ Unlike us, they might have known also the *Andromeda* and the *Prometheus Unbound*.

¹⁹⁴ Referring to an Apulian vase representing Medea, Taplin underlines that 'the pleasure for the owner of these vases and for his fellow-viewers would be enhanced by knowing the powerful final scene of the tragedy'. See Taplin 1993, 17.

however, this work of art is not found in a temple,¹⁹⁵ but in a painter's atelier (ἐργαστηρίῳ ζωγράφου), that is, in other words, not in a place meant for the exhibition of the work of art, but in a place where the work of art is made. If such a place is a rare thing to find in ancient fiction in general,¹⁹⁶ its occurrence in ancient narrative is virtually non-existent.¹⁹⁷ If we restrict the field to the novels, this atelier constitutes a unicum, and the fact that it is found in Achilles Tatius does not come as a surprise, since, among the novelists, he is the most interested in art and its production. Still, all we know is that Clitophon was standing next to a painter's atelier. They are not inside the workshop, yet they are still able to appreciate the painting hanging there. Was the painting inside the shop or was it exhibited outside? The shop must have been open (it is day, and they can see the painting): could the painter himself have been inside at that moment? Unfortunately, the questions raised by the new and unusual scenario in which the picture is found will remain unanswered, and the only thing that can be said so far is that the ensuing *ekphrasis* shares similarities with the previous ones, but also differences.

Structure of a problematic *ekphrasis*

Φιλομήλας γὰρ εἶχε φθορὰν καὶ τὴν βίαν Τηρέως καὶ τῆς γλώττης τὴν τομὴν. ἦν δὲ ὀλόκληρον τῇ γραφῇ τὸ διήγημα τοῦ δράματος, ὁ πέπλος, ὁ Τηρεὺς, ἡ τράπεζα. (5.) τὸν πέπλον ἠπλωμένον εἰστήκει κρατοῦσα θεράπεινα· Φιλομήλα παρειστήκει καὶ ἐπετίθει τῷ πέπλῳ τὸν δάκτυλον καὶ ἐδείκνυε τῶν ὑφασμάτων τὰς γραφάς· ἡ Πρόκνη πρὸς τὴν δεῖξιν ἐνενεύκει καὶ δριμύ ἔβλεπε καὶ ὠργίζετο τῇ γραφῇ· Θραξ ὁ Τηρεὺς ἐνύφαντο Φιλομήλα παλαίων πάλην Ἀφροδίσιον. (6.) ἐσπάρακτο τὰς κόμας ἢ γυνή, τὸ ζῶσμα ἐλέλυτο, τὸν χιτῶνα κατέρρηκτο, ἠμίγυμνος τὸ στέρνον ἦν, τὴν δεξιὰν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἤρειδε τοῦ Τηρέως, τῇ λαιᾷ τὰ διερωγῶτα τοῦ χιτῶνος ἐπὶ τοὺς μαζοὺς ἔκλειεν. <ἐν> ἀγκάλαις εἶχε τὴν Φιλομήλαν ὁ Τηρεὺς, ἔλκων πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ὡς ἐνὴν τὸ σῶμα καὶ σφίγγων ἐν χρῶ τὴν συμπλοκὴν. (7.) ὧδε μὲν τὴν τοῦ πέπλου γραφὴν ὑφηνεν ὁ ζωγράφος. τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν τῆς εἰκόνος, αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν κανῶ τὰ λείψανα τοῦ δεῖπνου τῷ Τηρεῖ δεικνύουσι, κεφαλὴν παιδίου καὶ χεῖρας· γελῶσι δὲ ἅμα καὶ φοβοῦνται. (8.) ἀναπηδῶν ἐκ τῆς κλίνης ὁ Τηρεὺς ἐγέγραπτο, καὶ ἔλκων τὸ ξίφος ἐπὶ τὰς γυναῖκας τὸ σκέλος ἤρειδεν ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν· ἡ δὲ οὔτε ἔστηκεν οὔτε πέπτωκεν, ἀλλ' ἐδείκνυε γραφὴν μέλλοντος πτώματος.

¹⁹⁵ It is not entirely clear where the primary narrator finds the painting of Europa. The text (περιϊῶν οὖν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην πόλιν καὶ περισκοπῶν τὰ ἀναθήματα ὀρῶ γραφὴν) says that the narrator undertook a tour of the rest of Sidon, but also that he found the painting while browsing around the votive offerings, which must have been in the temple. See Whitmarsh 2011, 79-80, and n. 48, for a possible solution. We do not know whether the diptych of Andromeda and Prometheus is an *anathēma*, but it is found in the back of the temple in Pelusium.

¹⁹⁶ Hephaestus' forge comes to mind, as well as the artists' workshops mentioned by Pliny the Elder (*NH* 35). We also know that Lucian worked in a sculptor's atelier (*Somnium* 1).

¹⁹⁷ Works of art are usually found in religious places (a sacred grove in Longus, temples in Achilles Tatius), art galleries (Petronius' *Satyrica*, but one might also consider Lucian's *De domo* and the *Imagines* by both Philostrati), or private houses (the royal palace in Heliodorus' *Aithiopica*, to name but one).

It told of the violent rape of Philomela by Tereus, who cut out her tongue. The picture incorporated the entire narrative of the drama: the robe, Tereus, the banquet. The maid was standing holding the unfolded robe; Philomela stood by her with her finger placed upon the robe, indicating the pictures woven into it. Procne had nodded her understanding of this performance: she was staring fiercely, furious at the picture. The embroidery showed the Thracian Tereus wrestling with Philomela for Aphrodite's prize. The woman's hair was torn, her girdle undone, her dress ripped, her chest half exposed. Her right hand was digging into Tereus' eyes, while her left sought to shut away her breasts with the shreds of her dress. Tereus held Philomela in his grip, pulling her towards him with all his bodily strength into a constricting, skin-to-skin embrace. This was the depiction the artist had woven into the robe. The remainder of the painting represented the women, simultaneously cackling and cowering, showing Tereus the leftovers of the feast in a basket, the head and hands of his son. Tereus was depicted leaping from his couch, waving his sword at the women and kicking his leg against the table. This was neither standing nor fallen, a pictorial indication that it was about to fall.

(5,3,4-8)

The descriptions of the paintings of Europa, Andromeda, and Prometheus, present a common structure. The descriptions can be divided into two parts, an introduction and the *ekphrasis* proper. The introduction provides a summary of the contents of the painting, highlights the subjects, and gives an idea of the spatial composition. The aim of its paratactic style is not to describe the picture, but to briefly inform the readers, and, in a way, to prepare the audience for the *ekphrasis*. Not only does the *ekphrasis* that follows expand and describe at length the contents of the introduction, but it also retraces the points previously summarised in the same order as they are found in the introduction. This structure is first found in the painting of Europa, and the diptych of Andromeda and Prometheus, in duplicating it, gives us a confirmation. Consequently, when Clitophon in Alexandria turns around, sees the new painting, and says:

Φιλομήλας γὰρ εἶχε φθορὰν καὶ τὴν βίαν Τηρέως καὶ τῆς γλώττης τὴν τομήν.
ἦν δὲ ὁλόκληρον τῇ γραφῇ τὸ διήγημα τοῦ δράματος, ὁ πέπλος, ὁ Τηρέυς, ἡ
τράπεζα,

we recognise all the features of the previous introductions, and, expecting the same outcome, start picturing what the painting is going to be like.

The first sentence consists of three elements: Philomela's ruin, Tereus' violence, and the cutting of the tongue. If we imagine transferring these elements into a painting, the result will be at least two scenes: the rape (Φιλομήλας γὰρ εἶχε φθορὰν καὶ τὴν βίαν Τηρέως: Tereus' violence being the counterpart of Philomela's ruin), and the cutting of the tongue (τῆς γλώττης τὴν τομήν). The second sentence tells us that the painting contains the narration of the entire myth (ἦν δὲ ὁλόκληρον τῇ γραφῇ τὸ διήγημα τοῦ δράματος), and then again consists of three elements:

the tapestry, Tereus, and the table. The intuitive visualisation of this sentence results again in two other scenes, one showing Philomela's tapestry (ὁ πέπλος: perhaps when she is sewing it, or when she is showing it to her sister Procne), and one showing the cannibal feast (ὁ Τηρέυς, ἡ τράπεζα). Therefore, the painted equivalent of the introduction should have at least four scenes: 1) the rape; 2) the cutting of the tongue; 3) the tapestry; 4) the feast. In addition to this, if the painting really represented the whole story, as we are told, we would expect to find one scene with the killing of Itys (a Medea-style scene that is represented in several of the few works of art on this subject), and one with the metamorphosis of the protagonists into birds, that is, the culminating point of the whole myth. However, none of this is mentioned in the introduction.

The proper *ekphrasis* of the painting, unexpectedly, is not an exact expansion of the introduction.¹⁹⁸ There are only two scenes in the painting: Philomela showing the tapestry to Procne (τὸν πέπλον ἠπλωμένον... ὠργίζετο τῇ γραφῇ; scene 3) in the introduction), and the rage of Tereus after the feast (τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν τῆς εἰκόνος... ῥοπὴν μέλλοντος πτώματος; scene 4) in the introduction). However, the painter ingeniously included the scene of the rape (Θραξ ὁ Τηρέυς... ὕφηνεν ὁ ζωγράφος; scene 1) in the introduction) inside the scene of the display of the tapestry, for the rape is not witnessed directly, but through the tapestry that carries its representation. Rather than the linear exposition of facts in the introduction, subject to Clitophon's point of view and knowledge of the myth, the actual painting, displaying an image within an image, presents the viewers with a more complex narrative, since they learn about the rape in the same way Procne did, by looking at the tapestry. The second scene in the painting depicts the women showing to Tereus the remains of his meal, that is, to be more precise, the head and hands of his son Itys. Philomela and Procne are inebriated by the successful revenge, but at the same time they fear for Tereus' reaction. The latter, realizing what he has eaten, is depicted in the act of jumping from the couch, brandishing the sword at the women, and kicking the table.

The painting lacks a few scenes that are crucial to the myth: the killing of Itys and the metamorphosis into birds. The Itys scene (which is implied by the revelation of what Tereus has eaten) would have fitted between the tapestry scene and the feast scene, and the metamorphosis scene after the latter. Now, art, when it chooses to represent myths, is not supposed, nor should it be expected, to depict the entire story. Its nature is to capture and show just one moment in time. This is what happens with the paintings of Europa, Andromeda, and Prometheus. Europa is depicted when she is on the bull in the middle of the sea, not when she is playing with the maidens, or when

¹⁹⁸ Harlan 1965, 127, n. 1, notices this and attributes it to Achilles' Tatius' overall lack of consistency. However, Achilles Tatius has proven to be quite meticulous when it comes to describing paintings, especially in the ordered correspondences between the introductory part of the *ekphraseis* and the description proper. On the structure of this *ekphrasis* see also Behmenburg 2010, 243 ff.

she is abducted, or when she arrives in Crete. Andromeda is painted during Perseus' fight with the seamonster, not as she is chained to the rocks, or when the monster is dead, or when Perseus frees her. Prometheus is painted while Hercules is shooting at the eagle, not as he is chained to the Caucasus, or as he is freed from it. Whereas in the previous cases the subjects are depicted only in one position, the protagonists of the painting of Philomela and Procne are caught in different moments, which means that we are dealing with narrative painting, a form of art that aims at representing a whole sequence of events. What is puzzling is this: if the painting wants to represent the sequence of events of the myth, why does it show only some of them, while omitting others? How could a viewer without previous knowledge of the myth connect the tapestry scene to the feast scene?¹⁹⁹ How do the head and hands in the basket make sense, if someone is unaware that they belong to Tereus' son? But let us allow the painter the complete freedom of drawing what he wants and nothing else, regardless of any chronological sequence. We will still find inconsistency.

If we look back at Clitophon's introduction, we realise that in the actual painting the cutting of the tongue is strikingly missing. Since it belonged to the sentence that summarized the rape (Φιλομήλας γὰρ εἶχε φθορὰν καὶ τὴν βίαν Τηρέως καὶ τῆς γλώττης τὴν τομήν), one would have expected to find the cutting of the tongue sewn in the tapestry. Instead, none of it is told in the *ekphrasis*. Is Clitophon not able to describe paintings anymore? Does he mention the tongue scene because he has actually seen it, but then forgets to describe it? Or does he include the tongue scene in the introduction just because to his knowledge it is automatically part of the myth, even though it is not painted? And if this is the case, why does he not add to the introduction also the metamorphosis scene? For the first time in the novel we come across some serious hiccups in the *ekphrasis* of a work of art, but we are still unable to tell whether they are the author's mistakes, or Clitophon's. Further elements for analysis can be found in the following paragraphs of the novel, where we are presented with another unusual situation, that is, the fact that other people are looking at the painting.

It is not the first time that this happens. In 1,1 Clitophon is not alone when he is looking at the painting of Europa, for the primary narrator is looking at it as well, and in 3,6 he is not alone in the temple in Pelusium, for Leucippe is there with him. Nonetheless, in 1,1 the primary narrator's vision of the painting is entirely independent from Clitophon's, for he is unaware of the presence of the young man until after he has looked at the painting. In the same way, it is true that in 3,6 Clitophon is visiting the temple with Leucippe and, since it is nowhere stated otherwise, looking at

¹⁹⁹ As we will see, Leucippe represents this kind of viewer.

the diptych with her, but Leucippe's presence is marginal, not to say completely neglected.²⁰⁰ This also draws attention to another fact, namely that on the first two occasions there was little or no reaction to the paintings. In 1,1 the presence of Eros in the painting causes the acquaintance between the primary narrator and Clitophon, and triggers the latter's narration, but they do not talk about the painting, and Clitophon's opinion on it will remain untold. In 3,8 the lack of discussion over the double painting is even more evident, because after the last word of the *ekphrasis* the narration proceeds by mentioning a temporal gap of two days since the visit to the temple (Ἐνδιατρίψαντες οὖν ἡμερῶν δύο..., 3,9,1). It is therefore quite surprising to find these patterns changed in the last *ekphrasis*. Not only is Clitophon accompanied by three other characters (Leucippe, Menelaus, Chaereas), but two of them also speak, and speak about the painting.

Omens

The first one to express his opinion, immediately after the *ekphrasis*, is Menelaus:

“Ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ τὴν εἰς Φάρον ὁδὸν ἐπισχεῖν. ὄρας γὰρ οὐκ ἀγαθὰ δύο σύμβολα, τό τε τοῦ ὄρνιθος καθ’ ἡμῶν πτερόν καὶ τῆς εἰκόνος τὴν ἀπειλήν. Λέγουσι δὲ οἱ τῶν συμβόλων ἐξηγηταὶ σκοπεῖν τοὺς μύθους τῶν εἰκόνων, ἂν ἐξιούσιν ἐπὶ πράξιν ἡμῖν συντύχῳσι, καὶ ἐξομοιοῦν τὸ ἀποβησόμενον τῷ τῆς ἱστορίας λόγῳ. ὄρας οὖν ὅσων γέμει κακῶν ἡ γραφή· ἔρωτος παρανόμου, μοιχείας ἀναισχύντου, γυναικείων ἀτυχημάτων. ὅθεν ἐπισχεῖν κελεύω τὴν ἔξοδον.”

‘I think we should postpone our journey to Pharos: the two signs have been clearly unfavourable, the bird's wing landing on us and the danger implied by the picture. Interpreters of signs say that if we encounter paintings as we set off to do something, we should ponder the myths narrated there, and conclude that the outcome for us will be comparable to the story they tell. This painting is filled with all sorts of negative aspects: illicit desire, shameless adultery, female misfortunes. For this reason, I advise you to postpone the expedition.’

(5,4,1)

According to Menelaus, the painting, just like the bird hitting Leucippe's head, must be considered as an omen. Exegetes, interpreters of symbols, warn us to pay attention to the stories we see in paintings, and compare to them what happens in real life. This comes as no surprise for us readers, for we had already figured as much since the painting of Europa, and have therefore been engaged in a hunt for symbols since the start of the novel. After trial and error we have also learnt not to trust the most obvious links between paintings and story, but to expect twists and variations. Here,

²⁰⁰ The last notion we have of her is as a co-subject of the first person plural περιήειμεν in 3,6,2. Since she was with Clitophon we can expect that she too saw the diptych. If she did, we do not know what she thought of it.

at the beginning of Book Five, we are ready to start the game again, which is why Menelaus' observation is as welcome as when someone shouts the solution to a question we were confident we were going to be able to answer on our own, spoiling the fun. But this too is part of Achilles Tatius' strategy.

According to Menelaus, the message of this painting (ἔρωτος παρανόμου, μοιχείας ἀναισχύντου, γυναικείων ἀτυχημάτων), clearly suggests that the safest thing to do is to stay at home, a concept which Menelaus stresses by repeating it at the beginning and at the end of his speech. Clitophon, who, besides being apparently confused about the contents of the painting, has yet to express an opinion on it, wholeheartedly accepts Menelaus' interpretation and suggestion, and agrees to postpone the trip to Pharos. The readers know it to be a wise choice, since Clitophon has told us in advance (beginning of 5,3) that Chaereas was in love with Leucippe and looking for a chance to be with her, but at that moment in the story the characters know nothing of Chaereas' infatuation, and their decision to postpone the trip is genuinely based on the omens received. Still, if so much trust is bestowed on the omens, one cannot see the reason why the decision is only to postpone and not to cancel the trip, but Oedipus teaches us that precognition does not mean prevention, and, generally speaking, cautious characters are enemies of adventurous plots.

As a matter of fact, as Bartsch has demonstrated, the following events, that is, the fact that the protagonists will ultimately go to Pharos and that Leucippe will be kidnapped, and then beheaded, are only loosely connected with the contents of the painting, and only if one takes into consideration the beheading of Leucippe as the fulfillment of the cutting of Itys' tongue.²⁰¹ The real accomplishment of the prophecy in the painting (illicit desire, shameless adultery, and female misfortunes, as said by Menelaus) occurs six months after Leucippe's *Scheintod*, with the establishment, in Ephesus, of two love triangles that include, beside Leucippe and Clitophon, Melite and her husband Thersander. In the first triangle (Leucippe-Thersander, and Melite), Thersander attempts, unsuccessfully, to take Leucippe by force; in the second (Clitophon-Melite, and Leucippe), Clitophon gives in to Melite's incessant advances and has sex with her. Thus the two main aspects of the painting, sex and violence, taking place within one love triangle, have been re-enacted but split into two love triangles, one showing violence (Leucippe-Thersander, and Melite), the other sex (Clitophon-Melite, and Leucippe).²⁰² As it appears, the final result was once

²⁰¹ Bartsch 1989, 65-71.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 69-70. See also Zimmermann 1999, 69. The matching works on a general level but is not perfect (nor need it be), for there are other aspects to the painting of Philomela and Procne that find no correspondence in the story. For example, Thersander's violent advances to Leucippe are the equivalent of Tereus' rape of Philomela, but this leaves aside other equally strong images of violence that are present in the myth namely the cutting of the tongue, and the killing, cooking, and eating of Itys.

again partially unpredictable, and Menelaus' intuition in the end neither saved the characters nor spoiled the readers' experience.²⁰³

Description and narration

Leaving aside the proleptic function of the painting, let us go back to some important variables that take place in this description. We said earlier that two unusual facts take place in the *ekphrasis* of the painting of Philomela and Procne: there is a follow-up regarding the painting, and it belongs to a character other than Clitophon. This raises a few questions with regard to the narrative.

When a heterodiegetic narrator decides to take a break from the story and spend some time describing an object, a person, or a landscape, what we assume is that the time of the story has been paused for a while, without the characters having any notion this is happening. But when a homodiegetic narrator describes, the readers are left with a question: when does the description take place, at the time of the story or at the time of the narration? That is, does the character stop and formulate the description in his mind at the time of the story, and then resume it as a narrator, or does the narrator expand and elaborate at length at the time of the narration something to which he had briefly paid attention as a character? The paintings in *Leucippe and Clitophon* offer different options. The painting of Europa is described by the primary narrator (homodiegetic: he is telling the readers something that happened to him in the past). For all we know he may have stopped in front of the painting for all the time it must have taken to notice all the details, and at the time of the narration he may just be recalling those memories of the painting. Whether the time of the story has stopped or not does not really constitute a problem, for he is alone and nothing else is happening at the moment. The time elapsed before the meeting with Clitophon, the fundamental event that causes the narration, is irrelevant. The diptych of Andromeda and Prometheus is described by Clitophon, the secondary narrator, obviously homodiegetic. In this case, however, the time of the story seems to have stopped, that is, he is describing as a narrator and not as a character. That time stops when he starts the *ekphrasis* is indicated by the fact that another character was there during the viewing of the painting, Leucippe, who completely disappears as soon as the painting is seen. Were it not like this, that is, if Clitophon were describing the diptych during the time of story, we would have to assume that Leucippe is standing there without any interaction the entire time Clitophon is observing the work of art, and that no word is exchanged between the two of them after the long pause, not even to justify such a pause. Another evidence of this break in the time of the story

²⁰³ For further considerations on the connection between the painting and parts of the narrative, including passages which precede the description of the painting, see Behmenburg 2010, 243 ff.

comes from the fact that the story is resumed immediately after the end of the *ekphrasis*, with a temporal gap of two days. If Clitophon is keen on art, as his *ekphrasis* shows him to be, he does not share his interest with other characters (or, at least, he does not relate any interaction regarding them), for he leaves the paintings out of the story, keeping it for himself and his audience (the primary narrator, the readers).

What happens in the case of the painting of Philomela and Procne is slightly more difficult to understand, for several clues seem to suggest that during Clitophon's *ekphrasis* the time of the story has not stopped. As seen, he finds himself in the company of other people. Menelaus, Leucippe, and Chaereas all witness the hawk touching Leucippe's head, all hear Clitophon praying for another omen, and all attend the discovery of the painting. When Clitophon starts the *ekphrasis* in his usual way, we are prone to think that the time of the story has stopped once again, but as soon as Menelaus starts talking we realize that for the very first time someone else other than Clitophon is looking at the painting, someone with a different understanding and perhaps a different point of view. The fact that Menelaus talks about the painting immediately after Clitophon's description indicates that he was doing exactly the same thing as Clitophon (taking his time to observe and consider the work of art), and he could only have done that during the time of the story. Whereas the *ekphrasis* of the painting of Europa and the diptych were cases of zero-speed narrative, where the progression of the text corresponded to no progression at all in the time of the story, at the end of the *ekphrasis* of the painting of Philomela and Procne we find out that something has happened, meanwhile, during the time of the story, namely that another character has spent some time studying the painting. Even though it cannot be said that this description corresponds to Clitophon's real-time observation of the painting (it is still, after all, reported in a narration that takes place after all these events, and so, one way or the other, the product of an elaboration), it can be said that it also does not entirely correspond to a break in the time of the story. The *ekphrasis* of the painting of Philomela and Procne is still made by Clitophon as a narrator, but for the first time there is a hint to the fact that his observations as a character might be part of it as well.²⁰⁴ In view of this, the connection between this *ekphrasis* and the story is quite different from before. Before, the descriptions were outside the story, and they were there for the narratees, the only ones who could notice the connections with the story. On the contrary this *ekphrasis*, being inserted directly in the time of the story, opens up to a new set of interlocutors, that is, the characters. The first one to

²⁰⁴ Clitophon as a character makes plenty of mistakes, which can be part of the explanation for the inconsistencies of this third *ekphrasis*.

speak up is Menelaus, providing his own point of view.²⁰⁵ And, to add more to this entirely unfamiliar situation, Leucippe speaks after him.

Ἡ δὲ Λευκίππη λέγει πρὸς με (φιλόμυθον γὰρ πῶς τὸ τῶν γυναικῶν γένος):
“Τί βούλεται τῆς εἰκόνος ὁ μύθος; καὶ τίνες αἱ ὄρνιθες αὐταὶ; καὶ τίνες αἱ
γυναῖκες, καὶ τίς ὁ ἀναιδὴς ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ;”

Now the female species is rather fond of myths, and Leucippe said to me: ‘What is the meaning of the myth in the painting? What are those birds? Who is that shameless man?’
(5,5,1)

Much as Clitophon believes that women love to listen to stories, it must be noticed that this is the first time Leucippe manifests such curiosity, or, at least, the first time Clitophon relates a reaction from her. She has witnessed the subjects of almost all of Clitophon’s descriptions, often being there together with him, but showed not even a scrap of interest for the painting of Andromeda and Prometheus (3,6-8), the Phoenix (described in 3,25), the hippopotamus (4,3), the elephant (4,4), the crocodile (4,19), the city of Alexandria (5,1-2). Plenty of subjects worthy of description, and plenty of occasions to display curiosity and listen to Clitophon’s stories. Yet, although she was always there, she was always silent, almost absent. But this time, we have seen, the consideration of the painting is not Clitophon’s prerogative, and everyone is free to access it.

Leucippe’s first words, however, leave us puzzled: ‘What does the story in the painting mean?’ While Clitophon was looking at the painting and describing it, and while Menelaus was doing the same thing and reading it as an omen, Leucippe was staring at something without understanding what it was. We therefore face a problem that so far had not been present in this novel but that is nonetheless very realistic, that is, the identification of the contents of the work of art. It is clearly not a problem with which the readers are confronted, because in all the descriptions of paintings in this novel, including this one, the introduction to the *ekphrasis* always offers a univocal and indisputable identification: Εὐρώπης ἡ γραφή (1,1); ἡ δὲ εἰκὼν Ἀνδρομέδα, καὶ Προμηθεύς (3,6); Φιλομήλας γὰρ εἶχε φθορὰν καὶ τὴν βίαν Τηρέως (5,3). The primary narrator and Clitophon can identify the subjects of the paintings at first sight, and to make sure that the readers do not misinterpret the paintings, they specify them in the introductions. Even without this guidance, that is even with an *ekphrasis* that describes only what it sees and does not name the subjects, it is likely that the audience (the ancient readers as well as us) would guess who the characters are. For instance, had the primary narrator omitted to mention Europa or Zeus in the first

²⁰⁵ Bartsch 1989, 66-67.

painting, we could still have guessed they are the ones being portrayed just based on the information ‘girl riding a bull in the middle of the sea’. The same goes for Andromeda and Prometheus: a maiden chained to a rock while a sea monster is attacking, and a flying hero rescuing her, can only refer to the story of Andromeda, and a man chained to a mountain while an eagle is eating his liver, and a hero rescuing him, can only refer to the story of Prometheus. This happens because of our knowledge of ancient myths and the corresponding iconography, a knowledge that, apparently, we share with the primary narrator and Clitophon.

When, however, the characters of the story are involved in the viewing of the painting, they are not given guidance, and are left to their own knowledge, which results in two possibilities. On the one hand we have Menelaus, who recognizes without problem the subjects portrayed. On the other hand we have Leucippe, who simply does not know what the painting is about.²⁰⁶ How is this possible? Do we have to assume that her education did not provide her with enough knowledge of Classical culture to be able to know a Greek myth when she sees one? Clitophon is a Phoenician, but, if not by origin, he is a Greek by culture.²⁰⁷ His use of Plato and tragedy, let alone his knowledge of Greek art, are a few elements that can testify to that. Perhaps we should simply assume that the same does not necessarily apply to Leucippe as well. However, her lack of knowledge gives us the opportunity to examine an entirely new point of view, that of the neophyte approaching works of art. In asking ourselves the reason why she does not recognize the painting, we come up with two main questions. Was it a famous iconography, one that everyone would have been expected to know, like that of Europa or Andromeda? Or, if that were not the case, does the painting, as it is described, help in understanding the events of the story of Philomela and Procne? It seems that the answer to both questions is negative.

Ancient art did not pay much attention to the story of Philomela and Procne.²⁰⁸ The oldest example is a metope from Thermon, a painted terracotta, which dates back to the third quarter of the seventh century BC.²⁰⁹ It shows two women facing each other, sitting down or perhaps kneeling, and slightly bending forward. What enables us to assign this metope to the story of Philomela and Procne is the fact that the word ΧΕΛΙΔΡΟΝ (swallow, the bird Philomela turns into) is written above the woman on the right. The central part of the composition is missing, but it is presumable that it showed the dead Itys before the preparation of the feast.²¹⁰ This, and the killing of the child,

²⁰⁶ Something similar can be found in Longus, where Chloe is not only unaware of famous myths (Pan and Syrinx in 2,34, Echo in 3,23), but also of everyday things (e.g. the phenomenon of echo, in 3,22). Every time she needs to be taught by someone with more experience than her: Lamon in 2,34 and Daphnis in 3,22-23.

²⁰⁷ On hybrid cultures in Achilles Tatius see Whitmarsh 2011, 77 ff.

²⁰⁸ See EAA *s. v.* Filomela; Procne; Tereo. See LIMC *s. v.* Prokne et Philomela.

²⁰⁹ LIMC *s. v.* Prokne et Philomela, n. 1.

²¹⁰ Touloupa 1994, 527.

seem to be the scenes most represented, presumably because of the similarities with the more famous story of Medea. Similarly to the latter, the story was the subject of a tragedy (Sophocles' lost *Tereus*),²¹¹ which may have constituted the main version, later integrated by Ovid's treatment of the subject (*Metamorphoses* 6,424-674). At any rate, as the scarce examples attest (we are talking about some fifteen works of art altogether in antiquity, at least five of which are of uncertain attribution), the story did not enjoy great fortune in art. If we compare the examples we have with the *ekphrasis* in Achilles Tatius, we can reach a few conclusions. First of all, Achilles Tatius interrupts a series of descriptions of works of art representing subjects that were exceptionally famous in ancient art (Europa, Andromeda, and, slightly less, Prometheus), to describe a painting the subject of which was hardly represented. Second, Achilles Tatius interrupts a series of paintings that are scrupulously close to attested iconography, to describe a painting that has little to do with the few artistic examples that we have. If a parallel in art ever existed, it and its copies are lost. Going back to our first question, it appears that Leucippe is entirely entitled not to know the subject portrayed, simply because it was not a popular one, at least not even remotely as popular as the others described in the novel.

Connected to this is the question whether the painting, assuming it is being faithfully described, offers to the uninformed viewers a satisfying grasp of the story. The first scene would surely convey the idea that sexual violence has been committed, and that the victim is now revealing it. However, since the scene of the cutting of the tongue is missing, it is difficult to understand the reason why the communication between the women takes place through the tapestry and not orally. Moving on, the second scene shows that the attacker represented in the tapestry has become the object of the women's revenge. However, the basket with the head and the hands is not immediately comprehensible, because the absence of the scene of the killing of Itys and the preparation of the feast with his remains (the most represented in works of art) does not allow the viewers to understand that Tereus is eating his own son, thus missing the tragic core of the myth. Finally, the lack of a representation of the metamorphosis leaves the whole story without an ending. In view of this, it appears that Leucippe, who does not know the myth, is entirely entitled not to have understood the contents of the painting even after having looked at it for some time, simply because the painting fails to deliver the essential message, that is, the events of the story, in a clear way.

If Leucippe's first question shows a lack of understanding about what she sees, the second one challenges the very object of the viewing: καὶ τίνες αἱ ὄρνιθες αὐταί; 'what are these

²¹¹ On Sophocles' play and these passages in Achilles Tatius see Liapis 2006.

birds?'.²¹² It does not take outstanding mnemonic skills to remember that no birds were said to be portrayed in the painting, and that instead they were surprisingly omitted. One could easily solve this problem by saying that either the author made a mistake, or something in the text went missing.²¹³ However, if a mistake it was, the number of macroscopic mistakes in this passage would amount to two (this one and the missed description of the anticipated cutting of the tongue), an unusual record for our otherwise alert author, at least when it comes to *ekphrasis*. But if that is not the case, how do we account for Leucippe's question? A closer look at the end of the *ekphrasis* might help:

Ἄναπηδῶν ἐκ τῆς κλίνης ὁ Τηρεὺς ἐγέγραπτο, καὶ ἔλκων τὸ ξίφος ἐπὶ τὰς γυναῖκας τὸ σέλος ἤρειδεν ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν· ἡ δὲ οὔτε εστηκεν, οὔτε πέπτωκεν, ἀλλ' ἐδείκνυε ροπήν μέλλοντος πτώματος.

Tereus was depicted leaping from his couch, waving his sword at the women and kicking his leg against the table. This was neither standing nor fallen, a pictorial indication that it was about to fall.
(5,3,8)

While chasing the women, Tereus pushes the table with a leg: the table is depicted in the instant of stillness that follows the impact and precedes the fall, caught in the middle of a change of state without belonging to one condition or the other. The sense of imminence and unavoidability is well conveyed by the use of μέλλω, which leaves the readers (and, we can imagine, the viewers) all the more surprised, since there is no completion to this unavoidability.²¹⁴ We do not see what happens to the table in the same way in which we do not see what happens to the women or the man. The story, both in its painted version and the relevant *ekphrasis*, is incomplete. Being in a context of narrative painting, the lack of an ending is disturbing. Can it be that Clitophon was interrupted by Menelaus' words before he was finished? It does not seem so, for the second and last sentence of the introduction said ἦν δὲ ὀλόκληρον τῆ γραφῆ τὸ διήγημα τοῦ δράματος, ὁ πέπλος, ὁ Τηρεὺς, ἡ τράπεζα', with τράπεζα as the last word. It seemed right, then, to understand τράπεζα as 'feast', but given the final words of the *ekphrasis* a literal meaning, 'table' might be appropriate as well, and it is not unlikely that Achilles Tatius played on the double meaning of the word. If both the introduction and the *ekphrasis* end with the table, there seems to be no doubt that Clitophon is describing everything he sees, and that the rest is simply not there. However, one cannot avoid the

²¹² Incidentally, she repeats almost the same question asked by Clitophon in 3,25 with regards to the phoenix: καὶ τίς ὁ ὄρνις οὗτος; Just like Clitophon's question, Leucippe's will be answered by a profuse explanation.

²¹³ Gaselee 1917, 244, n. 1.

²¹⁴ Guez 2012, 43, 48-9, reflects on the temporality of these final words of the *ekphrasis*.

impression that Clitophon's *ekphrasis* should continue, and Leucippe's question about the birds calls exactly for such continuation. Had the discrepancies between the introduction and *ekphrasis* not been revelatory enough, Leucippe's question is the signal that the painting before our eyes is an incomplete one.

Art in fieri

If Leucippe's questions are striking because they pose questions about her knowledge and make us question the reliability of Clitophon's *ekphrasis*, Clitophon's reaction is striking inasmuch as he seems to be unaware of the contradictions the questions have brought up, and moves on without flinching to a very matter-of-fact answer. Instead of asking the girl where she saw the birds, which is exactly what the readers would love to know, he nonchalantly tells her who the birds are:

“Ἀηδῶν καὶ χελιδῶν καὶ ἔποψ, πάντες ἄνθρωποι καὶ πάντες ὄρνιθες. (2.) ἔποψ ὁ ἀνὴρ· αἱ δύο γυναῖκες, Φιλομήλα χελιδῶν, καὶ Πρόκνη ἀηδῶν. πόλις αὐταῖς Ἀθῆναι. Τηρεὺς ὁ ἀνὴρ· Πρόκνη Τηρέως γυνή. βαρβάροις δέ, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐχ ἰκανὴ πρὸς Ἀφροδίτην μία γυνή, μάλισθ' ὅταν αὐτῷ καιρὸς διδῶ πρὸς ὕβριν τρυφᾶν. (3.) καιρὸς οὖν γίνεται τῷ Θρακί τούτῳ χρήσασθαι τῇ φύσει Πρόκνης ἢ φιλοστοργία· πέμπει γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν τὸν ἀνδρὰ τὸν Τηρέα. ὁ δὲ ἀπῆει μὲν ἔτι Πρόκνης ἀνὴρ, ἀναστρέφει δὲ Φιλομήλας ἐραστής, καὶ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἄλλην αὐτῷ ποιεῖται τὴν Φιλομήλαν Πρόκνην. (4.) τὴν γλώτταν τῆς Φιλομήλας φοβεῖται, καὶ ἔδνα τῶν γάμων αὐτῇ δίδωσι μηκέτι λαλεῖν καὶ κείρει τῆς φωνῆς τὸ ἄνθος. ἀλλὰ πλέον ἤνυσεν οὐδέν· ἢ γὰρ Φιλομήλας τέχνη σιωπῶσαν εὗρηκε φωνῆν. (5.) ὑφαίνει γὰρ πέπλον ἄγγελον καὶ τὸ δράμα πλέκει ταῖς κρόκαις, καὶ τὴν γλώτταν μιμεῖται ἢ χεῖρ, καὶ Πρόκνης τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς τὰ τῶν ὠτῶν μηνύει καὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν ἅ πέπονθε τῇ κερκίδι λαλεῖ. (6.) ἢ Πρόκνη τὴν βίαν ἀκούει παρὰ τοῦ πέπλου καὶ ἀμύνασθαι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ζητεῖ τὸν ἀνδρὰ. ὄργαι δὲ δύο, καὶ δύο γυναῖκες εἰς ἓν πνέουσαι καὶ ὕβρει κεράσασαι τὴν ζηλοτυπίαν δειπνον ἐπινοοῦσι τῶν γάμων ἀτυχέστερον. (7.) τὸ δὲ δειπνον ἦν ὁ παῖς Τηρέως, οὗ μήτηρ μὲν ἦν πρὸ τῆς ὀργῆς ἢ Πρόκνη· τότε δὲ τῶν ὠδίνων ἐπετέλεστο. οὕτως αἱ τῆς ζηλοτυπίας ὠδίνες νικῶσι καὶ τὴν γαστέρα. μόνον γὰρ ἐρῶσαι γυναῖκες ἀνιάσαι τὸν τὴν εὐνήν λελυπηκότα, κὰν πάσχωσιν ἐν οἷς ποιοῦσιν οὐχ ἦττον κακόν, τὴν τοῦ πάσχειν λογίζονται συμφορὰν τῇ τοῦ ποιεῖν ἡδονῇ. (8.) ἐδείπνησεν ὁ Τηρεὺς δειπνον Ἐρινύων· αἱ δὲ ἐν κανῶ τὰ λείψανα τοῦ παιδίου παρέφερον, γελῶσαι φόβῳ. ὁ Τηρεὺς ὄρᾳ τὰ λείψανα τοῦ παιδίου καὶ πενθεῖ τὴν τροφήν καὶ ἐγνώρισεν ὧν τοῦ δειπνου πατήρ· γνωρίσας μαίνεται καὶ σπᾶται τὸ ξίφος καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς γυναῖκας τρέχει, ἃς δέχεται ὁ ἀήρ. καὶ ὁ Τηρεὺς αὐταῖς συναναβαίνει καὶ ὄρνις γίνεται. καὶ τηροῦσιν ἔτι τοῦ πάθους τὴν εἰκόνα· (9.) φεύγει μὲν ἀηδῶν, διώκει δὲ ὁ Τηρεὺς. οὕτως ἐφύλαξε τὸ μῖσος καὶ μέχρι τῶν πτερῶν.”

‘The nightingale, the swallow, and the hoopoe: all three humans, all three birds. (2.) The hoopoe is the man; of the two women, Philomela is the swallow and Procne the nightingale. The women came from the city of Athens. The man's name was Tereus, and Procne was his wife. It seems that with barbarians one wife will not satisfy Aphrodite's needs, especially when the opportunity to indulge in rape presents itself. (3.) Such an opportunity to display his nature was provided to this Thracian by Procne's kindly affection: she sent her husband to collect her sister. He began the outward journey still faithful to Procne, but the homeward one aflame for Philomela. On the way, he made Philomela his second Procne. (4.) Out of fear of Philomela's tongue, he gave her as her wedding present the gift of speechlessness, clipping the

flower of speech. All to no avail, for artful Philomela invented silent speech: (5.) she wove a robe to be her messenger, weaving the plot into the threads. The hand imitated the tongue: she revealed to Procne's eyes what normally meets the ears, using the shuttle to communicate her experience. (6.) When Procne heard from the robe of the rape, she sought to exact an excessive revenge upon her husband. Their anger was doubled, since there were two women of a single mind: they plotted a feast more ill-starred than their marriages, blending resentment into a recipe for atrocity. (7.) The feast was Tereus' son, whose mother Procne had been before her anger: she had no memory of the birth-pangs now. Thus do the pangs of resentment vanquish even the womb: for when wives desire nothing other than to hurt the husband who has brought grief to the marriage-bed, though they themselves suffer no less pain as they inflict it, they weigh up the pain of suffering against the pleasure of inflicting. (8.) Tereus' feast was served up by the Furies: the women brought him the leftovers of his son in a basket, cackling as they cowered. When Tereus saw the leftovers of his son, his meal filled him with sorrow: he realised that he was the father of the feast. When this dawned upon him, he flew into a mad rage, drew his sword, and ran at the women. They were whisked into the air, and Tereus was lifted up with them, metamorphosing into a bird. Even now they preserve the image of their suffering: (9.) the nightingale flees, with Tereus in pursuit, retaining his hatred thus even in winged form.'

(5,5)

Paratactic, symmetric, and concise, the first sentence, while perfectly answering Leucippe's question, recalls closely the style used in the introductions of the paintings in 1,1 and 3,6, and one cannot avoid feeling that the choice of this specific style imitates the showing of a visual object: there is no need for verbs because the images substitute the verbs in providing the narrative. Behind 'ἔποψ ὁ ἀνὴρ· αἱ δύο γυναῖκες, Φιλομήλα χελιδῶν, καὶ Πρόκνη ἀηδῶν' (and the following 'πόλις αὐταῖς Ἀθῆναι. Τηρεὺς ὁ ἀνὴρ· Πρόκνη Τηρέως γυνή') one can almost see the finger pointing at the picture. However, what follows ceases to be the verbal label of the picture and takes the tone of a proper narrative.²¹⁵ Clitophon blames Tereus' violence on his barbaric nature, thus not just reporting what the Thracian did, but interpreting it from a cultural point of view ('It seems that with barbarians one wife will not satisfy Aphrodite's needs, ...'). He then glides quickly through the episode of the rape, mentioning it with words that are clear enough to tell what happened, yet vague enough not to expose Leucippe to the scabrous event explicitly (not more than the picture already did vividly). The same goes for the cutting of the tongue, where Clitophon chooses words that are specifically designed for his delicate audience, never saying that Tereus cut Philomela's tongue, but, literally, that he 'gave her the inability to speak as a wedding-gift, and cut the flower of the voice'. This episode also gives him the opportunity for an erudite gloss on art as a form of silent communication: 'artful Philomela invented silent speech: she wove a robe to be her messenger,

²¹⁵ It has been noted (Harlan 1965, 128, Bartsch 1989, 65), that Clitophon's explanation of the story of Philomela and Procne is similar to Philostratus' way of interpreting paintings by providing the wider narrative of the myth depicted. Philostratus, however, does that systematically, whereas this is the first time that the study of a painting proceeds in this way in Achilles Tatius.

weaving the plot into the threads. The hand imitated the tongue.²¹⁶ The play on antithesis of sound and vision is mirrored by Procne's reception of the story: 'she revealed to Procne's eyes what normally meets the ears' (Πρόκνης τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς τὰ τῶν ὠτῶν μηνύει), 'when Procne heard from the robe of the rape' (ἡ Πρόκνη τὴν βίαν ἀκούει παρὰ τοῦ πέπλου). The episode of Itys' death shows particular care, for instead of telling the act of killing itself, Clitophon stresses the destructive power of a jealous rage, and how it overcomes even the strongest bond of being a mother.²¹⁷ Besides, shifting the attention to the labour and the womb ironically anticipates the fact that Itys will finish his days in the same way in which he began them, in one of his parents' bellies.²¹⁸ After this, Clitophon's tale becomes more factual and less reflective. In the part where he tells about the feast of the Erinyes, he is basically paraphrasing what he has previously said in the *ekphrasis*.²¹⁹ Finally, he concludes by resuming the beginning of the speech, the metamorphosis into birds.²²⁰

²¹⁶ An adaptation of Simonides' famous statement that painting is silent poetry and poetry talking painting (Whitmarsh and Morales 2001, 157). This contains reasoning that can be extended to the other paintings in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, for in each case words substituted images, but it is interesting to notice that the saying, which was very popular, is alluded to for the first time in the painting of Philomela and Procne, which presents a case of an image within an image (the tapestry with its own story, inside the surrounding painting). The Simonidean maxim was the starting point of a line of thought that would bear important consequences for the criticism of both literature and art. This will be analysed more thoroughly in the next chapter, concerning Longus and the birth of the genre of *ekphrasis* of paintings. The counterpart of Philomela's tapestry in the story is probably the exchange of letters between Leucippe and Clitophon in 5,18 and 5,20 (Repath 2013), although the myth is being parodied: a silent communication to tell the exact opposite of the tapestry, not the exposure of a rape, but a proclamation of virginity!

²¹⁷ Harlan 1965, 128-129, suggests the presence of rhetorical material; perhaps more to the point, Whitmarsh points at Euripides' *Medea* (Whitmarsh and Morales 2001, 158).

²¹⁸ Such reasoning, opposed to the lack of visual violence, has a tragic flavour. The story of Philomela and Procne was the subject of a tragedy (Sophocles' lost *Tereus*), besides sharing with other tragedies the themes of infanticide (*Medea*, by Euripides and Seneca; Seneca's *Thyestes*) and cannibalism (Seneca's *Thyestes*). In Euripides' *Medea* the audience was not meant to witness the killing, but, quite effectively, only to hear the children's screams from outside the stage (1270-1278). Among other innovations, Seneca's *Medea* shows the protagonist slaying both children on stage, one on her own and the other in front of Jason (967 ff.). In Seneca's *Thyestes* the killing takes place outside the stage, but is substituted by an extremely detailed *rhêsis aggelikê* (683 ff.). What is shown are, at 1004-1005, the heads of the children, much in the same way as Philomela and Procne are described as showing Itys' remains in Achilles Tatius. It is likely that Sophocles would have followed in the *Tereus* the Greek custom of moving the killing outside the scene and leaving its account to a *rhêsis aggelikê* (the same strategy he used, for example, in *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1237 ff., and *Antigone* 1192 ff. and 1282 ff.), and Clitophon, in indulging in the struggle between the pain of labour and the pain of jealousy instead of describing the actual killing, is perhaps following his steps. See again Liapis 2006, who covers the links between these paragraphs in Achilles Tatius and Sophocles' lost *Tereus*.

²¹⁹ Cf. the painting's 'αἱ γυναῖκες ἐν κανῶ τὰ λείψανα τοῦ δεῖπνου τῶ Τηρεῖ δεικνύουσι' with 'ἐδείπνησεν ὁ Τηρεὺς δεῖπνον Ἐρινύων, αἱ δὲ ἐν κανῶ τὰ λείψανα τοῦ παιδίου παρέφερον' here; the painting's 'γελῶσι δὲ ἄμα καὶ φοβούνται' with 'γελῶσαι φόβῳ' here; the painting's 'ἔλκων τὸ ξίφος ἐπὶ τὰς γυναῖκας' with 'σπᾶται τὸ ξίφος καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς γυναῖκας τρέχει' here.

²²⁰ One might notice that this conclusion is less precise than the beginning, lacking the symmetry of the associations characters-birds. This is evident in the sentence 'φεύγει μὲν ἀηδῶν, διώκει δὲ ὁ Τηρεὺς'. Although Tereus has turned into a bird (ὄρνις γίνεται, without any specification that this bird is a hoopoe), he is still called by his human name. This would cause no trouble, were it not for the fact that, on the contrary, Procne is rightly referred to as a nightingale, and Philomela, the swallow, is not referred to at all. Achilles Tatius usually follows a more accurate balance in this kind of sentences, but perhaps he needs to leave Tereus' name as it is to make a pun with the preceding *têrousin*: 'καὶ τηρούσιν ἔτι τοῦ πάθους τὴν εἰκόνα· φεύγει μὲν ἀηδῶν, διώκει δὲ ὁ Τηρεὺς' (Whitmarsh and Morales 2001, 158).

It is difficult to judge the coherence of Clitophon's speech. At first he answers Leucippe's question as if he is actually seeing the birds, although no mention of them has been made before. Then he moves on to the account of the myth. However, he is not content with just stating the facts and summarising the story, but produces a speech that is well polished in terms of contents, showing a learned background, and in terms of style, being carefully built for a selected audience. As a result, the discrepancy between the accuracy of the exegesis and the incompleteness of the *ekphrasis* emerges, and the readers, used to the previous precise descriptions, are left with the impression that there is much more than what this painting offers. However, they might be reminded that, contrarily to the previous cases, this painting is not found in a temple, a place where works of art are exhibited, but in a studio, a place where works of art are made. Whereas in the former case the work of art, being dedicated and exhibited, must be complete, in the latter it can still be in the process of being made. If this is the case here, then what the characters see would be a work in progress, which would justify the fact that some episodes of the myth are still missing in the painting. On a purely speculative level, it may be suggested that Leucippe is seeing the images of the birds in a preparatory sketch, before they are drawn on the painting. The natural question to this would be why does Achilles Tatius not tell all these details. The answer might be a metaliterary one, considering the fact that the last painting is as incomplete as the novel that frames it.

The readers do not know it yet, but the sense of dissatisfaction derived from this *ekphrasis* will be multiplied by the novel's ending. As the genre commands, the protagonists undergo many adventures before their final reunion. To put it briefly, Leucippe will experience two more apparent deaths, slavery, attempted rape, and a test of virginity, while Clitophon will engage in an affair with a rich widow which will culminate in sexual intercourse, but also suffer imprisonment, physical violence, and will have to stand trial. The striking part, however, is that after all of this has happened, even after the marriage, the readers are left with an only apparent happy ending. First of all, the protagonists do not have sex, a unique case in the novels written up to Achilles Tatius' times.²²¹ Secondly, after having gone back and forth from Tyre to Byzantium, the novel ends with the promise of a journey back to Byzantium. Now, apart from the fact that we would prefer to see the protagonists settling down and living happily ever after, and instead what we are given is a couple that clearly has not found its place, the major problem is that at the beginning of the novel

²²¹ One might also notice that by the end of the novel the protagonists lose all their sex appeal and erotic impulse. Clitophon is a man who is not able to defend himself, who will be said to be like a girl or a eunuch, who will wear female clothes, and who will be practically the object of Melite's sexual violence. Leucippe is a girl who works the land, does not come across as particularly bright, and has short hair. No more compliments will be made by Clitophon about Leucippe's beauty, and they will even stop kissing. The wedding is briefly mentioned, but the fact that no mention is made of the first night together (again, unlike all the other novels up to that point) may even not depend on modesty, but instead on the fact that nothing happened during that night. As in Book One the primary narrator finds Clitophon after his adventures have ended, but still in a state of distress, questions about the ending of the novel become questions about its beginning as well. On this see Most 1989 and, *contra*, Nakatani 2003, 74 ff. and Repath 2005.

the primary narrator finds Clitophon in Sidon, alone and sad. Why is he there? What is he doing? Where is Leucippe?²²² What matters here is that the author seems to have highlighted an unusual, incomplete ending in contrast with the previous tradition, just like the last *ekphrasis* is unusually incomplete if compared to the others. Just like the painter's atelier, the author's desk presents a work that is unfinished, not only because at that stage the novel was naturally incomplete, but also because already at that stage Achilles Tatius had planned to leave it open-ended.²²³

The table in the painting (the last sentence of the *ekphrasis*), described when it is about to fall, at the peak moment of its potential energy, resembles the ending of the novel (καὶ διεγνώκαμεν ἐν τῇ Τύρῳ παραχειμάσαντες διελθεῖν εἰς τὸ Βυζάντιον, 'then we decided to spend the winter in Tyre before returning to Byzantium' 8,19), still open to developments.²²⁴ Now, we cannot expect a book to follow the laws of physics, but we can generally agree that we like our novels to exhaust their kinetic charge by the time we reach the last page. At the end of *Leucippe and Clitophon*, however, just as at the end of the *ekphrasis* (the table about to fall, the untold fate of the characters), the narrative energy is still there, and although we can easily predict what is about to happen (the table will fall, Leucippe and Clitophon will keep on dealing with whatever destiny throws at them), we are not shown it, a situation that results in a feeling of puzzlement. Therefore, Leucippe's questions ('What is the meaning of the myth in the painting? What are those birds? Who is that shameless man?') become our questions, for we wonder what the meaning of the book is, and what happened to its characters. These questions are meant to be unanswered. The point here is not why Achilles Tatius left the novel without an ending and what happened to the protagonists, but that in the last painting he hints, among other connections to the plot, at his strategy for the end of the novel.²²⁵

²²² A survey of answers to these questions can be found in Repath 2005, who suggests a 'non-happy non-ending' as a reversal of the genre's rules. Perhaps Clitophon is unhappy in Sidon because, having finally learnt Menelaus' lesson on paintings as omens, he has realised that the vision of the painting of Europa will bring about more misfortunes. See further on the intended incompleteness of the novel Rabau 1997, Kasprzyk 2005, and Guez 2007.

²²³ Nimis has advanced the idea that not everything in the novels is part of the author's pre-determined plan, and that, instead, the novelists had in mind the general outline of the story but proceeded by opening many doors, deciding to walk only through some of them, and sometimes forgetting to close the others (see Nimis 1999). This contrasts with views such as Bartsch's, which is based on the idea that everything in *Leucippe and Clitophon* is part of the carefully conceived plan of the author, who controls with the same mastery both narrative and readers. Nimis, on the other hand, opts for a more experimental, heuristic way of writing novels (Nimis 1998 on the role of paintings in Achilles Tatius from this point of view). If it is true that the last painting is proleptic of the novel's open-endedness, then this means that also those aspects that Nimis believes to be subject to whim were in fact carefully planned. Achilles Tatius' experimentation, from a different angle, will be discussed soon.

²²⁴ Harlan 1965, 130-1, believes this to be the description of an existing painting and reads the falling table as a detail of pictorial realism.

²²⁵ On the possible reasons why there is no painting in Book Seven, thus breaking the sequence of odd-numbered books starting with descriptions of paintings, see Nakatani 2003.

Final remarks

Achilles Tatius' approach to art is uniform only in appearance, but on a closer look the three *ekphraseis* are not the triple repetition of a same model. From an artistic point of view, for instance, each painting belongs to a different typology. The painting of Europa is a straightforward one, for it consists of one scene showing one single moment of the story. The paintings of Andromeda and Prometheus constitute a diptych. The painting of Philomela and Procne is again a single painting, but it shows different scenes representing different moments of the story (narrative painting). From an iconographical point of view, the first two instances fully reflect real works of art to the detail, with the exception of the garden in the painting of Europa. Not only this: the way in which the narrator describes the first two paintings presupposes the viewing of real paintings. Instead, the lack of consistency in the treatment of the third painting seems to indicate a state of incompleteness, and its lack of parallels in art (or, better, the selection of scenes that are absent in art and the omission of those that are present) seems to indicate its being fictitious. It might also be noticed that the last two (Andromeda and Prometheus, Philomela and Procne) represent characters with a strong theatrical, and, specifically, tragic, background, whereas the myth shown in the first one belongs to the bucolic genre. This does not mean that the last two paintings should be associated in contrast to the first one, first of all because tragedy was among the most popular means of transmission of mythical tales and it is therefore just natural that art, in representing myths, ended up representing tragedies. Secondly, because if we change the parameters, the associations also seem to change. If we consider these stories from the point of view of their positivity, then what we see is an increasing worsening from the first to the last painting. The story of Europa is one of love where no one is killed (all of this not considering the fact that Europa is technically taken against her will and that the love narrated is everything but lawful); both the stories of Andromeda and Prometheus involve torment and the risk of death, but both have a happy ending (and Perseus and Andromeda surely represent a happy couple); instead, the story of Philomela and Procne is one of destruction. In this case, the first two paintings would appear closer, in contrast to the third one. The same affinity results from the consideration of the location where the paintings are found: the first two in a temple, the third one in a studio.

Differences also emerge when considering the relationship of the paintings with the narration. On the one hand it is true that the one thing that all the paintings have in common is that they share a proleptic function with regard to the plot. This is explained best by one of the characters, Menelaus:

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

(5,4)

As a matter of fact, the events that follow the description of a painting (up to the next painting) somehow resemble its content, both in the general theme (though in the end it is never exactly the same) and in the details (lexical affinities so clear that no reader could miss them, e.g. Perseus' double sword in 3,7,9 and the sword with retractable blade in 3,20,7). However, how this takes place does not follow one immutable formula, but is instead subject to countless variables meant to surprise the readers by constantly exceeding, often much to their frustration, their expectations. On the other hand, the meaning of the events in relation to the paintings varies according to who the narrators and audiences of the paintings and their descriptions are. The triple nature of Clitophon, at first character in the primary narrator's narration, and then narrator of his own story and protagonist of it, and the fact that it is his narratee who is the one who finally delivers the story to the readers, already presents a difficult narratological situation. Quite often we have found ourselves wondering whether the person talking is Clitophon-character, Clitophon-narrator, the anonymous primary narrator, or a combination of the three. This should be made easier by the presence of an *ekphrasis*, for it represents a break in the sequence of events, and its artificiality is usually the signal of an elaboration taking place during the act of narrating, not during the story (unless, say, the story included a character who were to deliver to an audience the description of something, as Helen does when she describes the Greek warriors to the Trojan elders on the walls of Troy in *Iliad* 3,154 ff.). The possibilities would then be reduced to Clitophon-narrator and the primary narrator, or perhaps a combination of the two.

In *Leucippe and Clitophon* the best example of this seems to be the description of the diptych of Andromeda and Prometheus. The fact that the characters (Clitophon and Leucippe) stop acting and interacting between themselves indicates that the time of the story has stopped, and what follows is a description made by the narrator. Whether the narrator is entirely Clitophon, or the primary narrator has mediated the description cannot be said, but does not seem to be fundamental. The main intended audience are the primary narrator and the readers. It is up to them to detect the proleptic function of the painting and find the connections with the plot. Since there is no sign of further interaction between Clitophon-character and the painting, the description of the painting takes place outside the story, which means that any attempt to interpret it is simply out of Clitophon's reach. In this case the relation between the *ekphrasis* and the novel runs smoothly: the painting as an object is marginal to the characters, its description takes place outside the story, and the prolepsis is therefore only for the readers' benefit. It runs smoothly especially because the

characters are unaware of the proleptic function of the painting. This, however, is the first painting Clitophon describes (to our knowledge the second one he has seen, considering the painting of Selene on the bull), and is by far the simplest case.

As we have seen, things become more complicated in the case of the painting of Philomela and Procne. In this case the author wants to open the proleptic reading of the painting to the characters, and in order to do so he has to bring the *ekphrasis* and the analysis of the painting inside the time of the story. The main flaw of this strategy consists in the fact that, regardless of the interaction between the characters and the painting and its meaning, none of this will produce any real insight in them. Although the readers and the characters should be on the same page and with the same level of knowledge (because they both constitute the audience and share the same interpretation), the readers will witness the characters ignore the information they were given. Moreover, no reference to the painting will be made by either Clitophon-character or Clitophon-narrator in the future, a sign, perhaps, that even as a narrator he still does not understand the significance of the paintings he has encountered. As a result, the connection between the proleptic painting and the story is less stable when the characters are aware of the function of the painting, because one would expect them to do something about it, or at least show some understanding of their own condition, none of which is the case. It is hard to tell whether Achilles Tatius is playing down his characters' acumen or whether he has experimented with a new modality of integration of description and narration (and multiple layers of it), and lost control of it in the process.

The latter point agrees with the view of Achilles Tatius as an author who decided to take his novel, from a point of view of composition, in a direction thus far little travelled, that of blending as much as possible and in as many ways as possible narration with description, and especially with descriptions of works of art. At his disposal were the notions learnt in the schools of rhetoric, that taught him how to write a description (careful analysis of the parts of the subject, use of *enargeia*, use of a style that matches the subject), how to use it (not detached but as a part of the whole composition), and how to understand its nature (a mode of narration). He applied this to something in which the novel as a genre was already interested, works of art, but chose especially the kind of works of art that were already by nature prone to the telling of a story, paintings. The description of paintings for allegorical purposes had already been tried (Pseudo-Cebes' *Tabula*), but never before in fictional narrative, as had the inserted description of a work of art with connections to the surrounding text (and Achilles Tatius pays homage to his main model, Moschus, in the *ekphrasis* of Europa), but never with paintings. What is more, the novelist explored a number of options for the combination of paintings and story, not limiting himself to one straightforward principle of prolepsis.

A variety of ways in which artistic and literary models can be combined in the description of a painting are exemplified by Achilles Tatius. In the *ekphrasis* of Europa we have the coexistence of iconography and poetry in the same painting (the realistic painting of Europa with the addition of Moschus' garden); in the *ekphrasis* of the diptych we see the author's understanding of the literary (theatrical in particular) origins of an existing joint iconography and their exploitation; in the painting of Philomela and Procne we find the juxtaposition of the *ekphrasis* of the painting and narration of the story there depicted. Moreover, from a narratological point of view, Achilles Tatius tries in each case a different solution, with different results. All of this suggests that there were no established rules on how to use *ekphrasis* of paintings, that the feature was relatively new and therefore unexplored, and that Achilles Tatius pioneered it by testing its many possibilities. The recurring reference, in the *ekphraseis*, to the actions of the artists, and the implication, in the last one, of the painter at work, serve as an image of the author's own experimentation. Achilles Tatius' interest is much more practical than it is theoretical. Paraphrasing Simonides in mentioning embroidery as a form of silent communication (5,5,4) is as close as Achilles Tatius gets to formulating a theory of art. But it is only after practice has paved the way that theory can provide the insight, and it is only after a narrative has been scattered in different ways with different descriptions of paintings that a reflection on the results of this can begin. The role played by another novelist in the study of the nature of *ekphrasis* of paintings, and consequently in the study of the nature of art, will be the topic of the next chapter.

A Byzantine epigram revisited

We started the discussion of works of art in Achilles Tatius by reporting an epigram written in Byzantine times, which encouraged the reading of the novel as well as gave advice on how to proceed with it.²²⁶ After having read the novel and seen what happens in it, the reader might have

²²⁶ AP 9,203:

Ἔρωτα πικρόν, ἀλλὰ σώφρονα βίον
ὁ Κλειτοφῶντος ὡσπερ ἐμφαίνει λόγος·
ὁ Λευκίππης δὲ σωφρονέστατος βίος
ἅπαντας ἐξίστησι, πῶς τετυμμένη
κεκαρμένη τε καὶ κατηχρειωμένη,
τὸ δὴ μέγιστον, τρίς θανούσ' ἔκαρτέρει.
εἴπερ δὲ καὶ σὺ σωφρονεῖν θέλῃς, φίλος,
μὴ τὴν πάρεργον τῆς γραφῆς σκόπει θέαν,
τὴν τοῦ λόγου δὲ πρῶτα συνδρομὴν μάθε·
συμφοστολεῖ γὰρ τοὺς ποθοῦντας ἐμφρόνως.

(The story of Clitophon almost brings before our eyes a bitter passion but a moral life, and the most chaste conduct of Leucippe astonishes everyone. Beaten, her head shorn, vilely used, and, above all, thrice done to death, she still bore all. If, my friend, you wish to live morally, do not pay attention to the adventitious beauty of style, but first learn the conclusion of the discourse; for it joins in wedlock lovers who loved wisely.)

gone back to the epigram and questioned the poet's point of view on the morality of the novel. But upon returning to the epigram, he might also have realised that some of the poet's words could have been interpreted differently, namely the advice on how to read the novel:

εἴπερ δὲ καὶ σὺ σωφρονεῖν θέλῃς, φίλος,
μὴ τὴν πάρεργον τῆς γραφῆς σκόπει θεάν,
τὴν τοῦ λόγου δὲ πρῶτα συνδρομὴν μάθε

If, my friend, you wish to live morally, do not pay attention to the adventitious beauty of style, but first learn the conclusion of the discourse.

In *De domo* Lucian makes a comparison between the words of a rhetorician trying to describe works of art and the excessive make-up used by a beautiful woman:

φημί γὰρ οὖν καὶ γυναιξὶ καλαῖς οὐχ ὅπως συλλαμβάνειν ἐς τὸ εὐμορφότερον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐναντιοῦσθαι τὸν κόσμον τὸν πολύν, ὅποτε τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων ἕκαστος ὑπὸ τοῦ χρυσοῦ καὶ τῶν λίθων τῶν πολυτελῶν ἐκπλαγείς ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐπαινεῖν ἢ χροάν ἢ βλέμμα ἢ δειρὴν ἢ πῆχυν ἢ δάκτυλον, ὁ δὲ ταῦτ' ἀφείς ἐς τὴν σαρδῶ ἢ τὸν σμάραγδον ἢ τὸν ὄρμον ἢ τὸ ψέλιον ἀποβλέπη, ὥστε ἄχθοιτο ἂν εἰκότως παρορωμένη διὰ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἀγόντων σχολὴν ἐπαινεῖν αὐτὴν τῶν θεατῶν, ἀλλὰ πάρεργον αὐτῆς ποιουμένων τὴν θεάν. ὅπερ ἀνάγκη, οἶμαι, παθεῖν καὶ τὸν ἐν οὕτω καλοῖς ἔργοις λόγους δεικνύοντα.

I assert that, far from contributing to the good looks of a beautiful woman, abundant jewellery is actually a detriment. Everyone who meets her is dazzled by her gold and her expensive gems, and instead of praising her complexion, her eyes, her neck, her arm or her finger, he neglects them and lets his eyes wander to her sard or her emerald, her necklace or her bracelet. She might fairly get angry at being thus slighted for her ornaments, when observers are too occupied to pay her compliments and think her aspect subordinate. The same thing is bound to happen, I think, to a man who tries to show his eloquence among works of art like these.

(*De domo* 15-16, trans. Loeb, adapted)

The show of words of the rhetorician ends up spoiling (instead of increasing) the beauty of the paintings, just like excessive make-up ruins (instead of helping) the beauty of the woman. The beauty of the woman, like the beauty of the paintings, becomes then a subordinate show (πάρεργον αὐτῆς ποιουμένων τὴν θεάν). These words are similar to the poets' 'μὴ τὴν πάρεργον τῆς γραφῆς σκόπει θεάν'. There is one fundamental difference, namely the fact that in Lucian the subordinate show is the one that really deserves attention, whereas in the poem the subordinate show distracts the reader from what is important, but both Lucian and the poet are talking about flamboyant style that covers the real message. Lucian uses these words in a context of descriptions of works of art, and, having this in mind, one might notice that art can also be found in the poet's

words: τῆς γραφῆς. *Graphê* can mean both ‘writing’ and ‘drawing’, and although Paton’s translation, not incorrectly, opts for the first meaning, understanding it as ‘style’, the second option is always available, and perhaps should be kept in mind, given that the poet is talking about a novel that starts with the description of a painting. With a slight change, the translation can then read:

do not pay attention to the subordinate show of the painting, but first learn the conclusion of the discourse.

This is quite fitting in Achilles Tatius’ case, because, as we have seen, it is only after learning the conclusion of the story that we can relate it to the show of the painting (in its real connection and not just the apparent one). Perhaps the poet was in fact trying to help his friend with a narrative that is more complicated than it seems by providing him with the key to read the novel. Moreover, the poet would hint at Achilles Tatius’ strategy while mimicking it, for it is upon second reading that his words become clearer: only after having read *Leucippe and Clitophon* can the recipient of the epigram fully understand the meaning of the advice and connect it with the novel. Lastly, even ‘εἴπερ δὲ καὶ σὺ σωφρονεῖν θέλῃς’ can acquire a different meaning. Not ‘if you wish to live morally’, but instead ‘if you wish to be sound of mind’; that is, if one wishes to keep one’s sanity while reading, which also fits Achilles Tatius’ case rather well.

3.4. Appendix: Achilles Tatius and Lucian

The reference to Lucian’s *De domo* allows us to resume a thread hinted at a few times in the course of this chapter, that is, the connections between Achilles Tatius and Lucian with regard to descriptions of works of art. On more than one occasion we have observed similarities between these two authors not just in the subjects described, but also in the details highlighted. It is therefore time to look at these details and attempt some conclusions, keeping in mind that both the dating of Achilles Tatius and the relative dating of most of Lucian’s works are uncertain, but also that the two lived more or less in the same period, and showed a similar interest in art, which finds little equivalence in their contemporaries. When reading scholarship on Lucian’s artistic side, one often finds the statement (based on the beginning of *Somnium*) that Lucian had acquired his advanced knowledge of art from his training as a sculptor. However, young Lucian’s time in his uncle’s workshop cannot have been very long, if, as he says, he managed to fail his very first task spectacularly (turning what was supposed to be gentle chiselling into stone-breaking) and was consequently thrown out immediately after. Whatever the source of his knowledge of art, Lucian indeed shows appreciation for the artistic quality of the works of art he describes, and some of his

remarks almost classify him as an art critic. Compared with Achilles Tatius, he goes one step beyond the *ekphrasis* of paintings and into the reflection on what takes place in the description of a painting. Some of this will be part of the next chapter. What follows is meant to deal only with the passages in Lucian that show strong similarities with the descriptions of paintings in Achilles Tatius.

Although Achilles Tatius is the only author who describes Evanthēs' diptych, the *ekphrasis* of a painting of Andromeda can be found in other authors of the same age. Some time after Achilles Tatius, Philostratus the Elder included a painting of Perseus and Andromeda among the *Imagines* (1,29). The scene takes place after the battle, with the sea monster already slain and dripping a stream of blood into the water. Perseus, however, is not, as expected, freeing Andromeda, for that task is entrusted to Eros, who sprung to Perseus' aid in answer to his prayer.²²⁷ Not many lines are devoted to the description of Andromeda,²²⁸ whose attention is entirely captured by Perseus. Finally we find the hero, in a most unusual pose. He is lying on the grass, resting after the fight and welcoming gifts from the Ethiopians. His only interaction with the maiden is a gaze. The description does not fit with any iconographical type known to us, and constitutes an *unicum*.

Lucian tells the story of Andromeda at length twice, in *De domo* 22, in the form of a description of a work of art, and *Dialogi marini* 14, in the form of a dialogue. In *De domo*, the painting of Perseus and Andromeda is the first one of eight (plus one statue) to be described by the rhetor:

Ἐν δεξιᾷ μὲν οὖν εἰσιόντι Ἀργολικῷ μύθῳ ἀναμέμικται πάθος Αἰθιοπικόν· ὁ Περσεύς τὸ κῆτος φονεύει καὶ τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν καθαιρεῖ, καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν γαμήσει καὶ ἀπεισιν αὐτὴν ἄγων· πάρεργον τοῦτο τῆς ἐπὶ Γοργόνας πτήσεως. ἐν βραχεῖ δὲ πολλὰ ὁ τεχνίτης ἐμιμήσατο, αἰδῶ παρθένου καὶ φόβον—ἐπισκοπεῖ γὰρ μάχην ἄνωθεν ἐκ τῆς πέτρας—καὶ νεανίου τόλμαν ἐρωτικὴν καὶ θηρίου ὄψιν ἀπρόσμαχον· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἔπεισι πεφρικός ταῖς ἀκάνθαις καὶ δεδιπτόμενον τῷ χάσματι, ὁ Περσεύς δὲ τῇ λαιᾷ μὲν προδείκνυσι τὴν Γοργόνα, τῇ δεξιᾷ δὲ καθικνεῖται τῷ ξίφει· καὶ τὸ μὲν ὅσον τοῦ κήτους εἶδε τὴν Μέδουσαν, ἤδη λίθος ἐστίν, τὸ δ' ὅσον ἐμψυχον μένει, τῇ ἄρπῃ κόπτεται.

On the right as you come in, you have a combination of Argolic myth and Ethiopian romance. Perseus is killing the sea-monster and freeing Andromeda; in a little while he will marry her and go away with her. It is an incident to his winged quest of the Gorgons. The artist has represented much in little –the maid's modesty and terror (for she is looking down on the fight from the cliff overhead), the lad's fond courage and

²²⁷ The addition of Eros is unique, yet not at all unjustified, for in all likelihood Perseus's prayer is the one that is shown in fr. 136 Nauck (σὺ δ' ὦ θεῶν τύραννε κἀνθρώπων Ἔρως, ...). The presence of the god in Philostratus represents the answer to that prayer.

²²⁸ Quite interestingly, Andromeda's charm is mainly attributed to the fact she is a white Ethiopian (ὅτι λευκὴ ἐν Αἰθιοπία), a detail generally much dismissed, but which will become of crucial importance in Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*.

the beast's unconquerable mien. As he comes on bristling with spines and inspiring terror with his gaping jaws Perseus displays the Gorgon in his left hand, and with his right assails him with the sword: the part of the monster which has seen the Medusa is already stone, and the part that is still alive is feeling the hanger's edge.
(*De domo* 22, trans. Harmon)

The scene takes place during the fight between Perseus and the sea monster, with Andromeda chained to the rocks. The characters are only sketched, and the only detailed information we are given regards the sea monster (emerging from the water with bristling spines) and Perseus' weapons (the Gorgoneion in the left hand and the *harpê* in the right hand). Especially if we compare it with Philostratus', this description falls undoubtedly very close to Achilles Tatius'. Some differences, however, must be pointed out. To begin with, Lucian's account is nowhere near as long as Achilles Tatius'. There is no comparison, in terms of words, between the novelist's meticulously detailed description and the brief account given by Lucian.²²⁹ Surely *De domo* was not meant to include long descriptions of all the works of art present in the hall, for the purpose of the speech is the description and praise of the hall itself, of which the works of art are but a part.²³⁰

Secondly, the scene depicted comes, in terms of the chronological sequence of the events in the story, after the scene depicted by Evanthes. In Achilles Tatius Perseus is descending from the sky, but he still has not engaged battle, whereas in Lucian he is clearly depicted in the act of slaying the monster (ὁ Περσεὺς τὸ κῆτος φονεύει). The two descriptions belong to different iconographical types. If Evanthes' painting can be placed side by side with the Pompeian wall painting from House IX, 7, 16, the painting described by Lucian can be compared with the wall painting from a house in Region VI. With regard to the moment in the story depicted in the painting, however, one must notice that Lucian's description often overcomes the boundaries of the work of art and overlaps into the telling of the tale.²³¹ His narrative attitude is clear from the beginning, when he states that the painting is a combination of myth and romance (Ἀργολικῶ μύθῳ ἀναμείκται πάθος Αἰθιοπικόν); he then anticipates the events that are bound to happen right after, the wedding and the departure from the country (καὶ μετὰ μικρὸν γαμήσει καὶ ἄπεισιν αὐτὴν ἄγων); almost glossing this last sentence, he reminds us that this is just one of the hero's deeds (πάρεργον τοῦτο τῆς ἐπὶ Γοργόνας πτήσεως).²³² The result is that Lucian includes in his description some events that do not belong to the picture he is describing, and the tenses he uses

²²⁹ Nonetheless, Bertrand 1893, 402 praised Lucian's lack of affectation in contrast with Achilles Tatius' prolixity.

²³⁰ Not to mention the fact that, even when describing one specific painting (see *Zeuxis* 4-6, *Herodotus* 5-6, *Heracles* 1-6, *Calumniae non temere credendum* 5), Lucian always seems to devote more space to judgment and interpretation rather than to the description of details.

²³¹ Bompaigne 1958, 714.

²³² And, as a matter of fact, the quest of the Gorgons, which in the myth precedes the episode of Andromeda, will soon follow (painting of Perseus and Medusa, *De domo* 25).

surely do not help in telling the difference. The present tense is used three times with actions that cannot have taken place at the same time (ὁ Περσεὺς τὸ κῆτος φονεύει; τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν καθαίρει; ἄπεισιν αὐτὴν ἄγων), but we also find, rightly, the future tense (μετὰ μικρὸν γαμήσει). However, that the scene depicted is the battle is clear from the final lines: Perseus is cutting the monster with the *harpē* while at the same time turning it into stone with the Gorgoneion (ὁ Περσεὺς δὲ τῆ λαιᾷ μὲν προδείκνυσι τὴν Γοργόνα, τῆ δεξιᾷ δὲ καθικνεῖται τῷ ξίφει). The final and most important difference between Achilles Tatius' *Andromeda* and Lucian's is that Lucian does not describe, nor even mention, the joint painting of Prometheus. Moreover, Prometheus never appears as the subject of a work of art in Lucian's works.²³³ If Lucian does not describe *Andromeda* in the same scene as in Achilles Tatius, and if he does not describe a painting of Prometheus at all, the reason must be that they were not considering the same work of art.²³⁴

On the other hand, there is no denying that this description is as close as it gets to Achilles Tatius' *ekphrasis* of Evanthēs' *Andromeda*. The first striking similarity is the general order in which the description is constructed. The beginning (Ἐν δεξιᾷ μὲν οὖν...) is an introduction meant to define the setting and tell what the painting is about (ὁ Περσεὺς τὸ κῆτος φονεύει). The real description only starts with ἔν βραχεῖ δὲ πολλὰ ὁ τεχνίτης ἐμιμήσατο, following which attention is paid very briefly (it could have hardly been more ἐν βραχεῖ than this) to the three main characters: *Andromeda* and her feelings (no physical description is given), *Perseus* and his courage, and the monster and its bestiality. The only proper details are in the final lines of the description: the monster coming out of the water, all spines and jaws, and *Perseus*' weapons, the Gorgoneion and the *harpē*. Let us turn to the construction of Achilles Tatius' description. If in 3,6 we take away the parts regarding the painting with Prometheus, the result will be similar to Lucian's introduction (main characters, setting of the scene); then we find a long section in which *Andromeda*'s body and mind are carefully described; then comes the description of the monster's body, and finally that of *Perseus*, and in particular of his weapons. As a result, the order chosen by the two authors appears to be almost the same. The objection that it could have been the most natural order of description is overruled by the comparison with Philostratus, who, just like Lucian, was not describing the same

²³³ Unless we consider a very dim reference in a dialogue that is anyway widely recognised as spurious: τῶν δὲ πικροτέρων εἴ τις ἐβελήσειε κατὰ μέρος τὸ ἀληθὲς ἐξετάζειν, ὄντως καταράσεται Προμηθεὶ τὴν Μενάνδρειον ἐκείνην ἀπορρήξας φωνήν· Εἶτ' οὐ δικάίως προσπεπαταλευμένον | γράφουσι τὸν Προμηθεῖα πρὸς ταῖς πέτραις; 'should one wish to examine in detail the truth about the more offensive of womankind, he will curse Prometheus in real life and burst out with these words of Menander: *Then are not painters right when they depict | Prometheus nailed to rocks?*' (*Amores* 43, trans. Macleod).

²³⁴ One must therefore disagree with views such as those expressed by Bertrand 1893, 402 ('Le premier de ces deux motifs (*Andromeda* and Prometheus in *Leucippe and Clitophon* 3,6-8) est, dans toutes les circonstances, le même que celui du tableau de Lucien'), or by Bompaire 1958, 733, n. 3 ('Signalons à époque tardive la description par A. Tatios d'une peinture d'Europe analogue de Lucien').

scene as Achilles Tatius. *Imagines* 1,29 (showing roughly the following order: monster, Eros, Andromeda, Gorgoneion, shepherds, Perseus) proves that the possibilities were many.

Second, each character's description has similar details in both authors. According to Lucian, the attitude that defines Andromeda is one of modesty and fear (αἰδῶ παρθένου καὶ φόβον); Achilles Tatius says that upon Andromeda's face was a combination of beauty and fear (ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν προσώπων αὐτῆς κάλλος κεκέρασται καὶ δέος).²³⁵ When describing the monster's terrifying aspect, Lucian mentions only the spines (πεφρικὸς ταῖς ἀκάνθαις) and the open jaws (δεδιπτόμενον τῷ χάσματι); in Achilles Tatius the spines (ἡ λοφία τῶν ἀκανθῶν) and its opened mouth (γένυς πολλή καὶ μακρά· ἀνέωκτο δὲ πᾶσα ...) are part of the beast's features (which include back, scales, neck and tail). Most importantly, Lucian and Achilles Tatius are the only authors who specifically describe Perseus' weapons, and both of them, as seen, do it at the end of the description. Lucian says that Perseus is carrying the Gorgoneion with the left hand (τῇ λαιᾷ μὲν προδείκνυσι τὴν Γοργόνα) and the *harpē* with the right hand (τῇ δεξιᾷ δὲ καθικνεῖται τῷ ξίφει); in Achilles Tatius' words, 'τῇ λαιᾷ τὴν τῆς Γοργούσ κεφαλὴν κρατεῖ' and 'ὥπλισται δὲ καὶ τὴν δεξιὰν διφυεῖ σιδήρῳ εἰς δρέπανον καὶ ξίφος ἐσχισμένῳ'. Moreover, they both spend some time describing the weapons' appearance and their use. Concerning the head of Medusa, Lucian tells us about its power of turning into stone (τὸ μὲν ὅσον τοῦ κήτους εἶδε τὴν Μέδουσαν, ἤδη λίθος ἐστίν), whereas Achilles Tatius focuses on the terrifying aspect (ἡ δὲ ἐστὶ φοβερὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς χρώμασι· τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξεπέτασεν, ἔφριξε τὰς τρίχας τῶν κροτάφων, ἤγειρε τοὺς δράκοντας). As for Perseus' sword, Lucian initially calls it a ξίφος, but then specifies that what we are dealing with is also a sickle (τῇ ἄρπῃ κόπτεται); Achilles Tatius does not spare words in order to make sure that the reader understands the manufacture of the weapon:

ὥπλισται δὲ καὶ τὴν δεξιὰν διφυεῖ σιδήρῳ εἰς δρέπανον καὶ ξίφος ἐσχισμένῳ. ἄρχεται μὲν γὰρ ἡ κώπη κάτωθεν ἀμφοῖν ἐκ μιᾶς, καὶ ἐστὶν ἐφ' ἡμισυ τοῦ σιδήρου ξίφος, ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ἀπορραγὲν τὸ μὲν ὀξύνεται, τὸ δὲ ἐπικάμπτεται. καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀπωξυμμένον μένει ξίφος, ὡς ἦρξατο, τὸ δὲ καμπτόμενον δρέπανον γίνεται, ἵνα μιᾷ πληγῇ τὸ μὲν ἐρείδῃ τὴν σφαγὴν, τὸ δὲ κρατῇ τὴν τομήν.

In his right hand he was armed with a double weapon, split between a sickle and a sword; thereupon it diverged into two, the one part sharpening in a line, the other curving. The part that sharpened remained a sword as before, while the part that curved became a sickle, so that with a single blow the one blade could drive home the lethal stab and the other could complete the decapitation.
(3,7,8-9)

²³⁵ See Schwartz 1967, 537.

The novelist pays more attention to the definition of the weapon. It is a double iron weapon (διφυεῖ σιδήρῳ), half a pointed sword (ξίφος), half a sickle (δρέπανον). Although Lucian and Achilles Tatius use different words for sickle, ἄρπη and δρέπανον are synonyms, and it is evident that they had the same weapon in mind.

Concerning Perseus' weaponry, no other author who either treated Andromeda's story or its artistic representation agrees on these particulars. What is left of Euripides' *Andromeda* does not mention the sword; that Perseus was in possession of the head of Medusa was known from other lost plays by Euripides, and is mentioned in fr. 124 Nauck of the *Andromeda* (though we cannot be entirely sure about these lines), but there is no way to tell whether Perseus used it against the sea monster. Nevertheless, although art cannot be expected to give an exact representation of a play, painted vases of the fifth century BC representing Euripides' *Andromeda* never show Perseus with the Gorgoneion.²³⁶ Also, we do not know whether the messenger's report of the fight revealed in which hand the sword was held. Ovid talks about the sword in *Met.* 4,720 (*Inachides ferrum curvo tenus abdidit hamo*), 4,727 (*falcato vulnerat ense*), 5,69 (*harpen spectatam caede Medusae*), 5,176 (*harpe*). From 4,720 it appears that the weapon is the same described by Lucian and Achilles Tatius (half sword and half sickle). We can infer that Perseus is holding it with the right hand from 733-734, where, unable to fly anymore, he is holding on to a rock with the left hand while still hitting the monster. He has the Gorgoneion, the effects of which are described at 744 ff. (petrification of the leaves where the hero places the head) and at 5,180 ff. (petrification of the deluded suitors of Andromeda), but he does not use it against the monster. The description of the fight made by Apollodorus is quite laconic: τὸ κῆτος ἔκτεινε (*Bibliotheca* 2,4,3). Mention is made of the weapon, ἀδαμαντίνην ἄρπην (2,4,2), but apparently it is just the sickle, not the double sword. As for the head of Medusa, once again it is not specified whether Perseus uses it in the fight. Philostratus does not consider the sword, and, as to the Gorgoneion, only says that Perseus, after the fight, keeps it hidden lest people see it (1,29,3). In Heliodorus a painting of Andromeda and Perseus occupies a role of the utmost importance, but the author does not provide the readers with a real description, and restricts himself to say that it portrayed Perseus helping a naked Andromeda down the rocks. There is no trace of the monster, let alone of the hero's equipment. Two facts emerge from this brief survey. Lucian and Achilles Tatius are the only two authors according to whom Perseus fights the monster with the double sword and the Gorgoneion. Moreover, they are the only two who felt the need to explain which hand was holding which weapon. The resemblance of *De domo* 22 and *Leucippe and Clitophon* 3,7 is enhanced when they are compared with other accounts.

If the fact that Lucian and Achilles Tatius were looking at different paintings accounts for

²³⁶ Not to mention the fact that carrying out the petrification on stage would have been difficult, to say the least.

the differences in their descriptions, what explains the similarities? It is either one of two options: one of them knew the other's work, or they both had a common source. Schwartz, who believed that Lucian preceded Achilles Tatius,²³⁷ opts for the common source, and although he never really expresses what the common source is, a footnote indicates that he believed it to be Euripides.²³⁸ Though not provable, it is probably true that Euripides provided for the story a set of standard elements that were repeated, innovated on, or ignored in later versions.²³⁹ However, to Lucian and Achilles Tatius Euripides is a source inasmuch as his tragedy had influenced Andromeda's early iconography, but the paintings they witnessed were the result of the evolution of that iconography. Proof can be found in the fact that in Euripides Perseus did not use the Gorgoneion in fighting the monster, something which Lucian and Achilles Tatius, and they alone, clearly state. The scenario that can best explain the similarities is that the one of the two authors drew inspiration from the other's work in describing a painting that represented the same subject in a slightly different scene.

We know that Achilles Tatius used an existing joint iconography, and there is no reason to doubt that Lucian described a real painting as well: in *De domo* the whole point of describing the hall and what it contained was to amuse the audience by telling them what they were able to see right there and then. However, for Achilles Tatius the painting of Andromeda (together with that of Prometheus) was the centre of attention, whereas for Lucian it was one of several works of art, which were but a part of the several elements that made the hall worth praising. That is to say that Achilles Tatius' purpose justifies the greater effort he puts into the description just as much as Lucian's justifies his quick observations on the painting. Having said this, we can speculate on the fact that a more difficult reading calls for anteriority (one might call it '*descriptio difficilior*'), and that we can see why someone would use a more refined and sophisticated work as a source and, not wanting to be too specific about the subject and dedicate too much space to it, summarise it in a shorter version.²⁴⁰

Take for instance the description of Andromeda. Achilles Tatius describes how she is chained to the rock, how one could detect beauty and fear by the look on her face, how her hands and fingers hang from the rock, and how she is dressed. Add to all of this the abundance of details of the composition (e.g. Andromeda inside the grotto, or how her hands are chained), colours

²³⁷ Schwartz 1967 and Schwartz 1976.

²³⁸ Schwartz 1967, 538 n. 10.

²³⁹ Apart from the general plot: the image of Andromeda as a statue (fr. 125 Nauck) is recalled in Ovid (*Met.* 4, 673-675) and Achilles Tatius; the Atlantic origin of the monster reappears only in Philostratus (fr. 145 Nauck and *Imagines* 1,29,1), as well as Perseus' invocation to Eros (fr. 136 Nauck and *Imagines* 1,29,2), and the presence of Ethiopians bringing gifts (fr. 146 Nauck and *Imagines* 1,29,3).

²⁴⁰ Bowie 2002, 60-1, strengthens the possibility of a pre-160 AD date for Achilles Tatius' work, also based on papyrus evidence. As we said before, Lucian's works cannot be dated with certainty, but Schwartz 1965, 61, dates *De domo* to the 160s.

(white/reddish cheeks, violet eyes, white fingers), and even material (dress). Lucian says that her attitude was of modesty and fear (αἰδῶ παρθένου καὶ φόβου), for she was seeing the fight from above. When Achilles Tatius underlines the mixture of beauty and fear on Andromeda's face (ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν προσώπων αὐτῆς κάλλος κεκέρασται καὶ δέος), he is compressing into a binomial what he thinks are the elements that best describe Andromeda, that is beauty and fear. This is one of the novelist's descriptive trademarks, used several times in the novel and, more importantly, every time a painting is described. In 1,1 Europa's maidens show a mixture of joy and fear (τὸ σχῆμα ταῖς παρθένοις καὶ χαρᾶς καὶ φόβου), recalled in 2,23,3 when Clitophon is entering Leucippe's chamber (τρέμων τρόμον διπλοῦν, χαρᾶς ἅμα καὶ φόβου); in 3,8 Prometheus is feeling hope and fear at the same time (ὁ δὲ Προμηθεὺς μεστός ἐστιν ἐλπίδος ἅμα καὶ φόβου), recalled in 6,14 when an imprisoned Clitophon is in distress about Leucippe (τὴν ψυχὴν εἶχον ἐπὶ τρυτάνης ἐλπίδος καὶ φόβου, καὶ ἐφοβεῖτό μου τὸ ἐλπίζον καὶ ἠλπίζε τὸ φοβούμενον); in 5,3,7 the vengeful act of Procne and Philomela causes in them a mixture of laughter and fear (γελῶσι δὲ ἅμα καὶ φοβοῦνται); in 6,6 an imprisoned Leucippe meets her guards Sosthenes and Thersander with a mixture of pain and fear (ἐμφαίνουσιν τοῖς προσώποις λύπην ὁμοῦ καὶ δέος). On this view, it seems that Lucian, when mentioning of Andromeda only her modesty and fear, is following Achilles Tatius' trend. When Lucian has to describe Andromeda in a few words, he chooses the binomial formula used by Achilles Tatius in every description of paintings in order to summarise the most important qualities of a character in a specific moment.

What then did Lucian do with the joint painting of Prometheus? As said, Lucian never mentions a work of art with Prometheus, nor, when displaying Prometheus as a character, does he put him anywhere near Andromeda. Nevertheless, in Lucian's works there are clues that he maintained the association of the two figures, possibly echoing Achilles Tatius.

Lucian's other account of Andromeda's story is in *Dialogi marini* 14. Triton relates to the Nereids how Andromeda, the victim chosen to avenge her mother Cassiopeia's arrogance towards them, just escaped at the hands of Perseus sacrifice by sea monster. He retraces Perseus' deeds since his early childhood with his mother Danae and the episode of the wooden chest (14,1). He then moves on to the fight against Medusa (14,2), and the liberation of Andromeda (14,3). This is the passage that concerns the fight against the sea-monster:

ἐπεὶ δὲ κατὰ τὴν παράλιον ταύτην Αἰθιοπίαν ἐγένετο, ἤδη πρόσγειος πετόμενος, ὄρᾳ τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν προκειμένην ἐπὶ τινος πέτρας προβλήτος προσπεπατταλευμένην, καλλίστην, ὧ θεοί, καθειμένην τὰς κόμας, ἡμίγυμνον πολὺ ἔνερθε τῶν μαστῶν· καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον οἰκτεῖρας τὴν τύχην αὐτῆς ἀνθρώπα τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς καταδίκης, κατὰ μικρὸν δὲ ἄλους ἔρωτι—ἐχρῆν γὰρ σεσῶσθαι τὴν παῖδα—βοηθεῖν διέγνω· καὶ ἐπειδὴ τὸ κῆτος ἐπήει μάλα φοβερόν

ὥς καταπιόμενον τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν, ὑπεραιωρηθεὶς ὁ νεανίσκος πρόκωπον ἔχων τὴν ἄρπην τῇ μὲν καθικνεῖται, τῇ δὲ προδεικνύς τὴν Γοργόνα λίθον ἐποίει αὐτό, τὸ δὲ τέθνηκεν ὁμοῦ καὶ πέπηγεν αὐτοῦ τὰ πολλὰ, ὅσα εἶδε τὴν Μέδουσαν· ὁ δὲ λύσας τὰ δεσμὰ τῆς παρθένου, ὑποσχὼν τὴν χεῖρα ὑπεδέξατο ἀκροποδητὶ κατιοῦσαν ἐκ τῆς πέτρας ὀλισθηρᾶς οὔσης.

When he was at the Ethiopian shore here, and now flying low, he saw Andromeda lying fastened to a projecting rock –ye gods, what a beautiful sight she was!– with her hair let down, but largely uncovered from the breast onwards. At first he pitied her fate and asked the reason for her punishment, but little by little he succumbed to love, and decided to help, since she had to be saved. So when the monster came –a fearsome sight it was too!– to gulp her down, the young man hovered above it with his scimitar unsheathed, and, striking with one hand, showed it the Gorgon with the other, and turned it into stone. At one and the same time was the monster killed, and most of it, all of it that faced Medusa, petrified. Then Perseus undid the maiden’s chains, and supported her with his hand as she tip-toed down from the slippery rock.

(*Dialogi marini* 14,3, trans. Macleod)

The account of these deeds parallels closely their pictorial descriptions in *De domo* 22 and 25 (the painting of Perseus aided by Athena in killing Medusa), not only in the general plot, but also in detail. Compare for instance Perseus’ weapons in the fight against the monster in *Dialogi marini* 14,3 (ὁ νεανίσκος πρόσκωπον ἔχων τὴν ἄρπην τῇ μὲν καθικνεῖται, τῇ δὲ προδεικνύς τὴν Γοργόνα λίθον ἐποίει αὐτό, ‘the young man hovered above it (the monster) with his scimitar unsheathed, and, striking with one hand, showed it the Gorgon with the other, and turned it into stone’ trans. Macleod) and in *De Domo* 22 (τῇ λαιᾷ μὲν προδείκνυσι τὴν Γοργόνα, τῇ δεξιᾷ δὲ καθικνεῖται τῷ ξίφει, ‘Perseus displays the Gorgon in his left hand, and with his right assails him with the sword’). This supports something which scholars have been noticing for a long time, without, however, going beyond the mere observation, that is, the likelihood that in composing the minor dialogues, or at least some of them, Lucian had pictorial representations in mind, judging by the stillness and the vivid effect of the images described.²⁴¹ It might be useful here to spend a few words on the chronological relationship between *De domo* and *Dialogi Marini*, in order to determine which one was written first. The connection between Lucian and Achilles Tatius is much more pronounced if the novelist’s *ekphrasis* is first reproduced in another *ekphrasis*, and then transposed into a dialogue. Although caution must be paid in dating Lucian’s works,²⁴² it is

²⁴¹ Croiset 1882, 277 dismisses his own suggestion, judging it ‘une conjecture trop incertaine pour qu’il soit utile d’y insister’. Bertrand 1893, 386 distinctly suggests the presence of works of art behind the dialogues, with special reference to *Dialogi marini* 15. Bompaire 1958, 579 ff., 730 ff., sees in the minor dialogues mainly the influence of satyr play, but admits that at least the last two of the *Dialogi marini* show a strong pictorial imprint. Hall 1981, 32 lists pictorial representations among the several sources; so does Hopkinson 2008, 199 and 219. The greatest attention is paid by Bartley 2005, who repeatedly stresses the influence of images that must have been popular in Lucian’s times.

²⁴² Hall 1981, 1-63 provides a useful survey of the many scholarly revisions the dating of Lucian’s works has undergone, constantly highlighting the limits of the preconceptions that often guided the different views.

commonly accepted that *De domo* belongs to the purely sophistic works of his earlier career (about 145 to 160 AD), whereas the *Dialogi* show a certain mockery of the gods that has been ascribed to the influence of the Menippean satire on Lucian's later works (approximately after 165 AD). That is to say that we can establish that *De domo* preceded *Dialogi Marini*, and therefore that Lucian wrote the dialogue while having the painting in mind.

Having clarified the relation of dependence of *Dialogi Marini* 14 from *De domo* 22, we can move on to verify how the dialogue testifies to the fact that Lucian read Achilles Tatius' *ekphrasis*. In view of this, two details of Triton's account are intriguing. In 14,3 Andromeda is described as being nailed to a rock ('ἐπί τινος πέτρας προβλήτος προσπεπατταλευμένην'), and towards the end, when Perseus helps her down the slippery rock, she is descending on tiptoe ('ἀκροποδητὶ κατιούσαν ἐκ τῆς πέτρας ὀλισθηρᾶς οὔσης'). The words to be taken into consideration are the verb προσπασσαλεύω and the adverb ἀκροποδητί. Both are used four times by Lucian in his works, but they co- occur only in two instances, here and in *Prometheus*, which is ascribed to roughly the same period of the *Dialogi*.²⁴³ The prologia *Prometheus* transforms the famous opening of the *Prometheus vincetus* into a self-defensive speech by the Titan who tries to justify his actions. Right at the beginning of the dialogue, Hermes describes the rock where Prometheus is about to be chained as being so inaccessible that it can only be reached by walking on tiptoe:

ἀπόξυροί τε γὰρ αἱ πέτραι καὶ ἀπρόσβατοι πανταχόθεν, ἡρέμα ἐπινενευκυῖαι, καὶ τῷ ποδὶ στενὴν ταύτην ὁ κρημνὸς ἔχει τὴν ἐπίβασιν, ὡς ἀκροποδητὶ μόλις ἑστάναι.

the cliffs are sheer and inaccessible on every side, and overhang slightly, and the rock has only this narrow foothold, so that one can barely stand on tip-toe.
(*Prometheus* 1, trans. Harmon)

Shortly after, Hermes denies mercy to Prometheus, for fear of having to share his punishment:

ΠΡ Ἄλλὰ κἄν ὑμεῖς γε, ὦ Ἥφαιστε καὶ Ἑρμῆ, κατελεήσατέ με παρὰ τὴν ἀξίαν δυστυχοῦντα.

ΕΡ Τοῦτο φῆς, ὦ Προμηθεῦ, ἀντὶ σοῦ ἀνασκολοπισθῆναι αὐτίκα μάλα παρακούσαντας τοῦ ἐπιτάγματος· ἢ οὐχ ἱκανὸς εἶναι σοι δοκεῖ ὁ Καύκασος καὶ ἄλλους χωρῆσαι δύο προσπατταλευθέντας;

PR: Come Hephaestus and Hermes, at any rate you might pity me in my undeserved misfortune.

²⁴³ Προσπασσαλεύω appears again twice in *Cataplus* 13. Ἀκροποδητί is a *hapax* by Lucian, who uses it again in *Pro imaginibus* 13 and *Dialogi mortuorum* 22.

HER: You mean, be crucified in your stead the instant we disobey the order! Don't you suppose the Caucasus has room enough to hold two more pegged up?'²⁴⁴
(*Prometheus* 1-2, trans. Harmon)

Lucian's choice of the same two words cannot be coincidental, especially if one considers the fact that, in their rarity, they appear together twice, and refer to Andromeda and Prometheus. That the use of these words is designed to bring Andromeda and Prometheus together is highlighted also by the context, for in the case of *Dialogi Marini* 14 and *Prometheus* the words are used exactly in the same meaning and situation, which do not fit with the other occurrences.²⁴⁵ It is therefore evident that Lucian perceived the figures of Andromeda and Prometheus as associated, and since he had Achilles Tatius' *ekphrasis* in mind already when writing *De domo*, we can conjecture that he derived this perception from the novelist's description of the diptych.²⁴⁶

With this in mind, it might not be a coincidence, at this point, that the dialogue that immediately follows *Dialogi marini* 14 reports the account of the rape of Europa, the painting of which, in Achilles Tatius, precedes the painting of Andromeda. We have already noticed how, from a survey of treatments (telling of the myth or of its artistic representations) of the rape of Europa in Latin and Greek literature, Lucian and Achilles stand out by their similarities. We have especially pointed out how the exact description of the position of Europa's hands on the bull, specified in the same way only by Lucian and Achilles Tatius, can be a clue that the authors were looking at real paintings and not just telling the tale (the left hand holding the horn, the right hand being towards the tail, and Europa being shown frontally, imply the visualisation of the bull going from left to right). However, having observed the influence of Achilles Tatius in Lucian's works (both *De domo* 22 and *Dialogi marini* 14), the account of the rape of Europa (very similar to Achilles Tatius') coming immediately after the account of Perseus and Andromeda seems to reinforce the idea that Lucian wrote these works under the influence of Achilles Tatius' descriptions. In finding sources for these subjects (Andromeda, Europa), he went for the most detailed, and possibly most recent, accounts, that is, those written by Achilles Tatius. This would testify to the pictorial origins of the *Dialogi*, and account for the many similarities (description of Perseus' weapons, association of

²⁴⁴ Undoubtedly an echo of *Prometheus vincitus* 20 (προσπασσαλεύσω τῶιδ' ἀπανθρώπῳι πάγωι). Although the attribution to Lucian of *Amores* is not certain, it is worth mentioning that in that dialogue, too, recurs the use of προσπασσαλεύω associated with Prometheus. Moreover, its derivation from theatre is evident, as the author quotes Menander when using it: ὄντως καταράσεται Προμηθεὶ τὴν Μενάνδρειον ἐκείνην ἀπορρήξας φωνήν· Εἶτ' οὐδ' ἀδικαίως προσπεπατταλεμμένον | γράφουσι τὸν Προμηθεῖα πρὸς ταῖς πέτρας; 'should one wish to examine in detail the truth about the more offensive of womankind, he will curse Prometheus in real life and burst out with these words of Menander: *Then are not painters right when they depict | Prometheus nailed to rocks?*' (*Amores* 43, trans. Macleod)

²⁴⁵ In *Cataplus* 13 Megapenthes and the Cynic are exchanging threats of crucifying each other; in *Pro imaginibus* 13 the tiptoe image belongs to a parallelism between a giant walking with a dwarf and the comparison between Panthea and the goddesses, and in *Dialogi mortuorum* 22 it refers to Crates' mockery of the Medes' inability to walk.

²⁴⁶ And the primary reason for an association is, as in Achilles Tatius, the fact that they are both chained to a rock.

Andromeda and Prometheus, position of Europa on the bull, to name the most important ones) that unite Lucian and Achilles Tatius against accounts made by other authors.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁷ Although the internal order of Lucian's works is not entirely certain, and although even the order of the single dialogues in *Dialogi marini* changes depending on the different families of manuscripts, all manuscripts agree on the sequence 12-15, so we know for sure that dialogue 14 preceded dialogue 15. See Macleod 1987, xiv (*praefatio* to Oxford edition, *tomus IV*).

Ekphrasis of paintings in Longus and the birth of *ekphrasis* as a genre

The nature and structure of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* hardly allow an analysis of one of its aspects without stirring up all the others. Elements of both content and form are so carefully chosen and intertwined in the telling of the tale of the two shepherds, that every part becomes equally essential to the whole and inseparable from the others. For instance, one can isolate the protagonists' interactions with music neither from the embedded narratives nor from the role of τέχνη in the novel, its relationship with φύσις, the poetics of imitation, how the combination of these factors contributes to the protagonists' education, and thus practically the entire novel. Since it introduces the novel but at the same time contains it, together with all its elements, the prologue is easily one of the most compelling features in this sense, one that is necessarily mentioned in almost every study on Longus, and consequently one that has received constant attention from scholars. We shall attempt nonetheless to examine its most distinctive peculiarity, the presence of a painting, from as narrow a perspective as possible, that is the stimuli that possibly influenced Longus in his use of the *ekphrasis* of a work of art.

Ἐν Λέσβῳ θηρῶν ἐν ἄλσει Νυμφῶν θέαμα εἶδον κάλλιστον ὧν εἶδον, εἰκόνας γραφήν, ἱστορίαν ἔρωτος. Καλὸν μὲν καὶ τὸ ἄλσος, πολύδενδρον, ἀνθηρόν, κατάρρυτον· μία πηγὴ πάντα ἔτρεφε, καὶ τὰ ἄνθη καὶ τὰ δένδρα· ἄλλ' ἢ γραφὴ τερπνότερα, καὶ τέχνην ἔχουσα περιττὴν καὶ τύχην ἔρωτικὴν, ὥστε πολλοὶ καὶ τῶν ξένων κατὰ φήμην ἦσαν, τῶν μὲν Νυμφῶν ἰκέται, τῆς δὲ εἰκόνας θεαταί. Γυναῖκες ἐπ' αὐτῆς τίκτουσαι καὶ ἄλλαι σπαργάνοις κοσμοῦσαι, παιδία ἐκκείμενα, ποιμνία τρέφοντα, ποιμένες ἀναιρούμενοι, νέοι συντιθέμενοι, ληστῶν καταδρομή, πολεμίων ἐμβολή, πολλὰ ἄλλα καὶ πάντα ἔρωτικά. Ἰδόντα με καὶ θαυμάσαντα πόθος ἔσχει ἀντιγράψαι τῇ γραφῇ, καὶ ἀναζητησάμενος ἐξηγητὴν τῆς εἰκόνας τέτταρας βίβλους ἐξεπονησάμην, ἀνάθημα μὲν Ἐρωτι καὶ Νύμφαις καὶ Πανί, κτήμα δὲ τερπνὸν πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, ὃ καὶ νοσοῦντα ἰάσεται καὶ λυπούμενον παραμυθήσεται, τὸν ἔρασθέντα ἀναμνήσει, τὸν οὐκ ἔρασθέντα προπαιδεύσει. Πάντως γὰρ οὐδεὶς Ἐρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύξεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἦ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν. Ἡμῖν δὲ ὁ θεὸς παράσχοι σωφρονούσι τὰ τῶν ἄλλων γράφειν.

On Lesbos, while hunting, in a grove of the Nymphs, I saw the most beautiful sight I have ever seen, a depiction of an image, a history of love. The grove was beautiful too, thick with trees, brilliant with flowers, irrigated by running water; a single spring sustained everything, flowers and trees alike. But the picture was more delightful still, combining outstanding technique with amorous adventure, so that many people, including visitors, drawn by its renown, came to pray to the Nymphs and look at the image. It showed women giving birth and others dressing the babies in swaddling-clothes, babes abandoned and beasts of the flock feeding them, shepherds taking them up and young people making pledges, a pirate raid and an enemy invasion, and much

else, all of it amorous. I looked and I wondered, and a desire seized me to respond to the painting in writing. I found someone to interpret the picture, and have laboured hard to create four books, an offering to Love, the Nymphs and Pan, a possession to delight all mankind, which will heal the sick and comfort the distressed, stir the memory of those who have been in love, and give preparatory instruction to those who have not. For certainly no one has ever escaped Love, nor ever shall, so long as beauty exists and eyes can see. For ourselves, may the god grant us to remain chaste in writing the story of others.¹

Before becoming the subject of a novel, the story of Daphnis and Chloe constituted the subject of a painting the narrator says he came across in a grove in Lesbos. As he observes the painting, he is filled with the desire to write about it, and indeed attempts to describe it, but seems to give up after the first glance at the represented figures, as if realising that he cannot do justice to it without knowing its contents more deeply. He promptly remedies this by looking for someone who can explain what the picture is about, and is then finally able to share with the readers the pleasure that comes from it. Thus the entire novel springs from an aesthetic experience and from the desire to understand the source of its pleasure and possess it (κτῆμα τερπνὸν).²

In order to understand the vision of art that Longus had and manifested in his novel, one needs to focus on the prologue, its form, vocabulary, and contents.³ The genesis of *Daphnis and Chloe* from a painting is a clever and well conceived device that works on several levels. Since the function of a prologue is to introduce but also contain the narration that follows, the prologue finds in the painting an image of itself, because the painting frames its contents just like the prologue does. Moreover, the painting shows the events that constitute the story that follows (not all of them, e.g. the final wedding): the eight subjects listed become almost an index of the episodes of the story.⁴ To this, Kestner adds that the pictorial frame of the verbal narrative is reflected in the fact that the first three books are in turn a frame for the inserted mythical tales (Phatta in 1,27, Syrinx in 2,34, and Echo in 3,23).⁵ As a result, the painting parallels the book (and vice versa) in both form and contents. The close connection between painting and story is intentionally suggested by Longus in the words ‘ἀντιγράψαι τῆ γραφῆ’, which play on the fact that *graphê* can mean drawing and writing, but it can also be seen in the very first words that are said about the painting: εἰκόνοσ γραφήν, ἱστορίαν ἔρωτος. Hunter has explained well the effects of this combination of words,

¹ Both Greek text and translation are taken from Morgan 2004.

² Κτῆμα echoes the beginning of Thucydides’s work. See Morgan 2004, 147, Luginbill 2002 for a close comparison and Philippides 1983 on the opposition of *opsis* and *akoê*.

³ On the prologue see Chalk 1960, Hunter 1983, 38 ff., MacQueen 1990, Zeitlin 1990, Wouters 1994, 15 ff., Morgan 2004, 145-50.

⁴ Cf. Mittelstadt 1967, 756, Wouters 1994, and Zimmermann 1997, 10, who underlines also how some part of this index would have signaled to the well-read reader the literary models used in the episodes.

⁵ Kestner 1973, 167 ff.

where almost every word carries more than one meaning: εἰκόνας γραφήν can be the painting of an image and the description of an image (which anticipates the novel as a whole), ἱστορίαν ἔρωτος can indicate a love story but also the painting of love.⁶ The chiasmus highlights the connection of *graphê* and *historia*, and also that of *eikôn* and *erôs*. Mittelstadt has attempted to give archaeological grounds to Longus' *eikonos graphên*, and established a parallel between the painting in the prologue and a specific kind of mural narrative painting, using this also to date the novel to the second century.⁷ It would not be surprising if Longus had seen paintings in his life, but to him reflecting on the narrative aspect of painting seems to be far more important than giving the impression of a realistic narrative painting.

The bucolic setting, the description of a work of art at the beginning, and the fact that the work of art prompts a narration, are elements that *Daphnis and Chloe* shares with the first Idyll of Theocritus. There, a goatherd entices Thyrsis, a shepherd, to sing *The Affliction of Daphnis* by promising him an engraved wooden cup (*kissybion*) as a reward. The cup is decorated with ivy and vines, and presents three scenes: a woman being wooed by men, an old fisherman pulling the net, and a young boy weaving a cricket-cage. Even though the cup will only be produced at the end of the poem, its description is enough to convince Thyrsis. Thus, we have a poem which contains the goatherd's description of a decorated artifact (the description itself being a piece of artistry), which leads to Thyrsis' display of his art, the song, all of which is obviously a manifestation of Theocritus' own art. As a result, it does not surprise that the description of the cup has been interpreted as the manifesto of Theocritus' poetry.⁸ Knowing the importance of pastoral poetry, and especially of Theocritus, in Longus, all these elements encourage to see in Longus' prologue and in its programmatic character an imitation of Theocritus.⁹ Moreover, Longus knew Idyll 1 because he employed the cricket-cage in 1,10,2 and the *kissybion* in 1,15,3.¹⁰ There are, however, some noticeable differences between Longus' prologue and Idyll 1, mainly the fact that in the latter there is very little display of connections between contents of the work of art and contents of the poem, which are instead crucial to Longus.¹¹ The description of the cup and its contents is highly symbolic of Theocritus' poetry for a number of reasons, but the figures carved on the cup are relatively

⁶ Hunter 1983, 43-4. See also Wouters 1994, 140.

⁷ Mittelstadt 1967 and, *contra*, Hunter 1983, 4-5, Zeitlin 1990, 441, Morgan 2004, 147.

⁸ For the analysis and function of the description of the cup see Hunter 1999, 60-8 and 76-7, Zimmerman 2004, 75-90, and Payne 2007, 24-48.

⁹ Bowie 1985, Cresci 1999, Morgan 2004, 2-7. That Longus, by starting a pastoral work with the description of a work of art, might be doing something à la Theocritus is suggested by McCulloh 1970, 53-5, but not examined.

¹⁰ On the two passages see Morgan 2004, 158 and 164. See also Cresci 1999, 226-30.

¹¹ Cf. Hunter 1999, 77: 'The cup is not a simple representation of the bucolic world –there are, e.g., no flocks– because the ephrastic relation here constructed between a described object and the poem in which it occurs is not that of 'original' and 'copy'.'

unrelated to both the primary narrative of the poem (the dialogue between Thyrsis and the goather) and the sub-narrative of Thyrsis' song (the affliction of Daphnis). From this point of view, the relationship between art and text in Longus is of a different quality, closer to the use of the feature which is found in Achilles Tatius, with whom Longus should also be paired in light of the fact that the object of art at stake is a painting. For the main part, this chapter will deal with Longus' use of *ekphrasis* of paintings. Much as the vision of one painting generates the narration of an entire novel, analysing the very few words (three, to be precise) used by Longus to define what he does opens a web of references that goes far beyond the novels and the times when Longus wrote. As we will see, Longus' use of *ekphrasis* shows the influence of previous authors and will in turn influence later ones, making him a crucial step in the development of both *ekphrasis* and novels.

4.1. Longus and Achilles Tatius on *ekphrasis* of paintings

The presence of a painting at the beginning of a novel suggests an association between Longus and Achilles Tatius, although several substantial differences are operating as well. Let us not take here into account the differences in the setting and in how the main story is introduced, but only what concerns the painting and its description. *Leucippe and Clitophon's* narrator immediately recognises the painting he is looking at as the representation of the rape of Europa. He is able to do so thanks to his knowledge of the myth, a knowledge that only needed to be very basic in order to be triggered by the visualisation of at least one unmissable detail, namely the maiden riding a bull swimming across the sea. His ability to produce the well rounded *ekphrasis* depends on such knowledge, which, it is reasonable to assume, would have been possessed, at least at a superficial level, by nearly everyone. The narrator of *Daphnis and Chloe*, on the other hand, is faced with a subject matter of which he has no previous knowledge: he can tell what he sees, and in fact he does, but he cannot provide a coherent description because he is lacking the background story that makes it complete. From this point of view, everything that follows is the result of a search for the missing *ekphrasis*.¹²

Another significant difference lies in the fact that Achilles Tatius' narrator never states what he is doing when he describes. The *ekphrasis* starts unannounced and finishes by flowing directly into the rest of the narration. The novel is then filled with details that implicitly recall the first *ekphrasis* (as well as the others), but the fact that a painting was described is never mentioned explicitly: we see the result, but we never see the describer at work; the act itself of describing is

¹² Scarcella indicates a first *aprosdoketon* when the presence of the painting interrupts what was shaping up to be a description of landscape, and a second one when the painting is not properly described. Cfr. Scarcella 1993, 217.

not considered. On the contrary, Longus' narrator clearly defines what he is going to do: ἀντιγράψαι τῆ γραφῆ. In these words, whose simplicity and depth no translation can preserve, it is possible to find Longus' manifesto on *ekphrasis* of paintings. Instead of diving into the expected detailed description, Longus chooses to explain his understanding of *ekphrasis* of paintings, which consists of writing in response, but also in substitution and rivalry with the work of art.¹³ Differently from Achilles Tatius, we are not even given a real *ekphrasis*, but a perspective on what writing the *ekphrasis* of a painting entails.

Such a perspective puts painting in a position of particular relevance among all the possible subjects of *ekphrasis*, since it is the only one where form and content can converge on an equal ground. Traces of this reasoning cannot possibly lie behind any other category of description. The *ekphrasis* of a battle, for instance, will aim at making the battle be seen, and perhaps its style will try to convey the chaotic melee, and the choice of words the sound of weapons clashing, but there will be no attempt to rival or surpass the real battle, since what makes description, that is writing, and what makes the battle, that is fighting, belong to different worlds. But when the subject becomes a work of art, and especially a painting, then what makes *ekphrasis*, that is writing (γράφειν), perfectly coincides with its content, that is painting (γράφειν).

This thinking can only be applied to *ekphrasis* when it concerns this particular subject. The early *Progymnasmata*, not interested in descriptions of works of art, do not attribute this value (the power to compete with the subject) to *ekphrasis*. Not even Achilles Tatius, who makes the widest use of *ekphrasis* of paintings among the novelists, manifests interest for this idea. The reader of *Leucippe and Clitophon* is free to think that the descriptions of the paintings rival the real things, but the author produces no claim in this sense, and this aspect of *ekphrasis* does not seem to play an essential role in his novel: to Achilles Tatius, the detailed contents and their use are more important than the ontology of the form. Longus, on the other hand, pays only brief attention to what is in the painting, and instead focuses on the essence of its description, making it the starting point of the story. Whereas Achilles Tatius proves to be a skilled artisan in the presentation of this literary creation, Longus chooses to reflect on its nature, not re-writing a painting (at least not in the expected, straight-forward way) but first examining the relationship itself between painting and writing. The fact that Longus consciously declares what he is doing with the picture provides us with a definition of *ekphrasis* (ἀντιγράψαι τῆ γραφῆ) that differs from the canonical one given by the rhetorical handbooks, due to the peculiarity of the subject and to the consequent understanding that it isolates *ekphrasis* of paintings from the other possible subjects of *ekphrasis*

¹³ Rosand 1990, 61, Billault 1979, 203-4, Zeitlin 1990, 418.

and inserts it in a different and much older line of thought, one that, for the sake of labelling, we shall call ‘*ut pictura poesis*’.

4.2. *Ut pictura poesis*

Horace’s famous words have come to define the theme of the association of painting and poetry, as it is found scattered in numerous passages of classical literature.¹⁴ In his lines the poet considers the similarities between painting and poetry only from the point of view of the interaction with the audience, in that people’s appreciation of poetry varies according to the circumstances, just like their appreciation of painting,¹⁵ but his words are the motto of a tradition that explores the nature of this comparison much further. Notoriously, the poet Simonides was the first to formulate the idea that poetry is painting that speaks, and, vice versa, painting is silent poetry. This is reported by Plutarch in *De gloria Atheniensium* (*Moralia* 346 f). In this work Plutarch celebrates the glory of Athens, praising, among other things, the deeds of famous Athenian generals, as well as the words of the historians that delivered those events to posterity. He also mentions painting as another field in which the city excelled, both for having invented the art and for having produced the finest painters. Plutarch then links the two themes by giving the example of painters who represented historical facts, namely Euphranor’s painting of the battle of Mantinea. He then gives an account of the battle (not of the painting), concluding that no matter how remarkable the painting is, the skill of the painter is nowhere near as praiseworthy as the skill of the general who won the battle.¹⁶ At this point he quotes Simonides in order to make the connection between painting and historiography:

Πλὴν ὁ Σιμωνίδης τὴν μὲν ζωγραφίαν ποίησιν σιωπῶσαν προσαγορεύει, τὴν δὲ ποίησιν ζωγραφίαν λαλοῦσαν. ἄς γὰρ οἱ ζωγράφοι πράξεις ὡς γινομένας δεικνύουσι, ταύτας οἱ λόγοι γεγενημένας διηγοῦνται καὶ συγγράφουσιν. εἰ δ’ οἱ μὲν χρώμασι καὶ σχήμασιν οἱ δ’ ὀνόμασι καὶ λέξεσι ταῦτὰ δηλοῦσιν, ὕλη καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως διαφέρουσι, τέλος δ’ ἀμφοτέροις ἐν ὑπόκειται, καὶ τῶν

¹⁴ For an overview see Lee 1967, and Benediktson 2000.

¹⁵ *Ut pictura poesis: erit quae si propius stes | te capiat magis, et quaedam si longius abstes. | haec amat obscurum, volet haec sub luce videri, | iudicis argutum quae non formidat acumen; | haec placuit semel, haec decies repetita placebit.* ‘A poem is like a picture: one strikes your fancy more, the nearer you stand; another, the farther away. This courts the shade, that will wish to be seen in the light, and dreads not the critic insight of the judge. This pleased but once; that, though ten times called for, will always please’ (*Ars poetica*, 361-365, trans. Rushton Fairclough).

¹⁶ τοῦτο τὸ ἔργον Εὐφράνωρ ἔγραψε, καὶ παρέστιν ὄραν ἐν εἰκόνι τῆς μάχης τὸ σύρρηγμα καὶ τὴν ἀντέρεισιν ἀλκῆς καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ πνεύματος γέμουσαν. ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἂν οἶμαι τῷ ζωγράφῳ κρίσιν προθείητε πρὸς τὸν στρατηγὸν οὐδ’ ἀνάσχοισθε τῶν προτιμώντων τὸν πίνακα τοῦ τροπαίου καὶ τὸ μίμημα τῆς ἀληθείας. ‘This was the action which Euphranor depicted, and in his portrayal of the battle one may see the clash of conflict and the stout resistance abounding in boldness and courage and spirit. But I do not think you would award judgement to the painter in comparison with the general, nor would you bear with those who prefer the picture to the trophy of victory, or the imitation to the actuality.’ (346 e-f, trans. Babbitt).

ἱστορικῶν κράτιστος ὁ τὴν διήγησιν ὥσπερ γραφὴν πάθει καὶ προσώποις εἰδωλοποιήσας. ὁ γοῦν Θουκυδίδης ἀεὶ τῷ λόγῳ πρὸς ταύτην ἀμιλλᾶται τὴν ἐνάργειαν, οἷον θεατὴν ποιῆσαι τὸν ἄκροατὴν καὶ τὰ γινόμενα περὶ τοὺς ὀρώντας ἐκπληκτικὰ καὶ ταρακτικὰ πάθη τοῖς ἀναγινώσκουσιν ἐνεργάσασθαι λιχνευόμενος.

Simonides, however, calls painting inarticulate poetry and poetry articulate painting: for the actions which painters portray as taking place at the moment literature narrates and records after they have taken place. Even though artists with colour and design, and writers with words and phrases, represent the same subjects, they differ in the material and manner of their imitation; and yet the underlying end aim of both is one and the same; the most effective historian is he who, by a vivid representation of emotions and characters, makes his narration like a painting. Assuredly Thucydides is always striving for this vividness (*enargeia*) in his writing, since it is his desire to make the reader a spectator, as it were, and to produce vividly in the minds of those who peruse his narrative the emotions of amazement and the consternation which were experienced by those who beheld them.

(346 f - 347 a, trans. Babbitt)

Painting and poetry are equivalent imitative arts because they both aim at the representation of events, and they only differ in two aspects. First of all, they use different materials and operate in a different manner (painting uses colours and shapes, poetry nouns and phrases). In other words, they share the contents but not the form. Secondly, they represent things from different temporal perspectives, painting as they are taking place (ὥς γινομένης), poetry after their conclusion (γεγενημένης). Coming very close to a distinction between spatial and temporal arts, Plutarch understands that a painting can only capture one single moment in time, while a narration can provide the continuity of the sequence of moments that constitute the entire event from beginning to end. The best historian, says Plutarch, is the one who can unite the best of the two worlds and ‘model his narration like a painting, with emotions and characters’. In πάθει and προσώποις it is possible to read the ideal complementarity of literature and figurative art, for painting can recreate the subject’s aspect in a way that is inaccessible to writing, but writing is more adept at reproducing the psychological depth that makes the subject significant.¹⁷

When formulating this, Plutarch seems to be considering the ability to write *ekphraseis* as the touchstone of a good historian. To begin with, his example of the good historian is Thucydides, the model for *ekphrasis* most preferred by the authors of Progymnasmata. He then praises him for the vividness that turns the hearers into spectators (τὴν ἐνάργειαν, οἷον θεατὴν ποιῆσαι τὸν ἄκροατὴν), with words that quote the rhetorical definition of *ekphrasis*. Finally, when giving examples of Thucydides’ art, he gives the same examples given by the authors of Progymnasmata when they talk about Thucydides’ *ekphraseis* (infantry battle, naval battle). Plutarch is considering

¹⁷ Kestner 1973, 170, Lee 1967, 61.

the similarities between painting and historiography, and the aspect of the latter he finds more fitting for the purpose is *ekphrasis*. It is clear that he is reflecting on *ekphrasis*' ability to paint with words, and on the fact that *ekphrasis* is writing's equivalent of painting, but it is also clear that he is not considering the instance (perfectly tailored for the case he is making) when painting itself becomes the subject of *ekphrasis*, not least because at the time when he was writing such a feature was still undeveloped.

The most suggestive part of this passage for our purpose, however, is the idea that narrative should be modelled like a painting (ὅ τὴν διήγησιν ὡςπερ γραφὴν πάθει καὶ προσώποις εἰδωλοποιήσας), for Longus in his prologue proposes to do something analogous. The view on the novelist's intention in the prologue is furthermore enriched by another passage where Plutarch recurs to Simonides' saying:

Ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ἐπιστήσομεν αὐτὸν ἅμα τῷ προσάγειν τοῖς ποιήμασιν ὑπογράφοντες τὴν ποιητικὴν ὅτι μιμητικὴ τέχνη καὶ δύναμις ἐστὶν ἀντίστροφος τῇ ζωγραφίᾳ. καὶ μὴ μόνον ἐκεῖνο τὸ θρυλούμενον ἀκηκοὺς ἔστω, ζωγραφίαν μὲν εἶναι φθεγγομένην τὴν ποίησιν, ποίησιν δὲ σιγῶσαν τὴν ζωγραφίαν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τούτῳ διδάσκωμεν αὐτὸν ὅτι γεγραμμένην σαύραν ἢ πίθηκον ἢ Θερσίτου πρόσωπον ἰδόντες ἠδόμεθα καὶ θαυμάζομεν οὐχ ὡς καλὸν ἀλλ' ὡς ὅμοιον.

We shall steady the young man still more if, at his first entrance into poetry, we give a general description of the poetic art as an imitative art and faculty analogous to painting. And let him not merely be acquainted with the oft-repeated saying that "poetry is articulate painting, and painting is inarticulate poetry," but let us teach him in addition that when we see a lizard or an ape or the face of Thersites in a picture, we are pleased with it and admire it, not as a beautiful thing, but as a likeness.

(*Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat, Moralia* 17f, trans. Babbitt)

Plutarch's intention is to underline the imitative nature of poetry, praising it for its faithful representations and not for the quality of its subjects. From this point of view it is similar to painting, because even portraits of ugly beings deserve admiration, provided they are thorough representations of their models (οὐχ ὡς καλὸν ἀλλ' ὡς ὅμοιον). If poetry achieves resemblance, then it becomes 'ἀντίστροφος τῇ ζωγραφίᾳ'. Longus' words 'ἀντιγράψαι τῇ γραφῇ' spring to mind, and indeed 'ἀντίστροφος' presents the same nuances as 'ἀντιγράψαι', for it can indicate correspondence and correlation, but at the same time opposition. Στρέφω describes the movement of turning back, and the preposition ἀντί adds to this the connotation of two elements facing each other, hence the first meaning of 'ἀντίστροφος' as we find it in LSJ: 'turned so as to face one

another'.¹⁸ Plutarch's words are particularly intriguing if one thinks about the relation between painting and story in *Daphnis and Chloe*. To begin with, the novel starts with the presentation of a painting and moves on as the written version of the story told in the painting, but by the end the reader realises that the painting had been dedicated by none other than the two protagonists of the story.¹⁹ It is the painting that stimulates the book, but it is the book that tells the story of the painting (the story of how it came into existence as well as the story contained in it). Not only is the relationship between the two arts turned around, but the reader himself, after having gained the last piece of information at the end of the book, is led to turn it back to the beginning in order to fully grasp the sequence of events, before getting lost in the contemplation of their short circuit.²⁰ Thus the action indicated by στρέφω describes well a major mechanism of Longus' novel, and the same can be said about the preposition ἀντί. In the prologue the narrator states that his work is intended as an offering (ἀνάθημα) to Eros, the Nymphs, and Pan. We know that he has come across the painting in a sacred grove, but at the end we discover that the painting itself was intended as an offering (εἰκόνας ἀνέθεσαν). Since both works are dedicated to the same divinities, it is likely that they will occupy, at least in Longus' fiction, the same space, that is the sacred grove, with the consequence that they will literally be facing one another.

Regardless of a few valuable cues (τὴν διήγησιν ὡςπερ γραφῆν; ἀντίστροφος τῇ ζῶγραφίᾳ), saying that Longus drew inspiration for his novel from Plutarch's ideas on *ut pictura poesis* would be simplistic. Rather, one can see in the novelist the recipient of ideas on visual and literary art that had been circulating for a long time, and that were developing at a particularly fast pace in the course of the second century AD. Plutarch explains the Simonidean aphorism having in mind painting on the one hand, and, though not explicitly, *ekphrasis* on the other hand, but he seems to be unaware of the possibility of the confluence of the two. Achilles Tatius, one of the pioneers of the application of *ekphrasis* to paintings (the pioneer, if one considers Greek novels alone), uses it methodically in his work, but in his very practical interest in the descriptions of paintings he pays little or no attention to the themes of *ut pictura poesis*. Longus' intuition unites threads that were eventually bound to recognise their common nature, enriching the presence of art in the genre novel, as it had been established by Achilles Tatius' *ekphraseis*, with the possibilities offered by the previous tradition.

¹⁸ LS⁹ *ad* 'ἀντίστροφος'.

¹⁹ Hunter 1983, 42-3, Wouters 1994, 138.

²⁰ Cf. Kestner 1973, 169: 'The transformation of a spatial to a temporal art form in the prologue is now reversed as the temporal art form assumes spatiality.'

Thematically in between Achilles Tatius and Longus seems to be Lucian's *De domo*.²¹ This is an introductory speech that at the same time shows *ekphrasis* of paintings of the same kind as Achilles Tatius', and theoretical reasoning of the same kind as Longus'. *De domo* is the speech of a rhetor who has been given the task to speak in a beautiful hall full of paintings. The beauty of the environment prompts him not only to speak, but to speak precisely about the hall, and to do so by describing it. The *prolalia* is divided into two main positions: the first is that a place so beautiful is ideal for speaking, and the second, opposite, is that such a place is detrimental to the speech, because the hall will attract the audience's attention more than the speaker. The similarities with Achilles Tatius are mainly the paintings described in *ekphraseis* of varying length from paragraph 22 onwards. The first of these is the painting of Perseus and Andromeda discussed at the end of the previous chapter. Without repeating that analysis, let us here only recall that the many correspondences between certain subjects (either in works on painting, like *De domo*, or works that look like paintings, like *Dialogi marini* 14-15) lead to the conclusion that one of the two authors knew the work of the other.²² Unlike Achilles Tatius, however, Lucian's declaration that what he is doing and talking about is *ekphrasis* is quite clear:

Ἐγὼ γὰρ λέγειν ὅτι καὶ οἱ παρόντες αὐτοὶ καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀκρόασιν
 παρειλημμένοι ἐπειδὴν εἰς τοιοῦτον οἶκον παρέλθωσιν, ἀντὶ ἀκροατῶν θεατὰὶ
 καθίστανται.

I forbear to say that even those who are present and have been invited to the lecture become spectators instead of hearers when they enter such a hall as this.²³
 (18, trans. Harmon)

The strongest similarities with Longus, especially with the prologue of *Daphnis and Chloe*, occur in paragraph 21, right before the series of *ekphraseis* of paintings:

τῆς γὰρ τέχνης τὸ ἀκριβὲς καὶ τῆς ἱστορίας μετὰ τοῦ ἀρχαίου τὸ ὠφέλιμον
 ἐπαγωγὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ πεπαιδευμένων θεατῶν δεόμενον. καὶ ἵνα μὴ πάντα
 ἐκεῖσε ἀποβλέπητε ἡμᾶς ἀπολιπόντες, φέρε ὡς οἷόν τε γράψωμαι αὐτὰ ὑμῖν
 τῷ λόγῳ· ἠσθήσεσθε γάρ, οἶμαι, ἀκούοντες ἅ καὶ ὀρῶντες θαυμάζετε.

The exactness of their technique and the combination of antiquarian interest and instructiveness in their subjects are truly seductive and call for a cultivated spectator. That you may not look exclusively in that direction and leave us in the lurch, I will do

²¹ Newby 2002 is a useful study of *De domo* from the point of view of *ekphrasis*.

²² There is also a Phaedran setting (*Imagines* 4), and the description of a peacock (*Imagines* 11).

²³ Cf. the point made by the authors of *Progymnasmata* that *ekphrasis* turns the hearers into spectators: καὶ ὑπ' ὅψιν ἡμῖν ἄγοντα ταῦτα, περὶ ὧν εἰσιν οἱ λόγοι, καὶ μονοῦ θεατὰς εἶναι παρασκευάζοντα (Nicolaus, 70 Felten).

my best to paint you a word-picture of them, for I think you will be glad to hear about things which you look at with admiration.

The fact that the first things about the paintings that is worthy of praise are the good technique and the value of the stories depicted (τῆς γὰρ τέχνης τὸ ἀκριβὲς καὶ τῆς ἱστορίας μετὰ τοῦ ἀρχαίου τὸ ὠφέλιμον) is echoed quite closely by what the narrator in *Daphnis and Chloe* says about the painting in the prologue (τέχνην ἔχουσα περιττὴν καὶ τύχην ἐρωτικήν). Moreover, the contents of the painting in the grove of the Nymphs is significantly called *historia* (ἱστορίαν ἔρωτος), which is the same word used by Lucian. The viewers of the paintings in *De domo* are called *theatai* (θεατῶν), as are those who go to see the painting in Longus (τῆς δὲ εἰκόνος θεαταί). Lucian's speech is meant for educated spectators, *pepaideumenoi* (πεπαιδευμένων θεατῶν), and education, *paideuein* (τὸν οὐκ ἐρασθέντα προπαιδεύσει) is one of Longus' aims for the novel. The paintings' effect wished upon Lucian's spectators is wonder (καὶ ὀρώντες θαυμάζετε), which is precisely what happens to the narrator in Longus (ἰδόντα με καὶ θαυμάσαντα).²⁴ More importantly, Lucian's intention to paint a picture with words (γράφωμαι αὐτὰ ὑμῖν τῷ λόγῳ) is paralleled closely, though not identically, by Longus desire to respond to the painting in writing (ἀντιγράψαι τῇ γραφῇ).²⁵ Finally, the poetics of *ut pictura poesis* (of how writing, or, in this case, composing a speech, gives voice to an otherwise silent form of art) that emerge in Longus' prologue are hinted at also in Lucian: ἀλλὰ περισκοπήσας ἀκριβῶς καὶ θαυμάσας μόνον ἄπεισι κωφὸν αὐτὸν καὶ ἄλογον καταλιπὼν; 'or (instead of composing speeches in the hall) after looking it over carefully and admiring it, would he rather go away and leave it mute and voiceless?' (1); οὐδ' ἂν ὑπομείναι ἄφωνος θεατῆς τοῦ κάλλους γενέσθαι, 'he (a man of culture) will not endure to be a silent spectator of their beauty' (2). As a result, Longus and Lucian are similar not only in that both of them set out to describe paintings, but also, and more importantly, in that they add the same explanation of the principles behind *ekphrasis* of paintings, its poetics. It is likely that Longus had read Lucian. Alpers shows that echoes of another one of Lucian's *prolaliai*, *Dionysus*,²⁶ can be seen in Philetas' garden in 2,3,3 (the uncommon reference to the presence three springs in a garden is common to both), and in the paintings in Dionysus' temple

²⁴ Notice as well how Lucian's words (ἀκούοντες ἃ καὶ ὀρώντες θαυμάζετε) manifest the Thucydidean contrast between *opsis* and *akoē* highlighted in Longus' prologue by Philippides 1983.

²⁵ Cf. also Lucian's λόγῳ ἀμείψασθαι τὴν θέαν (*De domo* 2). There are differences of context (oral performance for Lucian, written text for Longus), and Lucian's formulation lacks the rivalry of the two forms of *graphē* (drawing and writing) that is crucial in Longus' ἀντιγράψαι τῇ γραφῇ. However, the rivalry between art and *logos* is underlined more than once in *De domo*: οὐκ ἀξιόμαχον λόγων ἰσχύς ὄψει ἀνταγωνίσασθαι, 'the power of the tongue is no match for the eyes' (19); πῶς οὖν οὐ χαλεπὸς τῷ λέγοντι ἀνταγωνιστῆς οἶκος οὕτω καλὸς καὶ περιβλεπτός ὢν; 'is not then a hall so beautiful and admirable a dangerous adversary to a speaker?' (21).

²⁶ Incidentally, another one that shows strong influence of pictorial representations, just like *Dialogi marini*: paragraphs 1 and 2 are the *ekphrasis*, in the form of a scout's speech, of Dionysus' march into India.

in Lamon's garden in 4,2,1.²⁷ If, to this, we add the fact, discussed in the previous chapter, that Lucian was probably aware of Achilles Tatius' descriptions of paintings, then we can see a progression, which took place quite rapidly in the second half of the second century, from the almost purely practical application of *ekphrasis* of paintings in Achilles Tatius to the almost purely theoretical one in Longus, with Lucian, in between, displaying both.

What Longus, unlike Lucian, does is to make the equivalence between the painting and its *ekphrasis* explicit, and in doing so he formulates the principle that constituted the theoretical basis for the development of *ekphrasis* of paintings as a self-standing genre. Those who had learnt how to compose *ekphrasis* in the schools of rhetoric were certainly aware of the recommendation that *ekphrasis* should always be part of a bigger speech and never a speech on its own. However, once the idea arose that seeing a painting is on par with reading its *ekphrasis*, then it was a short step to the realisation that just as a painting hanging on a wall is self-sufficient in providing an experience of contemplation that is fulfilled in itself without the need for additional context, so too is the *ekphrasis* of a painting able to constitute an autonomous speech without being part of a surrounding narrative. The later handbooks of rhetoric accept this,²⁸ but they forget to mention that this is only possible in the case of *ekphrasis* of works of art. Indeed, aside from *ekphraseis* like those by Libanius, which described the entire range of possible subjects (people, events, places, etc., including works of art) but were gathered without any real editorial project except for being set examples for his students, we know of no work of literature purely intended to be a collection of *ekphraseis* of any of the other canonical subjects. There is no collection of descriptions of storms called *Χειμῶνες*, no collection of descriptions of siege engines called *Μηχανήματα*, no book called *Λειμῶνες*, and so on, even though these subjects of *ekphrasis* were very popular and frequently practiced. We do, however, have more than one book called *Εἰκόνες*. The *ekphraseis* of none of those other subjects became a literary genre, because in none of those cases was it possible to find the same kind of equivalence between content and container, the same kind of interchangeability between the object and its *ekphrasis*, that could be found in the *ekphrasis* of a painting.²⁹ The titles themselves of these collections of *ekphraseis* of paintings testify to this interchangeability: a book that contains *ekphrasis* of paintings is not called '*Ekphraseis*' but '*Images*', the former medium having let its very label be swapped with the latter's.³⁰

²⁷ See Alpers 2001. Bernsdorff 1993 highlights similarities between *Daphnis and Chloe* and Lucian's *Verae Historiae*.

²⁸ Nicolaus, 70 Felten, discussed above in 1.3.2.

²⁹ The subordination of all other subjects of *ekphrasis* to paintings is already clear in Achilles Tatius.

³⁰ With one known important antecedent, Lucian's *Imagines*. This is an over-the-top *ekphrasis* of a person that exploits to an extreme degree the *topos* of the comparison between a beautiful woman and a work of art. Many works of art are mentioned, but none made the object of a proper *ekphrasis*. The theme is an old one, but it might well be its use in the novels that constituted Lucian's inspiration. More on Lucian's *Imagines* will be said in the next chapter.

If we consider the second substitution employed by Longus, that is the innovative substitution of the *ekphrasis* with the novel, with a book (τέτταρας βίβλους ἔξεπονησάμην), we see how completely *Daphnis and Chloe* constituted the mutation that triggered the genesis of the genre of *ekphrasis* of paintings. For the literary experience of a book that is a painting anticipates and evolves almost naturally into the literary experience of a book directly entitled ‘*Paintings*’ which contains nothing but images. And accordingly to the fact that Longus’ reflection on *ekphrasis* had as a starting point the idea that *ekphrasis* of paintings is a case of *ut pictura poesis*, in the prologues of the *Imagines* of both the Elder and the Younger Philostratus we find references to the same thematics, in recognition of the principle that justified the very existence of the genre they were practising.³¹

4.3. Painting and mimesis

In talking about *ekphrasis* of paintings, we have given much attention to the theoretical aspects of the container and none to those of the content. This is generally due to the fact that art theory in antiquity never constituted a unified branch of studies, but is found scattered in various places. Among the authors met so far even the ones most interested in art provide very little information in the building of a theory able to answer the question ‘what does art do?’. But as *ekphrasis* of paintings started to mushroom in the course of the second century, so too artistic theories began to take a more concrete and organised form. Examining this form becomes extremely important when observing the development of *ekphrasis* into a literary genre, for it has consequences for the development of the novels as well.

The ancient perspective on art was that it operated on the principle of imitation. To put it very simply, art was the craft that copied things. The likeness of the work of art to the model was the main parameter on which judgement on the artist was based. Famous anecdotes about Athenian painters testify to this idea that realism, and hyper-realism, were the criteria used to evaluate a painter’s excellence. It is said that the painter Zeuxis, having entered a competition with Parrhasius, painted some grapes so perfectly that birds flew on the painting to pick them. On the other hand, Parrhasius produced the picture of a curtain, so well painted that Zeuxis asked for him to open it and reveal the painting. Having realised his mistake, Zeuxis himself gave the victory to

³¹ Philostratus the Elder: Ὅστις μὴ ἀσπάζεται τὴν ζωγραφίαν, ἀδικεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀδικεῖ καὶ σοφίαν, ὅποση ἐς ποιητὰς ἦκει, κτλ, ‘Whosoever scorns painting is unjust to truth; and he is also unjust to all the wisdom that has been bestowed upon poets’ (*Imagines*, prooem. 1, trans. Fairbanks); Philostratus the Younger: σκοποῦντι δὲ καὶ συγγένειάν τινα πρὸς ποιητικὴν ἔχειν ἢ τέχνη εύρίσκεται, ‘if one reflects upon the matter, however, one finds that the art of painting has a certain kinship with poetry’ (*Imagines*, prooem. 6, trans. Fairbanks).

Parrhasius.³² Likewise, a number of epigrams concerning works of art in the *Anthologia palatina* show as their main purpose the celebration of the perfect likeness to the model, the most evident and frequent example being Myron's cow, which features in a number of epigrams and is said to be not just like the original, but indeed a real cow, except for the lack of voice.³³

Good art is imitation so detailed that its main purpose is the recreation of reality, or, as Zeuxis' confusion seems to show, the illusion of reality. Zeuxis' episode shows precisely the kind of deception that was famously condemned in the *Republic* by Plato, who was much concerned to show that the reality that we believe surrounds us is nothing but the appearance of the true form of things. Plato gives the example of a painted couch, an imitation of the couch produced by the craftsman, which is in its turn the imitation of the true nature of the couch. Leaving aside the problem of art's truthfulness, what is relevant here is the example chosen by Plato, because it highlights one important common trait with the previous examples, the grapes, the curtain, the cow, the couch. The works of art that represent these subjects are works of art where the artists are able to have the models in front of them. It is considering this circumstance that an artist can truly be categorised as an imitator, a μιμητής, and his art as imitation.³⁴

What if, on the other hand, the object represented is something that cannot stand before the eyes? Can the art of someone representing something that does not have a visible model, say gods and heroes, still be called imitation? It is said that when commissioned the painting of Helen, Zeuxis chose the five most beautiful girls of the city and captured the characteristic at which each of them excelled, blending them in the portrait of the perfect beauty of the heroine.³⁵ Each individual component of the final product was therefore the faithful imitation of a directly observed model, but their combination represented something that technically was never there to be witnessed by the eyes.

The second half of Dio Chrysostom's *Twelfth Discourse* offers a rich treatment of these matters, for it contains the ethopoeia of Phidias being asked about the creation of his statue of Zeus in Olympia. The technical impossibility of imitating a divine model is stressed more than once,³⁶

³² The story is told by Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* 35,36.

³³ *AP*, 9, 713 ff. On the *ekphrastic* aspect of these epigrams see Goldhill 2007, 15 ff., and more generally Goldhill 1994.

³⁴ It is worth underlining at this point that the space of this chapter is insufficient for a discussion, even cursory, of Platonic mimesis. This extremely loaded term receives a fluctuating treatment by Plato himself, and stands for a representation which goes beyond simple simulation. Halliwell 2002 is the standard reference, to which we will point again in this chapter. Concerning mimesis, our interest here is narrow, prompted by the fact that the word is used in connection to the theme of *ut pictura poesis*, which is behind Longus, and aimed at clarifying its use in the works of Philostratus the Elder and its absence in Philostratus the Younger, as we will shortly see.

³⁵ There are a few versions of this story, which will be analysed more into detail in the next chapter.

³⁶ 54: ἢ μᾶλλον φοβηθέντας μήποτε οὐ δύναιντο ἰκανῶς ἀπομιμήσασθαι διὰ θνητῆς τέχνης τὴν ἄκραν καὶ τελειοτάτην φύσιν; 'did they fear that they would never be able adequately to portray by human art the Supreme and most Perfect Being?'; 74: ὡς δυνατόν ἦν θνητῶ διανοηθέντι μιμήσασθαι τὴν θεῖαν καὶ ἀμήχανον φύσιν, 'in so far

but the problem is solved thanks to the assumption that what the artist imitates is not, obviously, the form of the god in the skies, but his appearance as it is described in poetry, and most eminently in Homer, the first and greatest creator of divine images.³⁷ Again, a very peculiar kind of imitation, and certainly not an activity of mere copying. In Dio's speech even Phidias seems to distance himself and his art from the vocabulary of mimesis, to the point that when referred to him it is used to highlight its own limits.³⁸ Rather, the activity of the sculptor, as well as that of the poet, is preferably defined with the vocabulary of creation (δημιουργία, and derived words: in 49, 50, 52, 57, 60, 62, 71, 82; εἰδωλοποιία: 46).

Reflections on the nature of art were arising from works where art was associated with literary productions, as shown by Dio's speech, which, with the parallel between Homer and Phidias, can be included in the periphery of the theme of *ut pictura poesis*. As it appears, these reflections were following a path bound to lead figurative arts away from the label of purely imitative arts that had characterised them in the Classical period. One only needs to compare the use of μιμητής and δημιουργός as they are found in Plato to their use in Dio in order to notice this.

No change of this kind, however, could be too clear-cut.³⁹ As we have seen, roughly at the same time as Dio, Plutarch's understanding of the comparison between painting and poetry is based on solid mimetic principles.⁴⁰ And approximatively one century later, in the prologue of the Elder Philostratus' *Imagines*, the nature of painting still does not depart from the idea of mimesis,⁴¹ though the immediate initial connection between painting and truth ('ὅστις μὴ ἀσπάζεται τὴν ζωγραφίαν, ἀδικεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν') makes it clear that the author's view of painting was well removed from Plato's. Indeed, in the course of the *Imagines* the reader realises that the excellence of painting lies in the fact that its imitation is not just adherent to reality, but becomes reality itself,

as it was possible for a mortal man to frame in his mind and to represent the divine and inimitable nature' (trans. Cohoon).

³⁷ 59: σχεδὸν οὗτος πολὺ κράτιστος δημιουργὸς τῶν περὶ τὰ θεῖα ἀγαλμάτων, 'he, we may say, has been by far the greatest creator of the images of the divine beings' (trans. Cohoon).

³⁸ For instance: the already seen 74 (ὡς δυνατόν ἦν θνητῷ διανοηθέντι μιμησάσθαι τὴν θεῖαν καὶ ἀμήχανον φύσιν); 78: ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ὡς οἶόν τε ἦν ἐμιμησάμεν, 'as for the attributes, then, I have represented them in so far as it was possible to do so'; 78: οὐκ ἦν διὰ τῆς τέχνης μιμῆσθαι, 'that god, I say, it was not possible to represent by my art' (trans. Cohoon).

³⁹ In many ways, it shares similarities with how in the ancient conception of poetry the attention moved from the view of the poet as the deliverer of a divinely-inspired message to the poet as one who creates with his own *technê* (on which see Brillante 2003). The main figure behind this change is Simonides, who, as we have already seen, was also the first one to draw parallels between different arts and to develop a theory of mnemotechnic (*ibid.* 100 ff.). As Brillante points out, this was the prelude to the origin of *phantasia*.

⁴⁰ Cf. above *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* 17 f, and *De gloria Atheniensium* 346 f.

⁴¹ καὶ βουλομένῳ μὲν σοφίζεσθαι θεῶν τὸ εὔρημα διὰ τε τὰ ἐν γῆ εἶδη, ὅποσα τοὺς λειμῶνας αἱ Ἑσθραι γράφουσι, διὰ τε τὰ ἐν οὐρανῷ φαινόμενα, βασανίζοντι δὲ τὴν γένεσιν τῆς τέχνης μίμησις μὲν εὔρημα πρεσβύτατον καὶ ξυγγενέστατον τῇ φύσει, 'for one who wishes a clever theory, the invention of painting belongs to the gods – witness on earth all the designs with which the Seasons paint the meadows, and the manifestations we see in the heavens – but for one who is merely seeking the origin of the art, imitation is an invention most ancient and most akin to nature' (*Imagines*, proem. 1, trans. Fairbanks).

to the point that Philostratus too, like Dio, prefers to call the painter δημιουργός rather than μιμητής. It would seem that the authors that were for various reasons expressing interest in art necessarily started to think about its nature, and, in doing so, gradually realised that the few things that had been said about it in earlier times were either insufficient or unsatisfactory, and that at any rate a reassessment of the ancient model of mimesis was needed.

What is Longus' point of view in all of this? As the promoter of one of the most famous reflections on painting and writing, and as one of the main forerunners of the Philostrati, one would expect to find in his work an indication of his stance in the debate. Unfortunately, he gives none, which is surprising for two reasons. The first one is that painting is indispensable to his work. The second one is that other, less relevant, forms of art that occur in the novel are on the other hand given some sort of treatment, making painting the exception.

Mimetic arts in Longus

A good example of this can be seen towards the end of Book Two, during the celebration for the happy ending of the Methymnaean affair. The first form of art addressed here is music, brought about by Daphnis and Chloe's request that Philetas play his syrinx (2,33). First the myth of Syrinx is told, to account for the origin of the instrument, then the pipe and its mechanisms are described, and then the quality of its music (2,35). Then another form of art takes place: dance. Dryas, following a Dionysiac tune played by Philetas, dances a dance of vintage, which is performed through the imitation of the figures involved in it (2,36). Finally it is the turn of Daphnis and Chloe, inspired by the myth, the music, and the dance combined, to dance the story of Syrinx told by Lamon, playing the roles of Pan and Syrinx (2,37). Similarly, in Book Three, an account of singing is given, caused by the witnessing of an echo. The myth of Echo is told, the Nymph who excelled in playing and singing to the sound of every instrument, and whose dismemberment originated the natural phenomenon of echo, earth's ability to reproduce every sound (3,22-23).

Music, dance, and singing are all taken into a certain degree of technical consideration which may vary but is nevertheless always greater than the attention paid to painting. One reason for this disproportion can be the fact that the former are arts that belong to the story as an important part of the protagonists' education, whereas the latter pertains more to the prologue, thus to the narrator's experience. This, however, is true only to some extent, since Daphnis and Chloe are the ones who commission the painting found by the narrator, and also given the fact that elsewhere the interaction with other works of art plays a certain role (for instance, the statues of the Nymphs in

2,23), thus making the protagonists' connection with figurative art in the story not a completely marginal one.

Before we try to answer this question, it is essential, given the development of art theory that we set out to observe, that we take into consideration another aspect that the treatments of music, dance, and singing, have in common, namely the fact that they are all described as mimetic arts. The speciality of Philetas' syrinx is that it can imitate all the sounds of pastoral music (ὄλως πάσας σύριγγας μία σῦριγξ ἔμιμήσατο, 'in short, a single set of pipes mimicked all pipes' 2,35); in his dance Dryas portrays figures working during the vintage, and the dance of Daphnis and Chloe originates specifically as an imitation of Lamon's story:

ὠρχήσαντο τὸν μῦθον τοῦ Λάμωνος. ὁ Δάφνις Πᾶνα ἐμιμῆτο, τὴν Σύριγγα Χλόη· ὁ μὲν ἰκέτευε πείθων, ἡ δὲ ἀμελοῦσα ἐμειδία· ὁ μὲν ἐδίωκε καὶ ἐπ' ἄκρων τῶν ὀνύχων ἔτρεχε τὰς χηλὰς μιμούμενος, ἡ δὲ ἐνέφαινε τὴν κάμνουσαν ἐν τῇ φυγῇ.

They danced out Lamon's tale. Daphnis took the part of Pan, Chloe of Syrinx. He pleaded imploringly, while she smiled disdainfully. He pursued and ran on tiptoe to mimic hooves, while she enacted the girl tiring in the chase.
(2,37)

Moreover, everything involving the echo is described in terms of mimesis:

Κοῖλος γὰρ τῷ πεδίῳ αὐλῶν ὑποκείμενος καὶ τὸν ἦχον εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς ὄργανον δεχόμενος πάντων τῶν λεγομένων μιμητὴν φωνὴν ἀπεδίδου.

Above the plain lay a high-sided valley which took the sound into itself like a musical instrument and then returned a voice that mimicked everything that was said.
(3,21)

Καὶ τὰ μέλη Γῆ χαριζομένη Νύμφαις ἔκρυψε πάντα καὶ ἐτήρησε τὴν μουσικὴν καὶ γνώμη Μουσῶν ἀφήσι φωνὴν καὶ μιμεῖται πάντα, καθάπερ τότε ἡ κόρη, θεοῦς, ἀνθρώπους, ὄργανα, θηρία· μιμεῖται καὶ αὐτὸν συρίττοντα τὸν Πᾶνα.

For love of the Nymphs, Earth hid all her limbs and kept her music, and now, by will of the Muses, she (Echo) emits a voice and mimics everything, just as the girl once did: gods, men, musical instruments, animals. She even mimics Pan playing his pipes.
(3,23)

As a result, art is qualified as an imitation of nature, and is part of the more general and multifaceted theme of imitation that pervades the novel both in its form and in the story it

contains.⁴² Let us recall here just a few macroscopic aspects of this. In view of their abandonment at birth Daphnis and Chloe share a special bond with the natural world that has nurtured them in place of the human one; as a newborn Daphnis is welcomed back into the human community thanks to an act of imitation of nature: in a wittily oxymoronic scene Lamon, after having hesitated, picks up the baby out of a feeling of shame for not being able to imitate the humanity of a goat (αἰδεσθεῖς εἰ μηδὲ αἰγὸς φιλανθρωπίαν μιμήσεται, ‘feeling ashamed at the thought that he would not even be following a goat’s example in human kindness’ 1,3). The protagonists’ growth follows harmoniously the rhythms of nature, and they absorb with uncorrupted mind what nature can teach them by imitating whatever they are able to detect with their senses:

τοσαύτης δὴ πάντα κατεχούσης εὐωρίας οἱ ἄπαλοὶ καὶ νέοι μιμηταὶ τῶν ἀκουομένων ἐγίνοντο καὶ βλεπομένων· ἀκούοντες μὲν τῶν ὀρνίθων ἀδόντων ἦδον, βλέποντες δὲ σκιρτῶντας τοὺς ἄρνας ἤλλοντο κούφα, καὶ τὰς μελίττας δὲ μιμούμενοι τὰ ἄνθη συνέλεγον.

Everything was so full of the joy of spring that they, being young and innocent, copied what they heard and saw. Hearing the birds singing, they sang; seeing the lambs skipping, they leaped lightly, and copying the bees they gathered the flowers.
(1,9)

We have seen that their experience of art too, as part of their education, follows the same principle. The only aspect of their lives where imitation of nature alone is insufficient is love. When spring arrives with its erotic drive, Daphnis, in accord with the animal world as he has always been, attempts to fulfill his desire by imitating the he-goats with Chloe, only to obtain more frustration:

ἀνίστησιν αὐτὴν καὶ κατόπιν περιεφύετο μιμούμενος τοὺς τράγους. πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον ἀπορηθεῖς, καθίσας ἔκλαεν εἰ καὶ κριῶν ἀμαθέστερος εἰς τὰ ἔρωτος ἔργα.

He made her stand up and embraced her from behind, mimicking the goats. Much more frustrated than ever, he sat and wept to think that, when it came to the deeds of love, he was stupider than even the rams.
(3,14)

In time he will learn that an education that is based on the sheer imitation of nature and avoids the teachings of human τέχνη is inadequate.⁴³

⁴² Further on these aspects see Blanchard 1975, Zeitlin 1990, Teske 1991, Herrmann 2007.

⁴³ How nature and *techné* work together in the construction of an erotic garden is exemplified by Lamon’s garden in 4,2,5: ἐδῖπκει μέντοι καὶ ἡ τούτων φύσις εἶναι τέχνης, ‘even their (the trees’ branches) natural growth seemed the product of art.’ On this garden see Di Virgilio 1991, Morgan 2004, 224-6; on *physis* and *techné* in Longus see Teske

What, then, can be said about painting? The importance of mimesis for the novel and the fact that other forms of art follow a theory of imitation of nature would suggest that there is no reason to think that Longus did not understand painting in the same way. In addition to this, during Longus' time the parallel between painting and writing was, as far as we know, still based on the idea of mimesis.⁴⁴ Still, it is said by Longus neither that the painting 'imitates' the story of Daphnis and Chloe, nor that the novel 'imitates' the painting. When it comes to it, the aesthetic theory that governs the genesis of Longus' novel as it is expressed in the prologue is entirely lacking the vocabulary of mimesis.

Let us speculate briefly on the scant elements that we are given in order to see how imitation might have worked in the fictional genesis of *Daphnis and Chloe*. To begin with we need to take into consideration two different moments, two passages in the origin of the story: the artist painting the work of art found by the narrator and the interpreter explaining it to him. Concerning the first moment, the painter presumably produced the work of art based on the account given to him by Daphnis and Chloe themselves. Longus is extremely vague on the subject, saying nothing more than 'εἰκόνας ἀνέθεσαν', but the only way to 'offer paintings' was to tell their story to a painter in order to have it represented. Surely the painter was able to use visible models while reproducing certain subjects (the protagonists' appearance when grown up, the landscapes, the animals, etc.), but not with others (the protagonists as babies, the pirates, the war, etc.), for which he must have relied on the protagonists' account. In this sense the painter's work was not, strictly speaking, an act of simulation of reality, but rather a creation based on tangible models as well as narrated ones, not altogether dissimilar from the δημιουργία or εἰδωλοποιία of Phidias modelling Zeus from Homer's account.

Concerning the second moment, the telling of the story by the interpreter, Longus is even more vague. He skips directly from the search for an interpreter to the composition of the novel, leaving us completely in the dark (καὶ ἀναζητησάμενος ἐξηγητὴν τῆς εἰκόνης τέτταρας βίβλους ἐξεπονησάμην, proem. 1,3). Again, we can only assume that the interpreter's explanation was a combination of references to the work of art, the directly visible model, and to the story as he knew it either by having witnessed it or by having heard it from someone else (we cannot know how much time has elapsed between the events of the story and the narrator's hunt). In this case as well pure mimesis would be insufficient in describing the genesis of the narration. We shall stop here, but not before adding en passant that another moment should also be considered,

1991, Zeitlin 1990, 430 ff.

⁴⁴ If dating Longus from in between the second half of the first and the first half of the second century is correct, then his 'ἀντιγράψαι τῆ γραφῆ' belongs in between Plutarch and the Elder Philostratus' not dissimilar statements that painting is like poetry in that it imitates.

that is the passage from the interpreter's explanation to the actual composition of the four books.

Two elements emerge from the observation of these moments: the limits of the concept of pure mimesis (the same thing experienced by Daphnis in lovemaking), and Longus' reticence on the topic. Regarding this last aspect, Longus seems to be willingly increasing the uncertainty by never clearly stating that the work of art dedicated by the protagonists is the same as that found by the narrator. As it is known, he uses the singular in the prologue (εἰκόνας, γραφή) and the plural at the end of the novel (εἰκόνας ἀνέθεσαν), thus never making the identification certain.⁴⁵

This transition of the same matter through different forms of art (the story of Daphnis and Chloe passed on from storytelling to painting, from painting to storytelling, and finally from storytelling to the novel) has a parallel within the story in the events at the end of Book Two. There too we witness the transition from myth to music (first we have the myth of the maiden Syrinx and then we hear Philetas' syrinx play, with the suggestion that it could have been the proto-instrument), and from myth to dance (Daphnis and Chloe's enacting of the story of Pan and Syrinx), and these changes, as we have seen, occur explicitly under the banner of mimesis. Again, this could work as a precedent for the transition from painting to novel, telling us that mimesis might be behind it as well, but the only effect that this parallel produces is to enhance the feeling that Longus purposely excluded painting, and painting alone, from the world of mimesis.

Could this be seen as a signal of anxiety on Longus' side when it comes to defining what painting is? Could this testify to the growing awareness that mimesis alone was no longer enough to explain everything that painting does? From our perspective, Longus' silence, or, to put it better, his suspension of judgement, fits in well with the attitude of doubt towards the Classical view, and consequent research of new parameters for art, that characterised the second century and that would find an answer only in the following century in the works of the Philostrati. Thus, although Longus himself did not make any statements concerning the theory of figurative art, he greatly contributed to the birth of the genre of *ekphrasis* of paintings from which such statements would later emerge.

4.4. Mimesis and *phantasia*

The ground on which artistic theory matured was that of *ekphrasis* of paintings, a genre whose limited proliferation does little justice to the fame it enjoyed. What we have left are the works of two authors from the third century, Philostratus the Elder and his grandson Philostratus the Younger, and another one from the following century, Callistratus, who described statues instead of

⁴⁵ Herrmann 2007, 210-20, draws a parallel between Longus' use of εἰκόν in the prologue and Plato's use of the same word in the sense not of 'physical object' but of 'simile', 'allegory'.

paintings.⁴⁶ Later references to the genre are scant, and the author they are mostly concerned with is the first of our list, Philostratus the Elder.⁴⁷ It is possible that more books entirely constituted by ekphrasis of works of art were written,⁴⁸ but what we have, which by natural selection should be considered the finest achievements of the genre, in all likelihood falls short of being the totality of it. As a matter of fact, if one considers paintings alone the phenomenon appears to be even more restricted in time and space, the household of one single family of rhetoricians in the third century, the Philostrati. This should not be seen as a lack of success of the genre. Rather, considering that *ekphrasis* as a genre constituted a literary niche that did not allow too many replicas lest it completely lose its flavour, it indicates that it had reached its climax already with its first major exponent, who earned prestige and set the standard for the centuries to come. Philostratus the Younger introduced himself as an emulator of his grandfather, and Callistratus applied his predecessors' *modus operandi* to statues. After him the experience could be regarded as both fulfilled and exhausted, at least until its revival in the late fifth and sixth century in the school of Gaza (Johannes and Procopius) and in Byzantium (Paulus Silentiarius).

The Elder Philostratus' *Imagines*

In the prologue of the *Imagines*, Philostratus the Elder expresses a view that has elements of both continuity and innovation with the Classical view:

“Ὅστις μὴ ἀσπάζεται τὴν ζωγραφίαν, ἀδικεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀδικεῖ καὶ σοφίαν, ὅποση ἐς ποιητὰς ἦκει—φορὰ γὰρ ἴση ἀμφοῖν ἐς τὰ τῶν ἡρώων ἔργα καὶ εἶδη—ξυμμετρίαν τε οὐκ ἐπαινεῖ, δι’ ἣν καὶ λόγου ἢ τέχνης ἄπτεται. καὶ βουλομένῳ μὲν σοφίζεσθαι θεῶν τὸ εὖρημα διὰ τε τὰ ἐν γῆ εἶδη, ὅποσα τοὺς λειμῶνας αἰετῶν γράφουσι, διὰ τε τὰ ἐν οὐρανῷ φαινόμενα, βασανίζοντι δὲ τὴν γένεσιν τῆς τέχνης μίμησις μὲν εὖρημα πρεσβύτατον καὶ ξυγγενέστατον τῇ φύσει· εὖρον δὲ αὐτὴν σοφοὶ ἄνδρες τὸ μὲν ζωγραφίαν, τὸ δὲ πλαστικὴν φήσαντες.

Whosoever scorns painting is unjust to truth; and he is also unjust to all the wisdom that has been bestowed upon poets -for poets and painters make equal contribution to our knowledge of the deeds and the looks of heroes- and he withholds his praise from symmetry of proportion, whereby art pertakes of reason. For one who wishes a clever theory, the invention of painting belongs to the gods -witness on earth all the designs

⁴⁶ For an overview on Philostratus see Anderson 1986 and Bowie and Elsner 2009.

⁴⁷ Cf. Philostratus the Younger (*Imagines*, proem. 2), Menander (*Peri epideiktikôn*, 390,2), John of Sardis (215,15 Rabe).

⁴⁸ We have already discussed the references in *Suda* to Pamphilus and Nicostratus (see above p. 12). In addition to them it is worth remembering here the Coptic poet Christodorus (between fifth and sixth century AD) who wrote an *ekphrasis* in verses of the statues collected by Constantine the Great in the gymnasium of Zeuxippus (*Anthologia Palatina*, 2).

with which the Seasons paint the meadows, and the manifestations we see in the heavens- but for one who is merely seeking the origin of the art, imitation is an invention most ancient and most akin to nature; and wise men invented it, calling it now painting, now plastic art.⁴⁹
(proem. 1)

Ancient is the invention of painting, as emerges from the stress on the past in Philostratus' words (εὐρημα πρεσβύτατον; εὐρον δὲ αὐτὴν σοφοὶ ἄνδρες), and ancient is the theory of painting expressed by the author (τὴν γένεσιν τῆς τέχνης μίμησις). Philostratus does not depart from the Classical definition of painting as mimesis, but his interpretation of the nature of painting's imitation will enrich it with a power much greater than just the ability to thoroughly copy things.

Already in the following paragraph, where Philostratus is drawing a comparison between sculpture and painting, it is possible to recognise the sophisticated character of painting:

ζωγραφία δὲ ξυμβέβληται μὲν ἐκ χρωμάτων, πράττει δὲ οὐ τοῦτο μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πλείω σοφίζεται ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ ἐνὸς ὄντος ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἢ ἑτέρα τέχνη. σκιάν τε γὰρ ἀποφαίνει καὶ βλέμμα γινώσκει ἄλλο μὲν τοῦ με μηνότος, ἄλλο δὲ τοῦ ἀλγοῦντος ἢ χαίροντος. καὶ αὐγὰς ὀμμάτων ὁποῖαί εἰσιν ὁ πλαστικὸς μὲν τις ἠκιστα ἐργάζεται, χαροπὸν δὲ ὄμμα καὶ γλαυκὸν καὶ μέλαν γραφικὴ οἶδε, καὶ ξανθὴν κομην οἶδε καὶ πυρσὴν καὶ ἠλιῶσαν καὶ ἐσθῆτος χρώμα καὶ ὄπλων θαλάμους τε καὶ οἰκίας καὶ ἄλση καὶ ὄρη καὶ πηγὰς καὶ τὸν αἰθέρα, ἐν ᾧ ταῦτα.»

Painting is imitation by the use of colours; and not only does it employ colour, but this second form of art cleverly accomplishes more with this one means than the other form (sculpture) with its many means. For it both reproduces light and shade and also permits the observer to recognize the look, now of the man who is mad, now of the man who is sorrowing or rejoicing. The varying nature of bright eyes the plastic artist does not bring out at all in his work; but the “grey eye,” the “blue eye,” the “black eye” are known to painting; and it knows chestnut and red and yellow hair, and the colour of garments and of armour, chambers too and houses and groves and mountains and springs and the air that envelops them all.
(proem. 2)

When considering pictorial creation, not even once does Philostratus use the verbs ‘to make’ or ‘to produce’ (the only time he uses ἐργάζεσθαι is in reference to sculpture). Instead, the verbs that he refers to painting are σοφίζεσθαι, ἀποφαίνειν, γινώσκειν, and εἶδέναι. To Philostratus, painting conceives with wisdom, makes manifest, and knows.

In the *Republic* Plato used ἐργάζεσθαι when showing that imitators believe they can produce everything:

⁴⁹ On Philostratus' *Imagines* see Bryson 1994, Webb 2006, Newby 2009; on different levels of relationship between style of writing and art subject see Beall 1993, Kostopoulou 2009, Dubel 2009 (on colour); a philosophical reading of the *Imagines* is Thein 2002.

Πόρρω ἄρα που τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἡ μιμητικὴ ἐστὶν καί, ὡς ἔοικεν, διὰ τοῦτο πάντα ἀπεργάζεται, ὅτι σμικρὸν τι ἐκάστου ἐφάπτεται, καὶ τοῦτο εἶδωλον.

Then the mimetic art is far removed from truth, and this, it seems, is the reason why it can produce (*apergazetai*) everything,⁵⁰ because it touches or lays hold of only a small part of the object, and that a phantom.
(598b, trans. Shorey)

This is evident in a passage where Socrates stresses the imitators' claim to be able to create all objects, everything in nature, and the heavens too:

ὁ αὐτὸς γὰρ οὗτος χειροτέχνης οὐ μόνον πάντα οἷός τε σκεύη ποιῆσαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐκ τῆς γῆς φυόμενα ἅπαντα ποιεῖ καὶ ζῶα πάντα ἐργάζεται, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ ἑαυτὸν, καὶ πρὸς τούτοις γῆν καὶ οὐρανὸν καὶ θεοὺς καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν οὐρανῶ καὶ τὰ ἐν Ἄιδου ὑπὸ γῆς ἅπαντα ἐργάζεται.

This same handicraftsman is not only able to make (*poiēsai*) all implements, but he makes (*poiei*) all plants and produces (*ergazetai*) all animals, including himself, and thereto he produces (*ergazetai*) earth and heaven and the gods and all things in heaven and in Hades under the earth.
(596c, trans. Shorey)

Our passage in Philostratus could be read not just as an overview of the accomplishments of painting, but as a reaction to the philosopher's vision. In fact Philostratus moves almost imperceptibly from a list of colours to the same sequence objects-nature-skies that appears in Plato:

καὶ ἐσθῆτος χρώμα καὶ ὄπλων θαλάμους τε καὶ οἰκίας καὶ ἄλση καὶ ὄρη καὶ πηγὰς καὶ τὸν αἰθέρα, ἐν ᾧ ταῦτα.

And (painting knows) the colour of garments and of armour, chambers too and houses and groves and mountains and springs and the air that envelops them all.
(*Imagines*, prooem. 2).

In view of this analogy, Philostratus' change of the semantic sphere of the verbs from 'making' to 'knowing' has the nuance of an answer to the problems of artistic mimesis as they had been formulated by Plato. What defines the relation between the act of painting and what is portrayed is not the mechanical dependence of the product on the maker, but an abstract dialogue between a source capable of wisdom (σοφίζεσθαι) and the object of its knowledge. Painting is thus removed

⁵⁰ On Plato's view of mimetic arts see further Keuls 1974, Janaway 1995, and especially Halliwell 2002, 118 ff. on Book Ten of the *Republic*.

from the world of human techniques and belongs to the world of wisdom, knowledge, and truth.

It is precisely the connection with truth, clear from the very first words of the *Imagines* (ὅστις μὴ ἀσπάζεται τὴν ζωγραφίαν, ἀδικεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν), that qualifies Philostratus' understanding of painting and distances it from the Classical, and especially Platonic, view of art. Let us therefore take into consideration a few passages of the *Imagines* where the author pursues and elaborates the bond between painting and truth. What is meant here is not a mere reference to the realism of a painting, examples of which can be found in 1.6.2, where the baskets used by the Cupids to collect apples are adorned with precious stones, among which we find ἀληθῆς μάργηνις, 'real pearl', or in 1.27.2, where the dust sticking on the sweating bodies of the horses makes them less beautiful but ἀληθεστέρους, 'truer'. These expressions have the flavour of a skilled repertoire rather than of a metaphysical reflection. This is not the case, for instance, with the description of the Bosphoros. In the middle of an *ekphrasis* where the boundaries between describing and narrating are, more often than not, crossed, Philostratus presents the audience with what seems to be a prolepsis:

καὶ ποίμναις ἐντεύξει προχωρῶν καὶ μυκωμένων ἀκούση βοῶν καὶ συρίγγων
βοῇ περιηγήσει σε καὶ κυνηγέταις ἐντεύξει καὶ γεωργοῖς καὶ ποταμοῖς καὶ
λίμναις καὶ πηγαῖς—ἐκμέμακται γὰρ ἡ γραφή καὶ τὰ ὄντα καὶ τὰ γινόμενα καὶ
ὡς ἂν γένοιτο ἓνια, οὐ διὰ πλῆθος αὐτῶν ῥαδιουργοῦσα τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλ'
ἐπιτελοῦσα τὸ ἐκάστου οἰκεῖον, ὡς κὰν εἴ ἐν τι ἔγραφεν.

As you go on to the other parts of the painting, you will meet with flocks, and hear herds of cattle lowing, and the music of the shepherds' pipes will echo in your ears; and you will meet with hunters and farmers and rivers and pools and springs—for the painting gives the very image of things that are, of things that are taking place, and in some cases of the way in which they take place, not slighting the truth by reason of the number of objects shown, but defining the real nature of each thing just as if the painter were representing some one thing alone.

(1,12,5)

This passage (among others by Philostratus) manifests the difficult position where *ekphrasis* stands, caught between the immobility of art and the flow of narration. Philostratus' words show the attempt to exceed the boundaries of figurative art. The engagement with the work of art is not defined by the relation between the viewer and the object, but has the feature of a face-to-face meeting on the same plane of existence, which cannot happen without consequences in terms of temporality. From a stylistic point of view, this is reflected in the shift from the present tense of the description to the future (ἐντεύξει, ἀκούση). From the point of view of the contents, we are told that the painting shows τὰ ὄντα καὶ τὰ γινόμενα καὶ ὡς ἂν γένοιτο ἓνια. Not only the stillness of being (τὰ ὄντα) that belongs to the representation of reality, but also the mutability of becoming

(τὰ γινόμενα) and the way in which this happens (ὡς ἂν γένοιτο), both of which belong to reality itself. In doing so, the painting ‘does not slight the truth by reason of the number of objects shown, but defines the real nature of each thing (ἐπιτελοῦσα) just as if the painter were representing some one thing alone’. The result is not a simplification of truth (οὐ... ῥαδιουργοῦσα τὴν ἀλήθειαν), or its deterioration, but quite the opposite, its fulfillment and perfection (ἐπιτελοῦσα). Ἐπιτελεῖν here seems to respond to the idea of imitation’s natural lack of completion expressed by Plato in the *Republic*:

τελέως δὲ εἶναι ὄν τὸ τοῦ κλινοῦργοῦ ἔργον ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς χειροτέχνου εἴ τις φαίη, κινδυνεύει οὐκ ἂν ἀληθῆ λέγειν.

If anyone should say that being in the complete sense (*teleôs einai*) belongs to the work of the cabinet-maker or to that of any other handicraftsman, it seems that he would say what is not true (*ouk alêthê*).
(597a, trans. Shorey)

In Philostratus the painting is real not because it shows reality and the objects that are in it, but because it completes the real nature of each thing (τὸ ἐκάστου οἰκέϊον), forming a wider truth through the addition of every single truth.⁵¹

From what we have seen so far, in the *Imagines* Philostratus does not address directly the matter of what constitutes the process of creation of a work of art. Rather, he starts by mentioning mimesis as the origin of the art, and now and again goes back to polish and refinish the concept. In this intermittent definition his main point seems to be that painting does not simply make a copy of reality, but is instead reality in its own right. Philostratus accentuates this idea by repeatedly strengthening the connection between painting and truth, and in doing so he necessarily engages, as we have seen, with the most renowned promoter of the antithesis between painting and truth, that is, Plato.⁵² It is known that the latter’s primary concern with painting was the risk of deception due to painting’s distance from the true nature of things, and the *Republic* offers a good example of this. In a tone which is intentionally exaggerated and satirical, Plato expresses his fear that people could be confused by the mimetic power of painting, and think to be real what in fact is not:

οἶον ὁ ζωγράφος, φαμέν, ζωγραφήσει ἡμῖν σκυτοτόμον, τέκτονα, τοὺς ἄλλους δημιουργοὺς, περὶ οὐδενὸς τούτων ἐπαίω τῶν τεχνῶν· ἀλλ’ ὅμως παίδας γε

⁵¹ A similar concept is resumed in *Imagines* 2,1,3: τὰ γὰρ συμβαίνοντα οἱ μὴ γράφοντες οὐκ ἀληθεύουσιν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς, ‘painters who fail to make the details consistent with one another do not depict the truth in their paintings.’

⁵² Plato’s treatment of painting in Book Ten of the *Republic* is here looked at merely from the point of view of Philostratus, and is not itself the object of discussion. Chapter Four of Halliwell 2002 demonstrates that Plato’s is not a condemnation as much as a challenge to mimesis and its potential.

καὶ ἄφρονας ἀνθρώπους, εἰ ἀγαθὸς εἶη ζωγράφος, γράψας ἂν τέκτονα καὶ πόρρωθεν ἐπιδεικνὺς ἐξαπατῶ ἂν τῷ δοκεῖν ὡς ἀληθῶς τέκτονα εἶναι.

As, for example, a painter, we say, will paint us a cobbler, a carpenter, and other craftsmen, though he himself has no expertness in any of these arts, but nevertheless if he were a good painter, by exhibiting at a distance his picture of a carpenter he would deceive (*exapatōi*) children and foolish men, and make them believe it to be a real (*hōs alēthōs*) carpenter.
(598b-c, trans. Shorey)

His provocative idea is confirmed by the fact that only fools, unable to distinguish between truth and its imitation, would be deceived by the imitator, unable to distinguish between truth and its imitation:

ὅτι εὐήθης τις ἄνθρωπος, καί, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐντυχὼν γόητί τινι καὶ μιμητῇ ἐξηπατήθη, ὥστε ἔδοξεν αὐτῷ πάσσοφος εἶναι, διὰ τὸ αὐτὸς μὴ οἶός τ' εἶναι ἐπιστήμην καὶ ἀνεπιστημοσύνην καὶ μίμησιν ἐξετάσαι.

A guileless man who apparently has met some magician or sleight-of-hand man and imitator (*mimētēi*) and has been deceived (*exēpatēthē*) by him into the belief that he is all-wise, because of his own inability to put to the proof and distinguish (*exetasai*) knowledge, ignorance, and imitation.
(598 d, trans. Shorey)⁵³

Provocation aside, deception (*apatē*) is one of Plato's main concerns. Philostratus approaches the problem of deception in the description of the painting of Narcissus, the extreme paradigm for the victims of mimesis who cannot distinguish between the original and the copy. This *ekphrasis* is divided into two parts: the description of the natural setting where the scene takes place and the description of the young boy. In the first part, Philostratus lingers over a particular detail, namely a bee:

τιμῶσα δὲ ἡ γραφή τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ δρόσου τι λείβει ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθέων, οἷς καὶ μέλιττα ἐφιζάνει τις, οὐκ οἶδα εἴτ' ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ὑπὸ τῆς γραφῆς, εἴτε ἡμᾶς ἐξηπατηθῆσαι χρὴ εἶναι αὐτήν. ἀλλ' ἔστω.

The painting has such regard for realism that it even shows drops of dew dripping from the flowers and a bee settling on the flowers –whether a real bee has been deceived by the painting or whether we are to be deceived (*exapatētheisa*) into thinking that the bee is real, I do not know. But let that pass.
(1,23,2)

⁵³ On these passages and on Plato's provocative tone see Halliwell 2002, 133 ff.

As Narcissus is the symbol of self-reflection, the riddle of the bee is the place where the story of Narcissus reflects itself. The readers are presented with a problem that mirrors Narcissus' own problem, since in Philostratus' hesitation we read the questions that Narcissus should be asking himself: is this real, or is it an image? If the bee is real, then it is the bee that has been deceived by the flowers' likeness to truth. If the bee is painted, then it is we who have been deceived by the bee's likeness to truth. Still, even if the former is the case, the existence of a doubt implies that our deception has somehow already occurred: we might find out that the bee is real, but the idea that it was painted has crossed our minds anyway. The risk of not being able to tell the difference and getting lost like Narcissus is plain to see. However, what distinguishes us from Narcissus is that, even though we might not be able to tell the difference, at least we ask ourselves the question, and we owe this to the fact that we have in Philostratus a wise guide to the interpretation of the paintings. Nevertheless, his answer to the question, if ever an answer there is, is far from being final. As a matter of fact, it is the non-answer par excellence: I do not know (οὐκ οἶδα). But there is more: let it be (ἀλλ' ἔστω). It does not matter whether the bee is real or not, because what triggers the possibility of a deception is the adherence of painting to truth (τιμῶσα δὲ ἡ γραφή τὴν ἀλήθειαν), and this is something to be praised, not condemned.⁵⁴ Philostratus does not deny that painting can bring deception, he simply denies that deception is that much of a problem.⁵⁵

In the *Imagines*, it appears, we do not find any groundbreaking theory of painting. What we find is an extreme exploitation of the concept of mimesis, with the consequent investigation of its principles and refinement of some of its rules. More specifically, we have seen how Philostratus establishes a connection with Plato, engaging in an almost word-by-word reversal of the theory of art, or, to be more precise, the criticism of art, expressed by the philosopher. In view of this it would seem that Philostratus' strategy for praising painting does not consist of just a direct encomium but takes on at times the appearance of a defence of the art. Indeed he chooses not to begin his work by enumerating painting's qualities and merits, but by defending it from its detractors, from those who do not appreciate it (ὅστις μὴ ἀσπάζεται τὴν ζωγραφίαν, ἀδικεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν), and as any defence presupposes an accusation it is plausible to think that one of these opponents was Plato, who made of the incompatibility of imitative arts and truth the main crux of his argument against painting.

There may be several reasons behind Philostratus' operation of linking the *Imagines* with

⁵⁴ On this passage see Thein 2002, 140.

⁵⁵ Philostratus the Younger will follow his lead: ἡδεῖα δὲ καὶ ἡ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀπάτη καὶ οὐδὲν ὄνειδος φέρουσα, τὸ γὰρ τοῖς οὐκ οὔσιν ὡς οὔσι προσεστάναι καὶ ἄγεσθαι ὑπ' αὐτῶν, ὡς εἶναι νομίζειν, ἀφ' οὗ βλάβος οὐδέν, πῶς οὐ ψυχαγωγῆσαι ἰκανὸν καὶ αἰτίας ἐκτός; 'and the deception (*apatē*) inherent in his (the painter's) work is pleasurable and involves no reproach; for to confront objects which do not exist as though they existed and to be influenced by them, to believe that they do exist, is not this, since no harm can come of it, a suitable and irreproachable means of providing entertainment?' (*Imagines*, proem. 4).

the *Republic*. On the one hand, typically for his time, Philostratus perfectly falls into the category of intellectuals who wanted to evoke the past they admired by engaging in literary dialogues with the glories of Greek culture. On the other hand, one can consider the fact that this first attempt to reproduce an entire museum of paintings is meant to bring the readers to a deep reflection on art, literature, their relation, and the connection of both of them with reality. In his attempt to explain the nature of painting through some sort of metaphysical insight, in order to exalt and ennoble it as a means of knowledge, Philostratus may have chosen the *Republic* as the most suitable source of an enriching philosophical background, and Plato as a hidden interlocutor. Of course, neither case excludes the other. All these reasons could, and should, coexist, and any univocal reading would in all likelihood be a limitation. However, Philostratus' apologetical attitude in the prologue, and the precise answers that he gives to specific problems set by Plato, seem to suggest a particular nuance in the rhetor's strategy. Plato's condemnation, just like the perfect state that he conceives in the *Republic*, was purely theoretical, inapplicable to the real world, and existing only in the abstract and speculative space of a dialogue.⁵⁶ Yet, a condemnation it was, and a famous one, to the point of being, though unfulfilled, indissolubly attached to painting. In writing about painting no praise would be more effective than confuting painting's most eminent detractor. Philostratus decided to glorify painting by taking it out of Plato's cave and placing it where the truth lies, in the sunlight. As a result, the first skill attributed to painting in the prologue of the *Imagines* is that it shows the shadow (σκιάν τε γὰρ ἀποφάνει..., prooem. 2), a prerogative of light only.⁵⁷

Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii*

A similar view of art based on mimesis can be found in another work by Philostratus, the *Vita Apollonii* (*VA* from now on).⁵⁸ The protagonists of this unique and complex work experience several encounters with art, much like the protagonists of the Greek novels, of which *VA*, in very general terms, can be considered a philosophising parallel. During their journey to India, Apollonius and Damis reach Taxila, where the king has his palace. Newly arrived in the city, the

⁵⁶ Unsurprisingly, such an opinion preceded Philostratus, as can be read in Lucian's ironic account of the Elysian Fields in *Verae historiae*: 'Πλάτων δὲ μόνος οὐ παρῆν, ἀλλ' ἐλέγετο καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῇ ἀναπλασθείσῃ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ πόλει οἰκεῖν χρώμενος τῇ πολιτείᾳ καὶ τοῖς νόμοις οἷς συνέγραψεν, 'Plato alone was not there: it was said that he was living in his imaginary city under the constitution and the laws that he himself wrote' (2.17, trans. Harmon).

⁵⁷ What is left to the reader to infer is that, if painting is truth, then those who have access to it are those who were able to come out of the cave as well, that is the painter and, indirectly, the rhetor.

⁵⁸ Notoriously, it is questionable whether the Philostratus who wrote the first *Imagines* is the same Philostratus who wrote the *VA*. What is said by Suda on the Philostrati does not coincide with the evidence that we have, generating changeable attributions. Without entering the *vexata quaestio*, let us point, for an overview of the problem, to Appendix 1 in Anderson 1986. Whereas Anderson suspends his final judgement, the most recent collection of works on Philostratus (Bowie and Elsner 2009) opts for the inclusion of the *Imagines* in the same corpus as *VA* and *VS*. See Elsner 2009 and Bowie 2009 in their volume. On art in the *VA* see Platt 2009, Abbondanza 2001.

two, waiting to be received by the king, spend some time in the temple, where they can admire the bronze panels on the walls, representing the deeds of Alexander and Porus. Unlike the heroes of the novels, who rarely engage with the works of art they come across, Apollonius takes this opportunity to discuss with Damis not only the panels in front of him, but art in general, and especially painting:

“ὦ Δάμι” ἔφη ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος, “ἔστι τι γραφικὴ;” “εἶ γε” εἶπε “καὶ ἀλήθεια.” “πράττει δὲ τί ἡ τέχνη αὕτη;” “τὰ χρώματα” ἔφη “ξυγκεράννυσιν, ὅποσα ἐστί, τὰ κυανᾶ τοῖς βατραχείοις καὶ τὰ λευκὰ τοῖς μέλασι καὶ τὰ πυρσὰ τοῖς ὠχροῖς.” “ταυτὶ δὲ” ἦ δ’ ὅς “ὑπὲρ τίνος μίγνυσιν; οὐ γὰρ ὑπὲρ μόνου τοῦ ἀνθους, ὥσπερ αἱ κήριναί.” “ὑπὲρ μιμήσεως” ἔφη “καὶ τοῦ κύνα τε ἐξεικᾶσαι καὶ ἵππον καὶ ἄνθρωπον καὶ νῆυν καὶ ὅποσα ὄρα ὁ ἥλιος· (...)“διττὴ ἄρα ἡ μιμητικὴ, ὦ Δάμι, καὶ τὴν μὲν ἠγώμεθα οἷαν τῇ χειρὶ ἀπομιμῆσθαι καὶ τῶ νῶ, γραφικὴν δὲ εἶναι ταύτην, τὴν δ’ αὖ μόνῳ τῶ νῶ εἰκάζειν.” “οὐ διττὴν,” ἔφη ὁ Δάμις “ἀλλὰ τὴν μὲν τελεωτέραν ἠγεῖσθαι προσήκει γραφικὴν γε οὖσαν, ἣ δύναται καὶ τῶ νῶ καὶ τῇ χειρὶ ἐξεικᾶσαι, τὴν δὲ ἕτεραν ἐκείνης μόριον, ἐπειδὴ ξυνήσῃ μὲν καὶ μιμῆται τῶ νῶ καὶ μὴ γραφικός τις ὢν, τῇ χειρὶ δὲ οὐκ ἂν ἐς τὸ γράφειν αὐτὰ χρήσαιτο.”

“Damis,” he said, “is there such a thing as painting?” “Yes,” said Damis, “if there is such a thing as truth.” “What does this art do?” “It blends all the colors there are,” said Damis, “blue with green, white with black, red with yellow.” “What does it blend them for?” asked Apollonius, “since it is not simply for superficial color, like made-up women.” “For imitation,” Damis replied, “in order to reproduce dogs, horses, humans, ships, everything under the sun.” (...) “Well then, imitation is of two kinds, Damis. Let us hold that one kind is imitation of both the hand and the mind, and this is painting, and the other is imagination of the mind alone.” “It is not of two kinds,” said Damis. “The one kind we should consider more perfect, since it is painting, which can depict both with the mind and the hand, whereas the other is a part of the first, since one can comprehend and copy things in the mind without being a painter, but he cannot use his hand to represent them.”

(VA 2,22, trans. Jones)

Asked whether such a thing as painting exists, Damis replies affirmatively that painting exists just like truth exists (“ἔστι τι γραφικὴ;” “εἶ γε” εἶπε “καὶ ἀλήθεια.”), recalling the very beginning of the *Imagines*. Through a series of questions aimed at clarifying what painting is, Apollonius leads Damis to a definition of painting that follows a purely mimetic principle (“μίμησις οὖν ἡ γραφικὴ, ὦ Δάμι;” “τί δὲ ἄλλο;”): the objective of mixing colours is to imitate things, to reproduce, for instance, the likeness of animals, men, objects. That Damis’ definition is lacking is shown by Apollonius with a series of observations that bring his disciple to an aporia. If painting were just mimesis, then we should assume that the fact that we see figures in the clouds (eg. animals), being itself imitation, is due to a god-painter (ζωγράφος οὖν ὁ θεός) who entertains himself painting these pictures. Embarrassed by his own reasoning, Damis is then led to agree with Apollonius that,

rather, the clouds take those shapes by chance, and that it is the innate sense of imitation within us that identifies familiar figures in those shapes (ἡμᾶς δὲ φύσει τὸ μιμητικὸν ἔχοντας ἀναρρυθμίζειν τε αὐτὰ καὶ ποιεῖν). The conclusion is that there are two kinds of mimesis, one that imitates with the hand and the mind (painting), and one that imitates with the mind alone.⁵⁹ This second mimesis is, according to Damis, a part of the first one, inferior to it.

Apollonius will add a few more points to the discussion. First of all that we possess mimesis within us by nature, but painting is an acquired technique (μιμητικὴν μὲν ἐκ φύσεως τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἦκειν, τὴν γραφικὴν δὲ ἐκ τέχνης, ‘the mimetic faculty comes to men from nature, but the ability to paint from art’), and secondly that the imitation within us is necessary to appreciate painting, because we cannot admire any given picture without having in mind an idea of the object painted to compare it with (εἴποιμ’ ἂν καὶ τοὺς ὀρώντας τὰ τῆς γραφικῆς ἔργα μιμητικῆς δεῖσθαι· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐπαινέσειέ τις τὸν γεγραμμένον ἵππον ἢ ταῦρον μὴ τὸ ζῶον ἐνθυμηθεῖς, ὥς εἴκασται, ‘I would say that those who look at the products of painting need the mimetic faculty; for no one could admire a painted horse or bull unless they had formed an idea of the animal to use as term of comparison’). The mimesis of the mind alone, the one that we possess by nature, belongs to everyone and not only to painters. It provides us with a model idea of objects that enables us to recognise them when we see them painted. What Philostratus is doing here is testing the mimetic theory of art and redefining the role of mimesis in painting. Painting requires, both in the artist and in the viewer, mental processes that would be highly limited by adhering to the simple definition that ‘painting copies things’. For this reason Philostratus highlights the deficiencies of the old view that painting is mimesis and shows that imitation is not the beginning and the end of everything that can be said about painting. Philostratus highlights that mimesis has a role inasmuch as it is a mechanism that belongs to our mind by nature. Thus, its function does not correspond to the concept of likeness of the copy to the model, but to the mind’s ability to recognise similarities. In a way, in discussing a theory of painting Philostratus has moved the attention from the canvas to the mind.

In Book Six Apollonius and Damis are in Ethiopia, where Apollonius is repeatedly engaged in a dialogue with the gymnosophist Thespesion. Apollonius is particularly displeased with the zoomorphic representation of the gods in that country, especially if compared to the decency and solemnity of the Greek representations of the gods. Thespesion rightly presumes that Apollonius is talking about the famous statues of Zeus in Olympia, of Athena, the Cnidian Aphrodite, and the Argive Hera. The aim of the gymnosophist is to show the absurdity of Apollonius’ opinion by

⁵⁹ Abbondanza 2001, 114, draws an equivalence between the second, mental mimesis and what later will be called by Philostratus *phantasia*, but the two, as we will see, are not exactly one and the same thing.

pointing out provokingly that the Greek artists like Phidias and Praxiteles must have gone up to the sky to see the gods in order to make a copy of them:

“οἱ Φειδίαι δὲ” εἶπε “καὶ οἱ Πραξιτέλει μῶν ἀνελθόντες ἐς οὐρανὸν καὶ ἀπομαζάμενοι τὰ τῶν θεῶν εἶδη τέχνην αὐτὰ ἐποιούντο, ἢ ἕτερόν τι ἦν, ὃ ἐφίστη αὐτοὺς τῷ πλάττειν;” “ἕτερον” ἔφη “καὶ μεστόν γε σοφίας πρᾶγμα.” “ποῖον;” εἶπεν “οὐ γὰρ ἂν τι παρὰ τὴν μίμησιν εἴποις.” “φαντασία” ἔφη “ταῦτα εἰργάσατο σοφωτέρα μιμήσεως δημιουργός· μίμησις μὲν γὰρ δημιουργήσει, ὃ εἶδεν, φαντασία δὲ καὶ ὃ μὴ εἶδεν, ὑποθήσεται γὰρ αὐτὸ πρὸς τὴν ἀναφορὰν τοῦ ὄντος, καὶ μίμησιν μὲν πολλάκις ἐκκρούει ἐκπληξίς, φαντασίαν δὲ οὐδέν, χωρεῖ γὰρ ἀνέκπληκτος πρὸς ὃ αὐτὴ ὑπέθετο.”

“Your Phidias,” said Thespesion, “your Praxiteles, they did not go up to heaven and make a cast of the gods’ forms before turning them into art, did they? Was it not something else that set them to work as sculptors?” “It was,” said Apollonius, “and something supremely philosophical.” “What is that?” asked Thespesion; “for you cannot mean anything but Imitation.” “Imagination created these objects,” replied Apollonius, “a more skilful artist than Imitation. Imitation will create what it sees, but Imagination will also create what it does not see, conceiving it with reference to the real. Shock often frustrates Imitation, but nothing will frustrate Imagination, as it goes imperturbably towards what it has conceived.”

(6,19, trans. Jones)

A literal interpretation of art as an imitative technique, which is the theory Thespesion is counting on Apollonius to hold (and, in fact, the point reached by the previous discussion in 2,22), would automatically lead to the untenability of the superiority of Greek representations. Which is why Apollonius replies by advancing another theory of art, one that reverses the terms of the previous discussion: “*Phantasia* created these objects, a wiser creator than mimesis. Mimesis will create what it has seen, but *phantasia* will also create what it has not seen, hypothesizing it with reference to the real.”⁶⁰ *Phantasia* is wiser than mimesis (σοφωτέρα μιμήσεως) because it does not require a visual sensation in order to produce a representation.⁶¹ It operates on its own σοφία, which covers not only all that is visible, but also the invisible. Since art is a product of *phantasia* rather than one of mimesis, the imaginative and creative power of the mind substitutes the copying skills of the eyes and the hand (οἶαν τῇ χειρὶ ἀπομιμεῖσθαι καὶ τῷ νῶ, 2,22), enabling it to escape its dependence on a model (mainly nature), and, ultimately, the value of craft that had been attached to it since antiquity.⁶²

⁶⁰ Jones’ translation of ‘εἶδεν’ with ‘knows’ is evidently wrong.

⁶¹ Further discussion on this in Pugliara 2004, 14 and Manieri 1998, 65 ff.

⁶² See Pollitt 1974, 53: ‘The contrast of *phantasia* (...) with *mimēsis* emphasizes the radical departure that this theory makes from Classical Greek thought. *Mimēsis* is clearly used here to sum up the Classical philosophers’ view of *technē*, in which all artists are craftsmen and the visual arts are crafts that copy external nature.’

It is no surprise that a discussion that starts with the inadequacy of mimesis and ends with the formulation of a new artistic theory should be triggered by the issue of divine representations, which constituted the major obstacle on which the theory of art as pure imitation stumbled. Dio Chrysostom, as we have seen, bypassed the problem by saying that what statues imitate is not divine models directly witnessed but their descriptions in poetry (12,59 ff). Philostratus proceeds from the same question but gives an altogether different answer, as if an argument such as Dio's was no longer exhaustive. First of all, keeping his focus on the mind instead of on the work of art itself, he attributes to it the ability to produce images. Secondly, he indicates this ability as the origin of every work of art. It is evident that by doing this he has provided a formula that can account for the representations not only of things seen, but also of things unseen (like the gods: as the artist imagines the divinity, so he represents it), and, in short, of every one of the infinite images that the mind can conceive. This, according to Philostratus, makes *phantasia* an all-comprehensive theory of art that overcomes the limitations of mimesis.⁶³

These passages in the *VA* have been held as the indicators of a switch in ancient artistic theory from imitation to creative imagination, but it is probably wise to resist the impulse to draw a firm line between mimesis and *phantasia*, as if the latter completely substituted and obscured the former.⁶⁴ It is true that the fact that the mimesis theory is held by the disciple, Damis, whereas the *phantasia* theory is formulated by the master, Apollonius, might put the second one on a more

⁶³ On the collocation of *VA* 6,19 between mimesis and *phantasia* see Schweitzer 1934 and Halliwell 2002, 302 ff. For the development of ancient art criticism see Pollitt 1974. We have here, in an artistic context, encountered *phantasia* for the first time, but it is important to know that before its application in art theory the word was philosophical by birth and, later, rhetorical by trade. *Phantasia* is relevant to our discussion for a number of reasons: it appears in connection to painting in a work, the *VA*, which has much in common with novels, and which is probably by the same author who wrote the most famous collection of *ekphraseis* of paintings; it will reappear in the work of the Younger Philostratus, which is again about *ekphraseis* of paintings; as we will shortly see, it belonged, before these authors, to rhetorical theory, connected to the orator's ability to visualise things in his mind and reproduce them in words, in the form of description; finally, and most importantly, it will reappear in Heliodorus, who probably knew Philostratus the Elder (see *infra* p. 252, and Morgan 2009), in a slightly different connotation but connected to a painting which is crucial to the novel's heroine. It is only in order to connect and understand these instances that *phantasia* will become part of the discussion of this chapter and of the next one. *Phantasia* is otherwise, much like mimesis, an exceptionally charged word, whose sense is enlightened only by a diachronic view of its development. Useful for this are Rispoli 1985, Watson 1988, Manieri 1998, and recently Sheppard 2014. No direct philosophical discussion of *phantasia* will be attempted here, but passages from philosophical texts will be used when functional to the analysis of passages from rhetorical theory in this chapter, and from Heliodorus in the next one. *Phantasia* will therefore be looked at from the narrow perspective of these texts, because of the special relationship that these texts, *ekphrasis* of paintings and Greek novels, enjoyed.

⁶⁴ On this see Halliwell 2002, 308-10, who sees this passage as 'the endlessly repeated textbook example of a supposed reaction against mimeticism in the name of imaginative creativity', observing the fact that it is one of only two ancient passages to make such claim (308). Still, Philostratus' use of *phantasia* here needs to be taken into consideration if one is paying attention not to the history of aesthetics but to *ekphrasis* of paintings and Greek novels, for it probably came from the same hand that wrote the *Imagines*, which would make its influence on the Younger Philostratus, who uses the same word in his *Imagines*, more than likely. Earlier examples of *ekphrasis* of paintings (e.g. Achilles Tatius, Lucian, Longus) influenced the Elder Philostratus in composing the *Imagines*, as certainly did the extended narratives of journeys and adventures in the composition of the *VA*. Thus, it is reasonable to choose him as a reference point for Heliodorus, a later novelist who probably knew his work and used *phantasia* in connection to a painting.

authoritative footing, but thinking that Philostratus abandons mimesis for *phantasia* would be an oversimplification that can be easily refuted. In fact, if mimesis is the representation of something that exists in reality, *phantasia* allows the representation of something that exists only in the mind, but the main principle, that behind the lines drawn by the hand there is an image (be it real or imagined) that is being represented, does not seem to change. What has changed is the notion that the image present in the mind (ὑποθήσεται γὰρ αὐτὸ πρὸς τὴν ἀναφορὰν τοῦ ὄντος, 6,19) is just as real as the image present in reality, and consequently that both kinds of representations hold an equally justified truth and can, in that respect, stand on the same ground. One can see then in the stress on painting and truth in the *Imagines*, regardless of whether it was written by the same Philostratus who wrote the *VA*, a preparatory and necessary stage for the development of this theory. Thus it is true that by ascribing painting to *phantasia* Philostratus is making a new connection in the world of art theory, but the two visions, the old and the new, should not be seen as opposite and mutually exclusive. The Classical view was not to be done away with; it needed to be integrated in order to answer the more complex questions that had been putting it in a tight corner, such as what were the mechanisms behind the representations of the gods, and this is exactly what happens in the *VA*. Focalised through Damis and Apollonius, the two ideas complement each other in the search for a more thorough explanation of painting.

Moreover, the *phantasia* theory was not as unprecedented as it is sometimes thought. Far from depriving it of its modern and perhaps even revolutionary aspect, we need to observe that the idea of *phantasia* as connected to painting did not occur to Philostratus out of thin air, but as the result of older lines of thought. The notion that the mind naturally produces images, and that this ability is called *phantasia*, was not developed by Philostratus. Already Aristotle had studied it in *De anima*, where he recognised that no act of thinking can take place without some level of creation of mental images (431a). It would appear that, as it undoubtedly involves a mental activity, painting too could be part of the processes of *phantasia*. But Aristotle was concerning himself with the nature of the mind, not the nature of painting, about which he is silent. What is interesting though is that the creation of mental images is explained through a comparison with painting, as if art were the most obvious example for it:

κατὰ δὲ τὴν φαντασίαν ὡσαύτως ἔχομεν ὡσπερ ἂν οἱ θεώμενοι ἐν γραφῇ τὰ δεινὰ ἢ θαρραλέα.

In imagination we are like spectators looking at something dreadful or encouraging in a picture.

(*De anima* 427b, trans. Hett)

The images of the mind and the images of figurative art share a common nature, and Aristotle's plan to clarify an abstract concept with one that is available to everybody's knowledge is plain to see. However, the consequence for us is that although Philostratus was perhaps the first one to ascribe painting to *phantasia*, *phantasia*, on the other hand, had been described through painting since its first systematic study. And in an apparently out-of-context passage of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, where we are provided all of a sudden with a brief summary of the history of painting, the author attributes to the painter Theon of Samos the excellence in conceiving mental images (*concipiendis visionibus quas φαντασίας vocant Theon Samius... est praesentissimus*, 'Theon of Samos excelled in the vivid imaginative concepts called *phantasiai*', 12,10,6, trans. Russell), which we can read as a signal that *phantasia* was already part of the vocabulary of art.

It was therefore a metaphorical association based on their common nature that brought *phantasia* and painting together at a time when the latter was still considered mainly as an imitative craft. Before Philostratus *phantasia* had not been included in the formulation of a theory of art, but their connection in other contexts had been established for long enough that when the time was ripe for a more in-depth study of art most of the elements needed for reflection were already in place. As transpires from the examples of Aristotle and Quintilian given above, and as we shall examine further, these contexts were primarily philosophy and rhetoric.

The Younger Philostratus' *Imagines*

Similarly to the genre of *ekphrasis* of paintings, the *phantasia* theory did not count many epigones. Not that other doctrines arose. Simply, the few authors that practiced *ekphrasis* of works of art for its own sake (e.g. Callistratus and the school of Gaza) felt no need to express the principles on which they based their works. An important exception is Philostratus the Younger, who inherited, continued, and was the last to represent his family's tradition of dabbling in rhetoric and art.

In his *Imagines* Philostratus the Younger seems to attach to the outline of the Elder's *Imagines* the theory found in the *VA*. In the prooemion of the *Imagines*, he states that he is following the lines of his grandfather's work, as he too intends to write a book entirely based on *ekphraseis* of works of art.⁶⁵ As the Elder did in the prologue of his work, the Younger chose the beginning as the place to express his theory of art, and, just like him and others, he too considers at one point, towards the end of the prologue, the relationship between painting and poetry:

⁶⁵ On the prologue see Pugliara 2004.

Σκοποῦντι δὲ καὶ ξυγγένειάν τινα πρὸς ποιητικὴν ἔχειν ἢ τέχνη εὐρίσκεται καὶ κοινὴ τις ἀμφοῖν εἶναι φαντασία. θεῶν γὰρ παρουσίαν οἱ ποιηταὶ ἐς τὴν ἑαυτῶν σκηνὴν ἐσάγονται καὶ πάντα, ὅσα ὄγκου καὶ σεμνότητος καὶ ψυχαγωγίας ἔχεται, γραφικὴ τε ὁμοίως, ἃ λέγειν οἱ ποιηταὶ ἔχουσι, ταῦτ' ἐν τῷ γράμματι σημαίνουσα.

If one reflects upon the matter, one finds that the art of painting has a certain kinship with poetry, and that an element of imagination (*phantasia*) is common to both. For instance, the poets introduce the gods upon their stage as actually present, and with them all the accessories that make for dignity and grandeur and power to charm the mind; and so in like manner does the art of painting, indicating in the lines of the figures what the poets are able to describe in words.

(proem. 6)

Painting and poetry represent the same things, but according to the Younger they do so due not to their imitative faculty (mimesis is absent from the prologue as well as from the rest of the book), but to the ability that they both possess to create images, *phantasia* (κοινὴ τις ἀμφοῖν εἶναι φαντασία). By this we have to understand the meaning described in the *VA*, that is the ability of the mind to create images that the eyes are not seeing.

The effects of the *phantasia* theory are all the more evident in that in the comparison between painting and poetry *phantasia* takes the place that had previously belonged to mimesis. If we consider what had been said some two centuries before by Plutarch on the same subject, the difference is clear.⁶⁶ To Plutarch poetry and painting are alike in virtue of their imitative nature. They share the same subjects and differ only in the way in which they represent them.⁶⁷ To Philostratus poetry and painting are joined not at the level of their product, where they imitate the same reality in different ways, but at the level of their creation, where they are identical because the visualisation that takes place in the mind of the artist, be he painter or poet, is the same for both.⁶⁸

The theoretical programme of the *Imagines* summarises the contributions that had been made to the theme in the course of over one century. First of all we have the confirmation that *ekphrasis* of paintings had become the place where the potential of *ut pictura poesis* could be expressed at its best, an idea that started with Longus and was strengthened by the Elder Philostratus in the *Imagines*. Secondly, the *phantasia* theory found in the *VA* is used by the Younger Philostratus to illustrate the affinity of poetry and painting, something which had been left unanswered by Longus and explained with mimesis in Plutarch and in the Elder Philostratus' *Imagines*. Given the development of these ideas, it is worth speculating a little bit more on the suspension of judgement that we previously attributed to Longus concerning these matters.

⁶⁶ Cf. above *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat* 17f.

⁶⁷ Cf. above *De gloria Atheniensium* 346f.

⁶⁸ Pugliara 2004, 13.

We have seen how Longus makes the connection between painting and writing one of the main mechanisms of *Daphnis and Chloe*. This connection, however, is only sketched in the prologue and is not given much explanation. We could supply this information by inferring it from the treatment of other forms of art in the same novel, or by comparison with other uses of the theme of *ut pictura poesis* up to Longus' time, and the answer would beyond doubt be mimesis. The vocabulary of mimesis, however, which is otherwise extensively exploited in the novel in connection with everything related to art, is strangely absent when it comes to the painting and the operation of turning it into a book. We have interpreted Longus' silence as a signal of uncertainty towards the nature of painting, at a time when the Classical view of art as mimesis had already started to be questioned but before the *phantasia* theory was found as the answer. Could, however, there be traces of it already in Longus? Did Longus understand painting, and its comparison with poetry, as two related expressions of *phantasia*?

According to the chronology that is generally followed, Longus wrote before the formulation of artistic *phantasia* that we find in the *VA*, but one cannot safely put chronological tags to ancient theories, especially when the dating of authors is not certain. Moreover, before being applied to art, *phantasia* was a concept that had belonged to philosophy and then rhetoric since Classical times, and it is certain that its means were accessible to Longus. In imperial times *phantasia* had become especially popular among the Stoics, who developed it into a general theory of knowledge.⁶⁹ In Stoic terms *phantasia* is the standard according to which the truth of things is known, thus it constitutes the first step of the knowing process.⁷⁰ What is absorbed by the subject from *phantasia* (presentation) is then elaborated by thought, which is capable of *λαλία* (*διάνοια ἐκλαλητική*), and then reproduced in speech (*λόγος*). This theory would mark the passage of *phantasia* from something which is outside the mind and that the mind receives (the presentation), to a faculty which belongs to the mind, close to the idea of creative imagination. Interestingly, as noticed by Manieri, the sequence of moments of the evolution of *phantasia* resembles the creative process behind a work of art (or literature): from an external reality to the artists' subjective perception of it, and finally to their modelling of it into a work of art (or literature).⁷¹ With this in mind it is easy to see why there is an argument that what Longus is doing with the painting is an exemplification of the Stoic theory of *phantasia*.⁷² In this view the painting found by the narrator in

⁶⁹ See Watson 1988, 44 ff., Manieri 1998, 43 ff.

⁷⁰ Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 7,49: προηγείται γὰρ ἡ φαντασία, εἴθ' ἡ διάνοια ἐκλαλητική ὑπάρχουσα, ὃ πάσχει ὑπὸ τῆς φαντασίας, τοῦτο ἐκφέρει λόγῳ, 'For presentation comes first; then thought, which is capable of expressing itself, puts into the form of a proposition that which the subject receives from a presentation' (trans. Hicks).

⁷¹ Manieri 1998, 25.

⁷² See Imbert 1980.

the grove of the Nymphs is the presentation, the narrator's appreciation and the desire that seizes him represents the mind's elaboration and assent, and finally the composition of the book corresponds to the externalisation of the *phantasia* through *logos*.⁷³

Since all the criteria seem to have been met, one can see the reason why what Longus does might look like the representation of the process of Stoic *phantasia*. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that saying that Stoic *phantasia* describes Longus' work and that Longus applies Stoic *phantasia* in his work are two rather different statements, of which only the first one can be affirmed with a certain degree of safety. In the end, in Stoic logic *phantasia* explains the cognitive process of the mind, and this can well include the peculiar composition of *Daphnis and Chloe*, but not just it. In the words of the anonymous author of *De sublimitate*, *phantasia* is any idea capable of generating speech (καλεῖται μὲν γὰρ κοινῶς φαντασία πᾶν τὸ ὀπωσοῦν ἐννόημα γεννητικὸν λόγου παριστάμενον, 'phantasia is applied in general to an idea which enters the mind from any source and engenders speech', 15,1, trans. Fyfe-Russell), and this is big enough an umbrella to cover the genesis of any work of literature of any time. Apart from this, and from the fact that Longus cannot be said to be someone who manifests particular interest in Stoic doctrine in the course of his novel, *Daphnis and Chloe* is entirely void of the vocabulary of *phantasia*.⁷⁴ Unlike mimesis, which is everywhere but in the prologue, and is clearly the object of the author's attention, *phantasia* is altogether absent, thus not providing us with even one clue that Longus was concerned with it.

At all events, an author, and especially an author of fiction, is not supposed to open the curtains on the mechanisms behind his narration, which makes the lack of explicit vocabulary of *phantasia* no real evidence that Longus did not apply *phantasia* at all. Having said this, a form of *phantasia* such as the one that we find in the *VA*, which advances an artistic principle of creative imagination, would indeed account for Longus' ἀντιγράψαι τῆ γραφῆ. The painting and the novel then would not be the product of an act of pure imitation, which, as seen before, is insufficient in fully explaining their origin, but the result of the *phantasia* that belongs to both the painter and the writer and allows them to represent even what they cannot see. Longus' *phantasia* should not be sought in Stoic philosophy, but rather in the environment closer to Longus and to those who practised *ekphrasis* and formulated the theory of artistic *phantasia*, that is, rhetoric.

⁷³ It has also been argued that what Petronius is doing in the *Satyricon* with Encolpius and Eumolpus in the gallery plays with the same Stoic notion. See Elsner 1993.

⁷⁴ *Contra* Imbert see Hunter 1983, 113, n. 90, and Morgan 1997, 2238. Lucian's *De domo*, as we have seen, displays principles very close to Longus' (e.g. the stress in paragraph 4 on external stimuli of beauty, internal reaction, and desire to repropose the experience of vision), and, just like Longus, does not mention *phantasia*.

4.5. Rhetorical *phantasia*

Given the environment in which they were generated, these ideas must be coupled with the concept of rhetorical *phantasia*, which we are to understand in the broadest sense as the imaginative faculties of an orator. These include the ability to produce images in the mind, to visualise them and then to describe them in speech. However, since it is clear that these activities pertain to the human mind as a whole long before they find an application in oratory, it is useful to start from some general remarks before taking into consideration the treatment of *phantasia* provided by rhetorical theory.

It does not require deep knowledge of psychology to realise that the notion of mental images cannot be restricted to a single field, be it art or oratory, but is on the whole a part of the answer to the much more general question: ‘how do we think?’. For thinking involves for a great part seeing in the mind, and when seeing is involved then images are too. Indeed Aristotle deals with *phantasia* when talking about how the mind works, and reaches the conclusion that intellect uses mental images as a substitute for sensations, thus there is no thinking without the involvement of mental images:

τῇ δὲ διανοητικῇ ψυχῇ τὰ φαντάσματα οἷον αἰσθήματα ὑπάρχει. ὅταν δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν φήσῃ ἢ ἀποφήσῃ, φεύγει ἢ διώκει. Διὸ οὐδέποτε νοεῖ ἄνευ φαντάσματος ἢ ψυχῆς.

For the thinking soul images take the place of direct perceptions; and when it asserts or denies that they are good or bad, it avoids or pursues them. Hence the soul never thinks without a mental image.
(*De anima* 431a, trans. Hett)

Phantasia and memory

In addition to this, mental images have an important role in another crucial mechanism of the mind, memory. Already from the first definition of *phantasia* Aristotle uses the mnemonic process as an example of an instance when mental images are used:

τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ τὸ πάθος ἐφ’ ἡμῖν ἐστίν, ὅταν βουλώμεθα (πρὸ ὀμμάτων γὰρ ἔστι ποιησασθαι, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημονικοῖς τιθέμενοι καὶ εἰδωλοποιοῦντες).

The former (imagination) is an affection which lies in our power whenever we choose (for it is possible to call up mental pictures, as those do who employ images in arranging their ideas under a mnemonic system).
(*De anima* 427b, trans. Hett)

It is true that we can have memories that pertain to all the other senses (memories of a voice, of the taste of food, and so on), but the memories of things seen have a prominent place (sight being the most prominent sense),⁷⁵ and memory is nothing but calling up mental images that we have stored in our mind in the past. In his treatise on memory, Aristotle states that, just like thinking, memory too cannot take place without mental images,⁷⁶ and concludes that memory and *phantasia* occupy regions of our mind that are akin:

τίνος μὲν οὖν τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστὶ μνήμη, φανερόν, ὅτι οὐπερ καὶ ἡ φαντασία· καί ἐστι μνημονευτὰ καθ' αὐτὰ μὲν ὧν ἐστὶ φαντασία, κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς δὲ ὅσα μὴ ἄνευ φαντασίας.

It is obvious that memory belongs to that part of the soul to which imagination belongs; all things which are imaginable are essentially objects of memory, and those which necessarily involve imagination are objects of memory only incidentally.
(*De memoria* 450a, trans. Hett)

It is not surprising, then, that the same metaphorical language is used to describe both of them. As the image of a spectator viewing a painting is employed to explain the use of *phantasia*,⁷⁷ so is memory likened to a picture, a mental impression of an object in accordance with the perception of the object, in the same way in which rings leave their seal on hot wax.⁷⁸ The idea of memory as wax impressed by perception goes back to Plato (*Theaetetus* 191c ff.), but the acknowledgement of the affinity between this and the sphere of *phantasia* is Aristotle's innovation.

Philosophy engaged with these topics while trying to explain how the human mind works, but other branches of knowledge can benefit from these considerations.⁷⁹ Being concerned with the ability to deliver long speeches, rhetoric had an obvious interest in the art of memory, for even the most embellished and persuasive words are pointless if an orator forgets them when it is time to

⁷⁵ Cf. Cicero, *De oratore* 2,357.

⁷⁶ *De memoria* 450a: ἡ δὲ μνήμη καὶ ἡ τῶν νοητῶν οὐκ ἄνευ φαντάσματός ἐστιν, 'memory, even of the objects of thought, implies a mental picture.'

⁷⁷ *De anima* 427b: κατὰ δὲ τὴν φαντασίαν ὡσαύτως ἔχομεν ὡσπερ ἂν οἱ θεώμενοι ἐν γραφῇ τὰ δεινὰ ἢ θαρραλέα, 'in imagination we are like spectators looking at something dreadful or encouraging in a picture.'

⁷⁸ *De memoria* 450a: οἷον ζωγράφημα τι τὸ πάθος οὐ φαμεν τὴν ἔξιν μνήμην εἶναι· ἡ γὰρ γιγνομένη κίνησις ἐνσημαίνεται οἷον τύπον τινὰ τοῦ αἰσθήματος, καθάπερ οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι τοῖς δακτυλίοις, '(one must consider) the affection, the lasting state of which we call memory, as a kind of picture; for the stimulus produced impresses a sort of likeness of the percept, just as when men seal with signet rings.'

⁷⁹ On the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric concerning *phantasia* see Dross 2004 and Webb 2009, 115-19.

talk. If we consider the fact that oratory could often result in something very similar to a live performance,⁸⁰ then the orator was not too dissimilar from an actor who could not afford to be forgetful of his lines, lest the entire play be a failure. Among other things, the immediate and tangible success of a speech depended greatly on the orator's memory, but the functions that an orator could find in memory went beyond the mere recollection of words at the moment of the speech, to which notes surely could contribute as well. For instance, in the case of lawsuits, it helped in containing the information retrieved when preparing the cause, or fully understanding the client's instructions, as well as keeping in mind the opponent's speech.⁸¹ It is plain to see that those with better mnemonical skills would be in a position of advantage. However, those who were not blessed with great memory could always rely on rhetorical treatises that provided readers with studies on memory as well as techniques to train it. The major ones are Book Three of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (28 ff.), Book Two of Cicero's *De oratore* (350 ff.), and Book Eleven of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (2,11 ff.). When it comes to the discussion of memory Aristotle (with *De memoria*, rather than *Ars rhetorica*) is constantly in the background of these treatises.

The main idea is that memory is helped by a meticulous organisation of the mind. One can achieve that by the use of *loci* (*loca* in Quintilian) and *imagines*.⁸² With *loci* we are to understand that we should visualise our mind as divided in spaces, as a house with rooms or a colonnade with intercolumnar spaces, in short anything that, according to our preference, can be used as a storage facility.⁸³ *Imagines* are the portraits of the things we wish to remember, and each image must be located in one space. The rhetoricians explain the location of one image in its space by using the metaphor of the impression on wax, though given the rhetorical context they develop it in an appropriate way. The spaces are like wax tablets and the images are like letters imprinted on them, so that memorising becomes similar to writing, and remembering to reading.⁸⁴ It is advised to have as many *loci* as possible, and to arrange them following a logical criterion. Similar or connected memories are to be placed in adjacent *loci*, so that the mind that 'goes there' to retrieve one memory will easily find all the useful data connected with it.

These treatises, with one exception, do not speak directly of *phantasia*, though it is evident that the concept of *phantasia* is implied every time visualisation and mental images are involved. In

⁸⁰ A parallel drawn by Aristotle, *Ars rhetorica* 1404a 12 ff.

⁸¹ Cf. Cicero, *De oratore* 2,355. On this see Webb 2009, 110-14.

⁸² *Her.* 3,29; *De or.* 2,354; Quint. 11,2,17.

⁸³ The idea of creating spaces in the mind in order to facilitate recollection is already in Aristotle, *De memoria* 452a: δεῖ δὲ λαβέσθαι ἀρχῆς. διὸ ἀπὸ τόπων δοκοῦσιν ἀναμνησκέσθαι ἐνίοτε, 'one must secure a starting point. This is why some people seem, in recollecting, to proceed from *loci*').

⁸⁴ Cf. *Her.* 3,30: *Nam loci cerae aut chartae simillimi sunt, imagines litteris, dispositio et conlocatio imaginum scripturae, pronuntiatio lectioni*, 'for the backgrounds are very much like wax tablets or papyrus, the images like the letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script, and the delivery is like the reading' (trans. Caplan).

the end what Aristotle said about memory, that it cannot, just like thinking, take place without mental images, and thus *phantasia*, remains true. If memorising is compared to building a house in our minds and associating images with every room, recollecting to taking a walk in that house,⁸⁵ and, one would add, speaking to describing those images, then imagination clearly plays an important role, since all of this depends on an activity of vision. In fact, a comparison with a Greek work that, unlike Aristotle's *De memoria*, analyses memory from a rhetorical point of view shows that the Latin word *imagines*, used by the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero, and Quintilian, indicates the same objects indicated by the Greek φαντασίας.

Longinus' *Peri mnēmēs* describes the method of spaces and images by using τόποι and εἰδῶλα.⁸⁶ However, in the explanation of the theory of impression on wax we find the vocabulary of *phantasia*:

ἀναλαμβάνει καθάπερ ἐκμαγεῖον καὶ διατυποῦται ῥαδίως ὑπὸ τῶν φαντασιῶν
τορνευόμενός τε καὶ γραφόμενος, ἐναργέσιν ὥσπερ καὶ κοίλοις γράμμασι καὶ
νεοχαρακτοῖς σημείοις τῆς ἐπιστήμης.

(A soul with a balanced constitution) receives like an impress and is easily imprinted by mental images (*phantasiai*), being lathed and drawn as if with vivid and hollow lines and signs of knowledge newly imprinted.
(35 Patillon-Brisson, my translation)

In addition to this, memory is ultimately defined as the preservation of φαντασίας: μνήμη μὲν γάρ ἐστι σωτηρία φαντασιῶν, 'memory is saving mental images.' Memory is more immediately crucial to rhetoric, but the consideration of the mental images seen by the orator through memory (the *imagines*, imprints of previous sensations, that are placed in the *loci*), naturally paves the way for the consideration of mental images that only need *phantasia* in order to be seen, bypassing direct sensation and memory. Quintilian, in a section of his work distinct from the study on memory, explores the possible uses that an orator can make of the art of creating and visualising mental images, which this time he labels with the Greek φαντασίας.

⁸⁵ Quint. 11,2,20.

⁸⁶ Ἡδη δὲ καὶ Σιμωνίδης καὶ πλείους μετ' ἐκείνον μνήμης [γνώμης] ὁδοὺς προῦδίδαξαν, εἰδῶλων παράθεσιν καὶ τόπων εἰσηγούμενοι πρὸς τὸ μνημονεύειν ἔχειν ὀνομάτων τε καὶ ῥημάτων, 'already Simonides and many after him taught the system of memory, introducing the storing of images and places in order to be able to remember names and things said' (105 Patillon-Brisson, my translation).

The orator's *phantasia*

Quas φαντασίας Graeci vocant, nos sane visiones appellemus, per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo, ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere videamur. Has quisquis bene conceperit, is erit in adfectibus potentissimus. Hunc quidam dicunt εὐφαντασίωτον, qui sibi res, voces, actus secundum verum optime finget.

The person who will show the greatest power in the expression of emotions will be the person who has properly formed what the Greeks call *phantasiai* (let us call them “visions”), by which the images of absent things are presented to the mind in such a way that we seem actually to see them with our eyes and have them physically present to us. Some use the word *euphantasiōtos* of one who is exceptionally good at realistically imagining to himself things, words, and actions. (*Institutio oratoria* 6,2,29, trans. Russell)

Good arguments will win the trial, but the most successful orator is the one who can control the emotions of the public, and especially of the judge. The most effective way to achieve this is to provide the visual experience of the topic at stake, which will put the orator in a position of control of the listeners' perception, and therefore of their emotions. In order to do this, one should master the art of what the Greeks call φαντασίας, the images that the orator paints in his mind and that consequently seem to be present.⁸⁷ Quintilian then describes how an εὐφαντασίωτος orator, an orator particularly good at φαντασίας, is the one who can represent anything to himself and believe in the reality of it.⁸⁸ This is something that can be trained and used at will:

Nisi vero inter otia animorum et spes inanes et velut somnia quaedam vigilantium ita nos hae de quibus loquor imagines prosequuntur, ut peregrinari, navigare, proeliari, populos alloqui, divitiarum, quas nos habemus, usum videamur disponere, nec cogitare sed facere: hoc animi vitium ad utilitatem non transferemus?

When the mind is idle and occupied with wishful thinking or a sort of daydreaming, the images of which I am speaking haunt us, and we think we are travelling or sailing or fighting a battle or addressing a crowd or disposing of wealth which we do not possess, and not just imagining, but actually doing these things! Can we not turn this mental vice to a useful purpose? (*Ibid.* 6,2,30)

The mental vice of daydreaming, of picturing in our minds all sorts of things (travelling, sailing, fighting, being rich), and not just imagining them but almost doing them, can be turned into a useful

⁸⁷ On Quintilian's *phantasia* see Rispoli 1985, 91-5, Watson 1988, 68-70, Dross 2004, 78 ff., Webb 2009, 119 ff.

⁸⁸ Though who are those who call such persons εὐφαντασίωτος is unknown. The adjective is rare and used only in astrology, with a meaning of 'fantastical' rather than 'skilled in *phantasia*'.

tool when the object represented is not just any thing but the case at stake, for instance the crime scene that we want the audience to witness.⁸⁹ The outcome of this, says Quintilian, is ἐνάργεια, which will win the orator the expected emotions from the crowd (*adfectus non aliter quam si rebus ipsis intersimus sequentur*, ‘emotions will ensue just as if we were present at the event itself’ 6,2,32).

Although a specific treatment of *phantasia* is not part of it, Aristotle’s *Ars rhetorica* too contains at an embryonic stage the idea that *phantasia* has a role in the rhetorical performance when it comes to arousing the audience’s emotions. Starting from Book Two the philosopher sets out to study emotions, with the general idea that knowing how emotions work (causes and circumstances) is useful in speeches in order to control the state of mind of the audience (the same reason as attested by Quintilian). However, this purpose, which pertains to rhetoric and its power of persuasion, is only expressed briefly and *en passant*,⁹⁰ whilst the main interest of Aristotle’s considerations on emotions seems to be purely philosophical and psychological. *Phantasia* comes into play when explaining how we are affected by pleasurable or painful emotions. Thus, for instance, we enjoy contemplating a mental image of retaliation against someone who has wronged us,⁹¹ or we are afraid when we imagine a future evil,⁹² or we feel ashamed because we imagine the loss of reputation.⁹³ Joy, fear, shame, are the reactions to the visualisation of the image of possible future scenarios. When it comes to oratory, the philosopher believes that justice should deal with facts and not with inspiring pain or pleasure, but reluctantly concedes that taking care of that aspect of delivery is important in controlling the audience’s opinion, though giving in to this means transforming the speech into nothing more than a performance for the audience (ἅπαντα φαντασία ταῦτ’ ἐστί, καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἀκροατὴν, ‘all these things are forms of outward show and intended to affect the audience’, 1404a, trans. Kennedy). Here φαντασία has been translated with ‘outward show’, but one wonders whether Aristotle meant that the adorned delivery concerns playing with the audience’s imagination. Be that as it may, it would seem that *phantasia* in Aristotle’s treatise does not have any specifically rhetorical connotation and is referred to the

⁸⁹ See Dross 2006 on how Quintilian’s *phantasia* borders on illusion.

⁹⁰ *Ars rhetorica* 1380a: δῆλον δ’ ὅτι δέοι ἂν αὐτὸν κατασκευάζειν τῷ λόγῳ τοιοῦτους οἷοι ὄντες ὀργίλως ἔχουσιν, ‘it is clear that it might be needful in speech to put [the audience] in the state of mind of those who are inclined to anger’ (trans. Kennedy).

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 1378b: ἀκολουθεῖ γὰρ καὶ ἡδονὴ τις διὰ τε τοῦτο καὶ διότι διατρίβουσιν ἐν τῷ τιμωρεῖσθαι τῇ διανοίᾳ· ἢ οὖν τότε γιγνομένη φαντασία ἡδονὴν ἐμποιεῖ, ὡσπερ ἢ τῶν ἐνυπνίων, ‘a kind of pleasure follows from this and also because people dwell in their minds on retaliating; then the image [*phantasia*] that occurs creates pleasure, as in the case of dreams’ (trans. Kennedy).

⁹² *Ibid.* 1382a: ἔστω δὲ φόβος λύπη τις καὶ ταραχὴ ἐκ φαντασίας μέλλοντος κακοῦ φθαρτικοῦ ἢ λυπηροῦ, ‘let fear be [defined as] a sort of pain or agitation derived from the imagination of a future destructive or painful evil’ (trans. Kennedy).

⁹³ *Ibid.* 1384a: ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ ἀδοξίας φαντασία ἐστὶν ἢ αἰσχύνῃ, ‘shame is imagination [*phantasia*] about a loss of reputation’ (trans. Kennedy).

audience; it is not even taken into consideration as a skill for the orator, let alone regarded in its conscious and active use in order to produce a database of helpful mental images, as Quintilian intends it.

On the other hand Quintilian understands that *phantasia* is used by everyone whenever they picture things, scenes, and stories, in their minds, and that rhetorical *phantasia* is a restricted application of this that occurs when the orator decides to visualise mental images of facts related to the trial. But an agile imagination is incomplete if the orator is unable to match it with oral skills capable of reproducing those mental images faithfully and persuasively in order to show things to the audience as they appear in his mind. Ultimately, then, it will all come down to his ability to describe what he has seen in his imagination. This, and the fact that Quintilian's final reference is to ἐνάργεια, suggests that the most advisable kind of speech the orator would use to show his φαντασίᾳ is *ekphrasis*, the speech that brings before the eyes.

Phantasia and ekphrasis

It must be noted that Quintilian does not provide any specific treatment of *ekphrasis* (= *descriptio*) either in this or in any other part of the *Institutio oratoria*, to the point that it is not even included among the progymnasmata discussed in Book Two. However, detailed description is always mentioned when he talks about vividness (= *evidentia*, = *enargeia*). At the beginning of Book Nine Quintilian quotes at length a passage from *De oratore* where Cicero, discussing styles, shows useful ways of producing an impression in the audience, one of which is clear explanation and visual presentation in order to bring the subject at stake almost before the eyes.⁹⁴ Cicero remains his main reference when it comes to both the definition of vividness and examples of effective vivid descriptions. In Book Eight of the *Institutio oratoria* vividness is one of the aspects of ornament, which is in its turn one of the virtues of good Latin. It is again explained as the quality that almost makes you see what is being told,⁹⁵ which happens when an entire scene is depicted in words,⁹⁶ or

⁹⁴ *De or.* 2,302 ff. (= Quint. *Inst.* 9,1,27 ff.): *nam et commoratio una in re permultum movet et illustris explanatio rerumque quasi gerantur sub aspectum paene subiectio, quae et in exponenda re plurimum valent et ad illustrandum id quod exponitur et ad amplificandum, ut eis qui audient illud quod augebimus quantum efficere oratio poterit tantum esse videatur*, 'thus dwelling on a single point is very effective. So is vivid description and the process of virtually setting events before our eyes, which is both a powerful tool of exposition and a way of throwing light upon a topic and amplifying it, so that the audience comes to think that the point which we amplify really is as important as speech can make it.'

⁹⁵ *Inst.* 8,3,61: *magna virtus res de quibus loquimur clare atque ut cerni videantur enuntiare*, 'it is a great virtue to express our subject clearly and in such a way that it seems to be actually seen.'

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 8,3,63: *est igitur unum genus, quo tota rerum imago quodam modo verbis depingitur*, 'one kind (of *enargeia*) is that in which a whole scene is somehow painted in words.'

in a description that captures all the details.⁹⁷ In Book Nine he includes *evidentia* among the figures of speech, starting again from Cicero's words.⁹⁸ *Evidentia* is not concerned with stating the facts, but with saying how they took place, thus creating a picture of them. The picture formed by the orator trying to achieve *evidentia* does not even need to conform to facts, for it can also represent events that have taken place only in the orator's mind (his φαντασίας, following what is said in 6,2,29),⁹⁹ and detailed description is again one of the modes of this representation.¹⁰⁰ By juxtaposing Quintilian's treatment of *phantasia* and *enargeia*, one can conclude that vivid description is the kind of speech that best conveys the orator's mental images in order to bring them before the audience's eyes.

Similar concepts can be inferred from a famous passage from *De sublimitate*.¹⁰¹ In chapter fifteen the Anonymous explains how images can enhance the elevation of style:

”Ογκου καὶ μεγαληγορίας καὶ ἀγῶνος ἐπὶ τούτοις, ὦ νεανία, καὶ αἱ φαντασίαι παρασκευαστικώταται· οὕτω γοῦν εἰδωλοποιίας αὐτὰς ἔνιοι λέγουσι· καλεῖται μὲν γὰρ κοινῶς φαντασία πᾶν τὸ ὅπως οὖν ἐννόημα γεννητικὸν λόγου παριστάμενον· ἤδη δ' ἐπὶ τούτων κεκράτηκεν τοῦνομα, ὅταν ἂ λέγεις ὑπ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ πάθους βλέπειν δοκῆς καὶ ὑπ' ὄψιν τιθῆς τοῖς ἀκούουσιν. Ὡς δ' ἕτερον τι ἢ ῥητορικὴ φαντασία βούλεται καὶ ἕτερον ἢ παρὰ ποιηταῖς οὐκ ἂν λάθοι σε, οὐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὲν ἐν ποιήσει τέλος ἐστὶν ἐκπληξις, τῆς δ' ἐν λόγοις ἐνάργεια, ἀμφοτέραι δ' ὅμως τό τε <παθητικὸν> ἐπιζητούσι καὶ τὸ συγκεκινημένον.

Weight, grandeur, and urgency in writing are very largely produced, dear young friend, by the use of “visualizations” (*phantasiai*). That at least is what I call them; others call them “image productions”. For the term *phantasia* is applied in general to an idea which enters the mind from any source and engenders speech, but the word has now come to be used predominantly of passages where, inspired by strong emotion, you seem to see what you describe and bring it vividly before the eyes of

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 8,3,66: *interim ex pluribus efficitur illa quam conamur exprimere facies, ut est apud eundem (namque ad omnium ornandi virtutum exemplum vel unum sufficit) in descriptione convivii luxuriosi*, ‘sometimes the picture we wish to present is made up of a number of details, as again by him [Cicero] (who suffices on his own to exemplify all the virtues of Ornament) in his description of a luxurious banquet.’

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 9,2,40: *Illa vero, ut ait Cicero, sub oculos subiectio tum fieri solet cum res non gesta indicatur sed ut sit gesta ostenditur, nec universa sed per partis*, ‘as for what Cicero calls “putting something before our eyes,” this happens when, instead of stating that an event took place, we show how it took place, and not as a whole but in detail.’

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 9,2,41: *Nec solum quae facta sint aut fiant sed etiam quae futura sint aut futura fuerint imaginamur*, ‘we can form a picture not only of the past and the present, but also of the future or of what might have happened.’ Thus *phantasia* is more comprehensive than memory alone, for the mental images that constitute memory can only refer to the past and to something that has actually happened (cf. Aristotle, *De memoria* 449b: ἡ δὲ μνήμη τοῦ γενομένου), whereas pure φαντασίαι are free from constrictions of time and factuality.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 9,2,44: *Locorum atque dilucida et significans descriptio eidem virtuti adsignatur a quibusdam*, ‘clear and vivid descriptions of places are by some assigned to this excellence (*evidentia*).’

¹⁰¹ *De sublimitate* 15 is a much debated chapter. For its role in the development of mimesis and *phantasia* and in art and literary criticism see Rispoli 1985, 88-91 and Manieri 1998, 51-60; for its connection with Stoic logic see Imbert 1980 and Watson 1988, 66-68; from the point of view of *ekphrasis* see Aygon 2004, Goldhill 2007, 6-8, and Webb 2009, 115-8. See also Russell's notes in Russell 1964.

your audience. That *phantasia* wants one thing in oratory and another in poetry you will yourself detect, and also that the object of the poetical form of it is to enthrall, and that of the prose form to present things vividly, though both indeed aim at the emotional and the excited.
(15,1, trans. Fyfe-Russell)¹⁰²

The Anonymous explains *phantasia* encompassing different layers of meanings.¹⁰³ We have a general, abstract definition that betrays philosophical, and especially Stoic, influences: καλείται μὲν γὰρ κοινῶς φαντασία πᾶν τὸ ὁπωσοῦν ἐννόημα γεννητικὸν λόγου παριστάμενον. The term *phantasia* indicates any concept that generates expression. To better understand this notion it is worth recalling the Stoic theory discussed above: *phantasia* is the standard according to which the truth of things is known, thus it constitutes the first step of the knowing process.¹⁰⁴ What is absorbed by the subject from *phantasia* (presentation) is then elaborated by thought, which is capable of λαλία (διάνοια ἐκλαλητική), and then reproduced in speech (λόγος). Leaving philosophy aside, the Anonymous continues by saying that there is a more concrete and practical meaning of the word, one that takes us to the sphere of communication, of speaking and writing, that is when one visualises what he is saying and brings it before the eyes of the listeners. This has two main derivations, one poetical, the aim of which is creating astonishment and passion, the other rhetorical, which aims at creating vividness, *enargeia*. The Anonymous' treatment of *phantasia* is not identical with Quintilian's. The former remains more theoretical and abstract, with the result that he does not specify what rhetorical *phantasia* actually consists of, unlike the latter, who describes how mental images work for the orator. Nonetheless, the same parameters can be found: visualisation of objects and their delivery before the eyes with *enargeia* as outcome. Moreover, as Quintilian introduces *phantasia* when talking about how to affect emotions, so does the Anonymous, when he states that emotions are the target of *phantasia*.

Finally, the view that once again *ekphrasis* is the most congenial way to express rhetorical *phantasia*, is strengthened by the words used by the Anonymous when giving the common definition of *phantasia*:

ὅταν ἂ λέγεις ὑπ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ πάθους βλέπειν δοκῆς καὶ ὑπ' ὄψιν τιθῆς
τοῖς ἀκούουσιν.

¹⁰² <παθητικὸν> is a conjecture by Kayser, but, as Russell 1964 explains, 'there can be no doubt of the sense which has to be supplied, though naturally the precise word cannot be certain.'

¹⁰³ See Beil 1993 on *De sublimitate* and in particular on how *phantasia* contributes to the sublime.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 7,49: προηγείται γὰρ ἡ φαντασία, εἶθ' ἡ διάνοια ἐκλαλητική ὑπάρχουσα, ὃ πάσχει ὑπὸ τῆς φαντασίας, τοῦτο ἐκφέρει λόγῳ, 'For presentation comes first; then thought, which is capable of expressing itself, puts into the form of a proposition that which the subject receives from a presentation' (trans. Hicks).

Where, under inspiration and passion, you seem to see what you describe and bring it before the eyes of your audience.

If we compare this to the canonical definition of *ekphrasis* as we find it in the *Progymnasmata* ('λόγος περιηγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον', Theon 118,7-8 Spengel), the connection between *phantasia* and *ekphrasis* becomes evident.¹⁰⁵ This connection can be delineated by saying that at the level of the preliminary exercises the art of visualisation was trained through the practice of *ekphrasis*. This does not mean that the other exercises did not require any amount of imagination,¹⁰⁶ but that its intrinsic characteristics and its language, as emerges from its definition, make the exercise of *ekphrasis* the most capable of reproducing *phantasiai*, because in order to be made present the absent cannot just be *told*, but needs to be *described*. The fact that *phantasia* is not mentioned in the *Progymnasmata* should not hinder this idea, since, it is worth remembering, the *Progymnasmata* constituted but the first stage of rhetorical training. Their purpose is to provide exercises in order to inculcate techniques in the students through constant repetition. They are interested in what needs to be done rather than in why it needs to be done. There was little point, at that fairly simple stage, in explaining description with the concept of visualisation, inscribing it in a theory of knowledge, defining its source (external reality or pure imagination), its process (impression on the soul, mental images), and its outcome (speech), with overlaps between rhetoric and philosophy. What really counted was that through the continuous practice of the art of vivid description the orator would have had in the long term the appropriate tools to give voice to his *phantasia*.

4.6. Rhetorical *phantasia* and artistic *phantasia*

Having outlined the concept of *phantasia* in rhetorical as well as artistic theory, it is time for some final considerations. First of all we shall notice that rhetorical and artistic *phantasia* are not altogether different from one another. According to Quintilian, the orator's *phantasia* is the ability to visualise all sorts of situations in one's mind and then express them through speech, and Philostratus says that art is the product of the artist's *phantasia*, which enables him to see even the invisible. As a result, oratory and figurative arts seem to share a common principle of drawing from mental images, *phantasias*. What is the connection, then, between the development of the two

¹⁰⁵ Bartsch 2007 makes a connection between Stoic *phantasia* and Stoic *ekphrasis* in Seneca. More to our point, Aygon 2004 connects the occurrences of *phantasia* in Quintilian and Pseudo-Longinus and *ekphrasis*.

¹⁰⁶ *Phantasia*, as we have seen, can never be excluded from any process of thinking. Besides, a form of imagination was certainly needed for exercises of personification such as ethopoeia or prosopopoeia, for they too imply seeing something or someone that is not there.

theories? Since rhetorical *phantasia* receives a treatment in *Institutio oratoria* and in *De sublimitate* whereas the first complete formulation of artistic *phantasia* appears in Philostratus' *VA*, it seems that the former anticipated the latter. Rhetorical theory talked about artistic *phantasia* before theory of art did. Already in *Orator* Cicero talks about how artists proceed from the formation of mental images and then transpose what they see in their minds into the work of art:

sed ego sic statuo, nihil esse in ullo genere tam pulchrum, quo non pulchrius id sit unde illud ut ex ore aliquo quasi imago exprimitur; quod neque oculis neque auribus neque ullo sensu percipi potest, cogitatione tantum et mente complectimur. Itaque et Phidias simulacris, quibus nihil in illo genere perfectius videmus, et eis picturis quas nominavi cogitare tamen possumus pulchriora; nec vero ille artifex cum faceret Iovis formam aut Minervae contemplabatur aliquem e quo similitudinem duceret, sed ipsius in mente insidebat species pulchritudinis eximia quaedam, quam intuens in eaque defixus ad illius similitudinem artem et manum dirigebat. Ut igitur in formis et figuris est aliquid perfectum et excellens, cuius ad cogitatam speciem imitando referuntur eaque sub oculos ipsa non cadit, sic perfectae eloquentiae speciem animo videmus, effigiem auribus quaerimus. Has rerum formas appellat ἰδέαις ille non intellegendi solum sed etiam dicendi gravissimus auctor et magister Plato, easque gigni negat et ait semper esse ac ratione et intelligentia contineri.

But I am firmly of the opinion that nothing of any kind is so beautiful as not to be excelled in beauty by that of which it is a copy, as a mask is a copy of a face. This ideal cannot be perceived by the eye or ear, nor by any of the senses, but we can nevertheless grasp it by the mind and the imagination (*cogitatione*). For example, in the case of the statue of Phidias, the most perfect of their kind that we have ever seen, and in the case of the paintings I have mentioned, we can, in spite of their beauty, imagine something more beautiful. Surely that great sculptor, while making the image of Jupiter or Minerva, did not look at any person whom he was using as a model, but in his own mind there dwelt a surpassing vision of beauty; at this he gazed and all intent on this he guided his artist's hand to produce the likeness of the god. Accordingly, as there is something perfect and surpassing in the case of sculpture and painting –an intellectual ideal by reference to which the artists represent those objects which do not themselves appear to the eye, so with our minds we conceive the ideal of perfect eloquence, but with our ears we catch only the copy. These patterns of things are called ἰδέαι or ideas by Plato, that eminent master and teacher both of style and of thought; these, he says, do not “become”; they exist for ever, and depend on intellect and reason.

(*Orator* 2,8-10, trans. Hubbell)

Cicero does not mention the word φαντασία, and instead uses *cogitatio*, *animus*, or *mens*, but the mental images of the artist or the orator are what Quintilian will ascribe to φαντασία. With regard to the mention of Plato's ideas, Rispoli describes Cicero's words as a betrayal of Plato, whereas Watson, perhaps more to the point, recognises in Cicero's imagination the Stoic theory of *phantasia*, and solves the contradiction by saying that this is a case of syncretism of Platonic and

Stoic ideas.¹⁰⁷ The reference to Plato's ideas could be explained by the fact that Cicero here is trying to describe the ideal, perfect orator. On the other hand, as we have seen, Quintilian talks about mental images in terms of φαντασία, and attributes it to both a painter (Theon of Samos in *Institutio oratoria* 12,10,3) and the orator (6,2,29).

In this view another fact should also be taken into account, that is that almost all of those who contributed to building art criticism between the late first and the early fourth century AD were rhetoricians (Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, the Philostrati), which alone suggests that rhetoric could have played an influential role in the growth of art theory. Moreover, the rhetoricians who gave rise to the theory of artistic *phantasia* were those who specialised in *ekphrasis* in general, and in *ekphrasis* of paintings in particular. Therefore it is not surprising that the subsequent reflection on the nature of painting employed a theory of *phantasia*, for *phantasia*, in its rhetorical meaning, was already part of what they were doing as writers of *ekphrasis*. *Ekphrasis*, we have just seen, was the most appropriate means for the expression of the orator's *phantasia*, whereby the unlimited imagination of the orator is given voice. When the insight of the authors who practised *ekphrasis* of paintings led them to work out a new theory of art, they drew inspiration from the more than familiar ground of rhetorical theory and modelled after rhetorical *phantasia* the idea of artistic *phantasia*, whereby art is explained as the representation of the unlimited imagination of the artist.

We have already seen in Longus the emphasis on the fact that when painting becomes the subject of *ekphrasis*, then what makes *ekphrasis* coincides with what makes painting. We based this on a commonality of lexicon (γράφειν) able to disclose the exclusive similarities of the worlds of writing and of figurative arts and to make the final product stand out among all other possible subjects because of the unique short circuit thus created. This can now be deepened by the understanding that the origin of these similarities lies in the fact that both arts are concerned with the visualisation and representation of mental images. Rhetoric expresses them through *ekphrasis*, figurative arts through painting. When *ekphrasis* specialises in painting, then the container and the content develop a special bond due to the fact that they are both related to *phantasia*.

This view can be traced, as we have done, in ancient artistic and rhetorical theory separately, but there is no theoretical treatment of *ekphrasis* of works of art that underlines the distinctive and unifying role of *phantasia*, though this might be expected. The *Progymnasmata* are all we have in terms of treatises that include *ekphrasis*, and they tend to give very practical instructions rather than theoretical discussions. Secondly, as seen before, art as a subject for *ekphrasis* only entered the handbooks quite late, around the late fifth century, long after *ekphrasis* of works of art had become a distinct genre. We have to observe that even after Nicolaus' *Progymnasmata* rhetorical theory did

¹⁰⁷ Rispoli 1985, 78, n. 12., and Watson 1988, 64-66.

not pay too much attention to this feature, with the result that we need to resort to practice in order to draw some conclusions.

Phantasia and ekphrasis in John of Sardis

There is possibly one exception to this. In a Byzantine commentary to Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata*, attributed to John of Sardis and dated to the ninth century, we find this particularly obscure passage on *ekphrasis*:

Θέων δὲ ἀρετὰς λέγει ἐκφράσεως σαφήνειαν καὶ ἐνάργειαν τοῦ σχεδὸν ὁρᾶσθαι τὰ ἀπαγγελλόμενα· ἐναργὲς γὰρ τὸ λίαν φανερὸν καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑποπίπτον· εἰ γὰρ σαφὴς καὶ ἐναργὴς εἴη ὁ λόγος, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκοῆς εἰς τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς σχεδὸν τὰ λεγόμενα μεθίστησιν· ὁ γὰρ λόγος τὰ δηλούμενα θεωρῶν τούτων τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑπογράφει τὸν τύπον καὶ τῇ φαντασίᾳ ζωγραφεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν

Theon says that the virtues of *ekphrasis* are clarity and vividness that makes one almost see the subject; for that which is very plain to the senses and lies before the eyes is vivid; if then the speech is clear and vivid, it almost transfers its subject from the sense of hearing into the eyes; for the speech, in contemplating the things shown, traces the impression of it for (or with) the eyes and paints the truth for (or with) the imagination.

(224-225 Rabe, trans. Webb 2009, 207)

The passage seems to be just another explanation of the concept of ἐνάργεια, and even the choice of vocabulary recalls ideas already expressed, most noticeably in the following passage:

Ἐπὶ ὅψιν ἄγων ἐναργῶς τὸ δηλούμενον. Ἀντὶ τοῦ φανερὸν ποιῶν, ἐκ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἐναργῶς εἰς ὅψιν ἄγων τὸ ὑποκείμενον· ἢ γὰρ τοῦ λόγου σαφήνεια νοεῖν καὶ βλέπειν ποιεῖ τὰ λεγόμενα τοὺς ἀκούοντας. ἢ τὸ “ὑπὲρ ὅψιν” οἰοῦναι ἀμυδρότερον· τὸ μὲν γὰρ καθαρὸν θεῶν δίδωσι, τὸ δὲ τύπον ψιλὸν καὶ φαντασίαν τοῦ πράγματος· κἂν γὰρ μυριάκις ἐναργὴς εἴη ὁ λόγος, ἀδύνατον αὐτὸ κατ’ ὅψιν ἀγαγεῖν “τὸ δηλούμενον” ἢτοι ἐκφραζόμενον. “ἐναργῶς” δὲ εἶπε διὰ τὴν διήγησιν, διότι ἢ μὲν διήγησις παχυμερῶς λέγεται, ἢ δὲ ἐκφρασις λεπτομερῶς· ἐναργὴς οὖν λόγος ὁ σαφὴς καὶ καθαρὸς καὶ οἷον ἔμπνους· ἃ γὰρ μὴ τις ἐώρακε, ταῦτα μονοῦ βλέπειν ποιεῖ ῥήματι ψιλῶ τὴν τῶν ζωγράφων τέχνην μιμούμενος.

Instead of making manifest, bringing the subject vividly before the eyes by detailed presentation; for the clarity of the speech makes the listeners imagine and see the subject. Alternatively, “ὑπὲρ ὅψιν” as if less distinctly; for one provides a pure vision, while the other a plain impression and mental representation of the thing; for even if the speech were ten thousand times vivid, it would be impossible to bring before the eyes “the thing shown” or described itself. He said “vividly” on account of narration, because narration is composed in a condensed manner while *ekphrasis* is composed in a detailed manner. So a vivid speech is one that is clear and pure and as if alive; for,

by the word alone, it all but makes one see what one has never seen, imitating the painters' art.

(216-7 Rabe, trans. Webb 2009, 206)

Both passages dwell on the vividness of the representation provided by *ekphrasis*, stressing the idea that the listener is turned into a spectator. Interestingly, both passages feature an uncommon word in the environment of the *Progymnasmata*, *phantasia*, and both end with a reference to painting, though the two occurrences seem to have quite different meanings.

The second passage (216-217 Rabe), in trying to clarify the ideas of '(bringing) before the eyes' and *enargeia*, underlines that no matter how precise the description, the object cannot actually be reproduced, if not for a plain impression and mental image of the thing (τὸ δὲ τύπον ψιλὸν καὶ φαντασίαν τοῦ πράγματος). The passage ends with a comparison between speech and painting (τὴν τῶν ζωγράφων τέχνην μιμούμενος), the former imitating the latter in almost making the listeners see the object described. What is said in the first passage (225 Rabe) has, however, a different flavour:

ὁ γὰρ λόγος τὰ δηλούμενα θεωρῶν τούτων τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑπογράφει τὸν τύπον καὶ τῇ φαντασίᾳ ζωγραφεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

the speech, in contemplating the things shown, traces the impression of it for (or with) the eyes and paints the truth for (or with) the imagination.

Here *τύπος* and *φαντασία* are not used interchangeably as in the other case, but *τύπος* holds its meaning of 'impression', whereas *φαντασία*, rather than 'mental image', becomes 'imagination'. On the one hand speech makes an impression (τὸν τύπον) of the object for the eyes, and on the other hand it paints the truth by means of *φαντασία*. As Webb's translation underlines, the dative τῇ φαντασίᾳ can be understood in different ways. Both expressions (τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ὑπογράφει τὸν τύπον and τῇ φαντασίᾳ ζωγραφεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν) share the construction Dative + verb + Accusative, which could indicate that, in order to maintain this symmetry, the two datives have the same function. Therefore, since Dative of advantage seems to be the most suitable option for τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς (make an impression *for* the eyes),¹⁰⁸ the same could apply to τῇ φαντασίᾳ: speech paints truth *for* the imagination, the imagination (as well as the eyes) being that of the listener. There is, however, another option, that is to consider τῇ φαντασίᾳ as an instrumental Dative: speech paints truth *with* the imagination, the imagination being that of the speaker. As a result, here

¹⁰⁸ Although the affinity with the common collocation of ὑπογράφω with the accusative τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, meaning 'to paint under the eyelids' (LSJ), 'to wear eye makeup', makes it plausible that the idea expressed is that speech 'makes an impression under the eyes', in order to strengthen the transformation of auditive material into visual.

we find *ekphrasis* explained through the vocabulary of impression, of painting, and of *phantasia*, all condensed in one sentence, showing an awareness of the evolution undergone by the theory of *ekphrasis* as a consequence of its encounter, in sources outside the *Progymnasmata*, with figurative art. The prologues of the *Imagines* of both Philostrati, for example, are visible in the association of painting with truth (ὁ γὰρ λόγος... ζωγραφεῖ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, cf. Philostratus the Elder's prooem. 1), and of *ekphrasis* with *phantasia* (τῆ φαντασίᾳ ζωγραφεῖ, cf. Philostratus the Younger's prooem. 6).

Final remarks

It is from this point of view, that is the combination of rhetorical and artistic *phantasia*, rather than from the philosophical one, that it would seem appropriate to describe the prologue of *Daphnis and Chloe* as an operation of *phantasia*. Indeed, Longus proves to be an essential milestone in the development of these ideas. When approaching the *ekphrasis* of a painting he innovatively refused to follow the routine steps and proceed with the detailed description, and instead chose to speculate on the nature of this feature and displayed his understanding of it. Unlike Achilles Tatius or Lucian, from a chronological point of view the exponents of *ekphrasis* of works of art that were possibly closest to him, Longus introduces a conscious reflection on the unique space created by the intersection of rhetoric and art, indirectly providing the theoretical bases, rooted in both worlds, for the development of *ekphrasis* of works of art as a genre.

At last let us take into consideration the context from which Longus' operation arises, that is neither rhetorical theory nor practice, but a novel. Not only should this come as no surprise, but it should be expected, because the Greek novel had set the stage for an active and not marginal role of works of art since its early phases. This was then channeled in the form of rhetorical *ekphrasis* by Achilles Tatius, whose descriptions of paintings constitute one of the very first examples of rhetorical *ekphrasis* of paintings. It is therefore only natural that a reflection on the special connection between *ekphrasis* and painting should originate from a novel, for novels had already proved to be a most fertile environment for artistic insertions. But Longus did not restrict himself to a use of works of art that had been seen before, since he gave this feature so important a role that the novel itself was meant as the *ekphrasis* of a painting. This testifies to the fact that art was felt as a characteristic part of the novels to the point of being essential.

Finally, the results of our research on *ekphrasis* of paintings bear an intriguing consequence for the particular nature of Longus' novel. For if the *ekphrasis* of a painting represents the quintessence of *phantasia*, then when the *ekphrasis* is substituted by the novel the latter becomes

the embodiment of *phantasia* as well. The prologue seems to be only one word away from saying that *phantasia* constitutes the engine behind the narrative, but, as we have mentioned before, Longus leaves no evidence that *phantasia* is involved in his perception of the novel. We will therefore close our judgement on Longus' use of *ekphrasis* of works of art by saying that by working on some previously neglected inner mechanisms of the device, he favoured its development as an autonomous genre which would bring about relevant changes in ideas about art in the century that followed. Whether these changes, that is the presence of *phantasia*, were already there in *Daphnis and Chloe* we cannot say, and the matter shall remain suspended. What we can say is that, possibly over a century after Longus, the last of the Greek novelist brought an end to this suspension by resuming the artistic threads left by Longus and bringing to completion, this time explicitly under the banner of *phantasia*, the role of works of art in the novels.

The strange case of a girl born from a painting (and a dream)

In reading the *Aithiopika* one cannot avoid the impression that behind it lies Heliodorus' attempt to write the ultimate novel, a work which would distinguish itself within the genre and surpass all its antecedents. This emerges from some concrete factors, like its length, the complexity of the plot and of the narration, the affectedness of the style, as well as from a more indefinite feeling that the novel is permeated with the author's will to amplify everything the previous novels had accomplished. From this point of view the *Aithiopika* seems to be governed by an attitude diametrically opposite to the one that we find in *Daphnis and Chloe*. Between the last two Greek novels lie not only the evident differences in the plot, which already set Longus apart from all the other novelists, but also and especially differences, as it were, of gusto. Generalising, one could say that Longus favours meaningful simplicity and eschews boastfulness. The story comprises a surprisingly small number of events, but each of them holds a crucial and irreplaceable significance for the whole. Accordingly, the narration is linear and the style clear, and the structure of the novel, just repetitive enough to parallel the cycles of the seasons, impresses for its compactness and symmetry. The result is a novel that is intentionally uncomplicated, void of superfluous accessories, private and secluded like the island where the story takes place.

The *Aithiopika*, on the other hand, is a seemingly inexhaustible source of adventures, shared by a numerous cast of characters and so geographically spread as to convey the idea that the scope of the novel is as world-wide as its setting. The narration follows a similarly bombastic strategy, whereby the chronological sequence of the already broad spectrum of events is fragmented and the different segments rearranged in the least predictable way and through the voice of different narrators. The result is a blend of real-time episodes and flash-backs, with a maze of bifurcations and junctures and a centrifugal tendency to keep the goal at bay for as long as possible. The complex and magniloquent style echoes these traits, contributing greatly to the air of grandeur that pervades the novel. In a nutshell, one could say that Longus seeks to charm, Heliodorus to impress. From these points of view, the two novelists could not be more apart.

The nature of Heliodorus' heroine partakes in the author's overall plan.¹ Among the virtues entailed by the role, unbelievable beauty is probably the main feature that elevates the heroines of

¹ This chapter is primarily interested in works of art in connection with Charicleia and her conception, therefore in the painting of Andromeda. Morgan 1978, 361 ff., offers a commentary on the relevant passage (10,14), and studies on this are Dilke 1980, Billault 1981, Reeve 1989, and Whitmarsh 2002. Two more artistic objects are present in the novel and described in more detail than the painting of Andromeda: a belt (3,4, see Morgan 2013) and an engraved amethyst (5,14, see Bowie 1995). These two objects will be given considerably less attention, and used only for specific points of

the novels among their contemporaries as well as the reason why their lives are worth telling. Beauty is what makes them unique, to the point that people will believe that they do not belong to this world but instead regard them as wonders (Callirhoe is a θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα παρθένου, 1,1) and divine beings. But their human nature, however good their genes might be, is never really questioned, and when they come across as goddesses it is always at a level of comparison and reflective of how they are perceived by others, not of what they actually are. Not Charicleia, who not only meets, like her counterparts, all the required virtues to the utmost degree, but is also made to stand out even among them by reason of her own very special nature, like those Iliadic heroes who, among many god-like warriors, can actually boast a divine pedigree.

Heliiodorus paid particular attention to the making of the ultimate heroine for the ultimate novel and bestowed upon his main character an additional feature that makes her extraordinary from birth, regardless of how beautiful she will grow up to be: Charicleia is born with white skin from black parents. During intercourse with her husband Hydaspes, the king of Ethiopia, Persinna happened to look at a painting representing Perseus helping Andromeda down the rocks. Andromeda is naked, and her skin is white, and this has somehow given to Charicleia her peculiar skin colour at the moment of her conception. Later, she will grow up to look exactly like Andromeda in the painting. Thus beauty, which she obviously possesses like no other, is but a part of her congenital exceptionality, which exceeds the laws of nature and borders on the prodigious and superhuman.

But Charicleia's birth also constitutes the beginning of her adventures, for the queen, afraid of being accused of adultery, exposes the baby girl, wrapping her in a band in which she has sewn the story of the baby's origins. The origin of the heroine coincides with the origin of the story, being the direct cause of her trials, and also with the origin of the telling of the story, for a form of narration, the contents of the band, starts as early as her first cries. With the image of baby Charicleia wrapped in her own narration, Heliiodorus materializes a suggestion that had of old belonged to the novels, that is the identification of the novel with its heroine, and vice versa.² Intuitively, all considerations on the heroine's uniqueness are thus extended to the novel as a whole, making it even more directly one of the most important components of the novel's intended impressiveness.³

Based on what we said at the beginning of the chapter, it would be strange to find, especially in this aspect of the *Aithiopika* a similarity with *Daphnis and Chloe*. Yet, if we set our eyes not on

the discussion. An overview on the descriptions of artistic objects in the *Aithiopika* can be found in Dubel 1990, although Dubel treats them as purely ornamental, which is a completely different interpretation from ours.

² This can be seen already in the novels' titles, especially in Chariton. See Whitmarsh 2005, Tilg 2010, 214-17, Morgan 2013, 227.

³ Morgan 2013, 229-30.

the final product but on the mechanisms behind it, we will notice that very similar features are vitally important to both novels. First of all, the painting as a starting point. It constitutes in Longus the starting point of the narration, whereas in Heliodorus the starting point of the story, but it is fair to say that in both cases we would not have a novel were it not for a painting.⁴ This can be said for Achilles Tatius as well, though the connections of the painting of Europa with the story are of a completely different kind. Second, the painting is not described. After all the elements seem to have been arranged as the overture of an *ekphrasis*, the latter is strangely missing, replaced by a caption (in Book 4,8 in Heliodorus) that merely suggests the contents but is far too brief to be exhaustive and thus leaves the readers wanting more. From this point of view Longus and Heliodorus differentiate themselves from Achilles Tatius, not for lack of talent at describing paintings but because the work of the predecessor had shown them the narrative potential of *ekphrasis* of paintings, on which they innovatively kept on experimenting. Lastly, connected to the previous point is the provision of a substitute for the missing *ekphrasis*. Longus and Heliodorus do not just overlook the description of the painting, but they transform it in order to integrate it with the core of the novel. Thus Longus substitutes the *ekphrasis* with the novel itself, Heliodorus with the heroine, a ‘walking *ekphrasis*’.⁵ Charicleia becomes the precise copy of Andromeda in the painting, to the extent that her identity will be proven only once the painting, the archetype, is placed next to her. But as we have seen Charicleia reflects by extension also her story and the novel, with the result that the novel too, in a way, can be said to derive from a painting. Thus, some of the principles on which the *Aithiopika* is built mirror *Daphnis and Chloe*. As a matter of fact, what derives from the painting is in both novels, at some point towards the end, placed next to the model: the four books of *Daphnis and Chloe*, as an *anathêma*, will at least figuratively occupy a position next to the painting, which is also a votive offering, and in *Aithiopika* 10,15 the painting of Andromeda is placed alongside Charicleia. This cannot be described as exact imitation, but as alternative elaboration on the same key points.⁶

What follows is an analysis of the birth of Charicleia and the creation of her character. It focusses on the models used by Heliodorus, taking into consideration first the figure of Andromeda, and then a series of anecdotes on unusual conceptions. It determines the agents of Charicleia’s appearance in the story, as well as Heliodorus’ sources, how he used them, and why.

⁴ More precisely: the painting in Longus coincides with the end of the story but causes the beginning of the narration; the painting of Andromeda in Heliodorus only causes the beginning of the story. However, it does trigger a narration, though this is not the main one but Persinna’s sub-narrative on the band.

⁵ The paradox is suggested by Whitmarsh 2002, 111.

⁶ If Bowie 1995 is right in seeing in the description of the pastoral scene engraved on the amethyst in *Aithiopika* 5,14 an allusion to Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe*, then it is all the more meaningful that Heliodorus would use the *ekphrasis* of a work of art to evoke his predecessor.

5.1. The birth of Charicleia

That Heliodorus paid specific attention to Charicleia's origin emerges from two facts, the circumstances of her birth and the way in which they are told. The author is very careful in disclosing the details of Charicleia's birth. We learn about the band in 2,31 from the Ethiopian Gymnosophist's flash-back, which is in part of Charicles' flash-back (from 2,29 to 2,33), which is in the middle of Calasiris' flash-back (from 2,24 to 5,1). Still, the content of the band stays untold until 4,8 (still during Calasiris' flash-back). Charicleia's unique trait, that is her origin (and consequently the origin of her story and of the novel), is a secret kept until almost the middle of the novel. Moreover, it is hidden inside several layers of narration, the smallest of a series of Chinese boxes. If an author builds such a powerful and complex narrative structure around the heroine's origin, hiding it and carefully revealing it bit by bit in order to enhance the suspense, the only possible explanation is that he considers it to be one of the most precious ideas of the entire work, a piece of information that must not be spoiled at the beginning, but saved for as long as possible.⁷

Even more so, since although in 4,8 we finally learn *what* happened, we still have no idea of *how* it happened. Persinna says that the child was white because she was looking at Andromeda, and Andromeda's skin colour was transmitted to it. In a way, understanding it by intuition, she does describe what happened during Charicleia's conception, but she does not explain it. How is it possible that Charicleia is white because of the painted image of a white girl? How could the transmission of resemblance from a distant source technically occur? This is not said in 4,8, and the question remains unanswered until 10,14, almost at the end of the novel, when the readers find out that the transmission of resemblance from the painting took place because the image of Andromeda had been absorbed by Persinna's eyes during intercourse. Until then, no one seems to be particularly surprised by the whole thing. It is indeed impossible to find even a tiny shadow of doubt in the characters' reactions to Charicleia's origin, with the reasonable exception of her father Hydaspes: λευκὴν γὰρ πῶς ἂν Αἰθίοπες ἀμφοτέρω παρὰ τὸ εἶκος ἐτεκνώσαμεν; 'How could we, Ethiopians both, produce, contrary to all probability, a white daughter?' (10,14).⁸ There are reasons behind everyone else's lack of uncertainty and Hydaspes' doubts. To begin with, Heliodorus' brilliant idea is slightly less original than it looks. There is in fact a tradition of anomalies related to birth that dates back a long time before Heliodorus. Before we take that into

⁷ On this see Hilton 1998.

⁸ In order of appearance: the Ethiopian Gymnosophist merely states the facts (2,31); Persinna, in her own narration sewn on the band, immediately understands what happened (4,8); Calasiris is overwhelmed with happiness (4,9); Charicleia becomes more aware of her nobility (4,12). Hydaspes is the last one to discover the secret and the first one to actually tackle the core of the problem.

consideration, however, let us analyse a more macroscopic matter, that is the role of Andromeda in Heliodorus' invention.

Charicleia and Andromeda

If it is already strange that only one character asks the reason why Charicleia's skin could be white, it is even stranger that no one seems to notice that history is merely repeating itself, for Andromeda experienced the exact same condition. In fact it is easy, even for us, to overlook the fact that Andromeda is white although her parents are obviously black, being the king and queen of Ethiopia. This is completely absent in the *Aithiopika*: from Persinna's words we learn that Andromeda is one of the ancestors of the Ethiopians, and that Charicleia is white because she resembles Andromeda, but this formulation allows her to avoid stating the fact that Andromeda is herself white. As a character and as a narrator, Persinna takes for granted the fact that Andromeda is white not just without questioning it, but without even mentioning it, thus leading the readers to assume the same a priori. All the stress on Charicleia's incredible skin colour (σε λευκὴν ἀπέτεκον, ἀπρόσφυλον Αἰθιοπῶν χροιάν ἀπαυγάζουσσαν, 4,8), as opposed to the silence on Andromeda's own colour,⁹ draws the attention away from the latter, possibly because it would have made the former less incredible.

In truth, Andromeda reveals herself as a double archetype for Charicleia. She is the model that gives Charicleia her physical appearance, but she is also, being white from black parents, the model for her story. In the *Aithiopika* the first aspect is repeatedly highlighted at the expense of the second, which is carefully concealed. Perhaps this omission reflects the fact that Andromeda's whiteness was so rooted in common knowledge that even (fictional) Ethiopians did not find it strange. After all, at the centre of everyone's attention was her story of enchainment and freeing much exploited by authors of all periods, not the little oddity of her skin colour, which was never part of the myth. Shortly we will examine how this discrepancy came into being. For the moment, however, we shall focus on why this matter is neglected especially in the *Aithiopika*. For, of all stories, this one in particular had every reason to point out Andromeda's example and appeal to it. In fact, if Persinna was so worried about being accused of adultery, why not recall the fact that their very own ancestor Andromeda had experienced the same thing that happened to their daughter Charicleia? Andromeda's case would have constituted an undeniable precedent that strange births did occur in the Ethiopian royal family, and, if anything, Charicleia's white skin would have been

⁹ The absence of the description of the painting might have had a part in this, for all is said about Andromeda's body is that she is naked.

the proof of the purity of her lineage, coming as it did from such an illustrious ancestor. Persinna had all to gain from telling the truth about the baby's colour immediately, because, if provided with the mythological background, Hydaspes could have been sympathetic, even proud. However, all of this is not Persinna's doing, but Heliodorus', for Persinna's alibi would have prevented Charicleia's exposure and thus the reason for a story to be there in the first place. Instead, no one points to Andromeda's own colour, not Persinna, the person most concerned about it, nor the sage Gymnosophist Sisimithres, the first one who finds the baby and reads the content of the band. The strange nature of Andromeda's colour is entirely disregarded first of all not to steal Charicleia's show, and secondly, and more importantly, because it would have created a major impediment to the logic of the story. Heliodorus seemingly follows a widespread unawareness of the problem, but in fact his omission is intentional and part of a well planned strategy. Then again, he also simply capitalised on an erratum of Greek mythology.

Why, then, is Andromeda white even though she is Ethiopian?¹⁰ As we have said, the myth of Andromeda revolves around her love story with Perseus, how he finds her bound in chains, an offering for the sea monster as a consequence of her mother's vanity, how he kills the monster and frees her, and how they take off together. The odd colour of her skin is not only irrelevant to this, but altogether absent from any version of the myth. The reason why no myth talks about her birth and explains the peculiarity of her colour is simply that there is no peculiarity of colour to begin with: Andromeda is white because so were her parents.

The confusion derives from the fact that the same name, Ethiopia, indicated two different places, a mythical Ethiopia situated in the East, and the African Ethiopia.¹¹ Consequently, myths related to Ethiopia, like the story of Andromeda (as well as that of Memnon, also listed by Persinna among the ancestors of their country), oscillated between Asia and Africa before finding their final location in the sub-Saharan country.¹² Greek sources told the story of an Andromeda born in the Near East, therefore white (as her parents), and this was also the skin colour in which the heroine was represented by the artists who drew inspiration from literary works.¹³ Logically, the change of geographical coordinates should have been followed by a change in the colour of skin, as in Memnon's case, who became black permanently. Andromeda's colour, however, proved to be more resilient, and in the majority of cases she kept on being described as white. Art probably had a role

¹⁰ The question is addressed especially in Snowden 1970, 151-5, Dilke 1980, 266-7, and McGrath 1992.

¹¹ On the whole problem see Schneider 2004.

¹² Cf Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2,4, for Andromeda in Ethiopia, Strabo 16,2,28 for the setting of the myth in Joppa (Asia Minor), and again Strabo 1,2,35 for the shift of the story from one place to another (although Strabo's view here is that the story moved from Africa to Asia). See Schneider 2004, 116-7. The importance of the sea in the story also made it difficult for the myth to be definitively located in sub-Egyptian Africa.

¹³ There is no indication in the fragments of the *Andromeda* by Sophocles and the one by Euripides that skin colour had a role in the play. Moreover, fragment 145 Nauck might indicate that Euripides' *Andromeda* was set in the far west.

in this. Since the heroine enjoyed a constant interest from figurative arts, people must have been accustomed to seeing Andromeda white, perhaps to the point that a white Andromeda was too inveterate an image to be changed even at a time when her story had definitely been set in African Ethiopia. Ovid is more philologically coherent when he makes Andromeda dark, realistically accounting also for Perseus' reaction to the unusual skin colour, but he is the only one to do so.¹⁴ The majority stuck to the white Andromeda, perpetuating the paradox either because, out of habit, they failed to notice it, or because they concluded that it was too late to do anything about it.

Philostratus the Elder is one such case. In the description of the painting of Perseus, he starts by dispelling possible doubts about the location of the myth, showing awareness of the two options inherited by the tradition: ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἐρυθρὰ γε αὕτη θάλασσα οὐδ' Ἰνδοὶ ταῦτα, Αἰθίοπες δὲ καὶ ἀνὴρ Ἕλληνα ἐν Αἰθιοπία, 'this is not the Red Sea nor are these inhabitants of India, but Ethiopians and a Greek man in Ethiopia' (*Imagines*, 1,29, trans. Fairbanks). Andromeda is described as follows: ἡ κόρη δὲ ἠδεῖα μὲν, ὅτι λευκὴ ἐν Αἰθιοπία, 'the maiden is charming in that she is fair of skin though in Ethiopia'. The heroine is pleasant *because* she is a white Ethiopian, and as a reminder that he is not ignorant of the natural colour of Ethiopians, Philostratus later specifies that all the other Ethiopians represented in the picture are of dark skin (ἠδεῖς Αἰθίοπες ἐν τῷ τοῦ χρώματος ἀτόπῳ, 'charming Ethiopians with their strange colouring'). Andromeda does belong to her people (they also have one trait in common, as they are all charming: ἠδεῖα, ἠδεῖς), but she is white and they are black.

Though probably not describing an actual painting, Philostratus is aware that Andromeda's canonical colour is white (just as he is that Memnon's is black, which he mentions twice in the *Imagines*, 1,2 and 2,7), and he accentuates the contrast by underlining all the contradictory elements: the Ethiopian setting, the white skin of Andromeda, the black skin of all the other locals. Unlike Ovid, who intervenes in the story in order to fix it, and unlike many who simply gloss over the problem either by not mentioning the Ethiopian context (like Achilles Tatius, who mentions the white colour of the skin, 3,7,4), or by not mentioning the skin colour at all (like Lucian, who mentions the country but not the skin colour, *De domo* 22) and thus taking it for granted, Philostratus makes display of the incongruity, as if to provide his audience with a case that requires the exercise of hermeneutics anticipated in the prologue, combining careful reading of paintings with knowledge of the stories represented in them.

¹⁴ References to Andromeda's dark skin in Ovid can be found in *Ars amatoria* 1,53 and 2,643, and *Heroides* 15,36. In *Metamorphoses* 4,663 ff., however, where Ovid gives a long account of the story, Andromeda's colour is not specified. Instead she is said to be like a statue of marble (*marmoreum opus*, 675), which *prima facie* refers without doubt to her stance, but might also play on the ambiguity of her skin colour.

Heliodorus might have been one of these readers. The creation of the character of Charicleia cannot have taken place without the acknowledgement of the fact that Andromeda too was a white Ethiopian, and the inspiration for this could well have come from Philostratus, who had previously pointed it out (and he seems to be the only one to have done so). The fact that Philostratus had underlined it in the description of a painting, and that Charicleia's singularity derives precisely from a painting of Andromeda, encourages this possibility. In the sequence of the events of the myth, the scene in Heliodorus' painting (with Perseus helping her down the rocks) follows the scene described by Philostratus (with Perseus taking a rest after the battle, Andromeda still chained), and Persinna's emphasis on Charicleia's peculiarity ('σε λευκὴν ἀπέτεκον, ἀπρόσφυλον Αἰθιοπίων χροιάν ἀπαυγάζουσιν') follows in turn Philostratus' emphasis on Andromeda's ('ὅτι λευκὴ ἐν Αἰθιοπία').¹⁵ And it makes sense that the protagonist and the story of the *Aithiopika* should derive from a painting, if the author's inspiration derived from one as well.¹⁶

Unplanned alterations in the transmission of the myth of Andromeda, coupled with a conservative iconography in art, had produced the rare circumstance where a tale-like situation (a white Ethiopian girl) had in fact no tale at all to justify it. Heliodorus seems to have noticed the anomaly and to have deemed such tale worth inventing. Not with Andromeda as protagonist, of course, for her already established story left no room for that, but with a new one, Charicleia, descending from her and inheriting her unique trait. As we have seen, he then covered his tracks, thoroughly erasing every detail (including the *ekphrasis* of the painting) that might have led to the realisation that Andromeda too was a white Ethiopian girl, lest his invention appear a less fantastic expedient.

The *Aithiopika* and the myth of Perseus and Andromeda

If Charicleia is entirely modelled on Andromeda (her physical appearance and her odd skin colour), it is natural to wonder whether Heliodorus borrowed other elements for Charicleia and her story from Andromeda and hers.¹⁷ Considering the plot, the story of Perseus and Andromeda seems to have little in common with the *Aithiopika*. The first one is but a chapter of the adventures of the hero Perseus, and tells of the enchainment of Andromeda as an offering to the sea monster, of the hero's fight against the monster, and of the protagonists' falling in love. The plot of the *Aithiopika* is not only much broader, but also entirely different. It is true that at some point Charicleia ends up

¹⁵ In addition to this we can mention the fact that Philostratus is a precedent also for paintings representing Memnon (*Imagines* 1,7 and 2,7), which also figure in Heliodorus, in the galleries of the royal palace.

¹⁶ See Morgan 2009 in support of the idea that Heliodorus knew works by Philostratus.

¹⁷ Laplace 1992, 214 ff.

in chains and is meant to be sacrificed by her father (when she becomes a prisoner of war in Book Nine), but the circumstances are altogether different from those of Andromeda. And it is true that Theagenes will fight a bull in Book Ten, proposing again the theme of the conflict between a man and a powerful beast, but this is in no way connected to the safety of the heroine. The main points of the story of Perseus and Andromeda are, at best, sources for single episodes which may or may not be re-enacting them but are, either way, far from constituting the cornerstones of the *Aithiopika*.¹⁸ Furthermore, Andromeda's role of defenceless maiden, who suffers the consequences of the actions of others rather than acting in response to the events in order to produce a solution, hardly coincides with the personality of Charicleia, which emerges very strongly, at times at Theagenes' expense.

The only motif that has been kept intact and with the same level of importance is the love story.¹⁹ This, rather than the trials they have to suffer for it, constitutes the real common denominator between the two couples. In fact the story of Andromeda and Perseus was one among not too many entirely successful love stories in the Greek mythological panorama, and thanks to its rewritings (Euripides especially comes to mind) had become a paradigmatic love story.²⁰ After all, of all the parts of the myth it is the first physical contact of the couple and their falling in love that is represented in the painting in Persinna's room. And perhaps it is no coincidence that a few other references to Perseus and Andromeda occur in Book Three, exactly when Theagenes and Charicleia meet for the first time.

The first encounter of Theagenes and Charicleia takes place in Delphi, in the course of a procession where the young man parades as the head of a delegation of Thessalians, and Charicleia as the priestess of Artemis. The procession is the subject of a rich compound *ekphrasis* by Calasiris, with musical as well as visual elements that produce a crescendo of stupefaction in the narratee Cnemon, which will culminate in the triumphant epiphany first of Theagenes and then in the even more jubilant one of Charicleia.²¹ Special attention is paid to the garments of the hero and the heroine. In particular, Theagenes is wearing a brooch carved with an Athena carrying the Gorgoneion (ἡ περόνη δὲ Ἀθηνᾶν ἠλεκτρίνην ἔστεφε τὴν Γοργούης κεφαλὴν εἰς θώρακα προασπίζουσαν, 'a clasp with, at its center, and amber figure of Athene with her Gorgon's head talisman on her breastplate' 3,3), an image that refers to the slaying of Medusa, Perseus' famous

¹⁸ In Theagenes' tauromachy, for example, Perseus is not even the main possible model, for in Greek mythology the monster-slayer par excellence is Heracles.

¹⁹ On this see Billault 1981.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 68 ff.

²¹ They are not the only protagonists of Greek novels to have met at a religious ceremony. The same goes, on a smaller scale, for Callirhoe and Chaereas and for Anthia and Habrocomes. On the description of the procession as Calasiris' successful operation of visualisation see Núñez 2006, 82 ff.

deed prior to the rescue of Andromeda. Concerning Charicleia, the garment that receives most attention is a girdle worn around the chest, moulded in the shape of two intertwining snakes that seem to lie languidly under her bosom rather than sustain it:

ζώνην δὲ ἐπεβέβλητο τοῖς στέρνοις· καὶ ὁ τεχνησάμενος εἰς ἐκείνην τὸ πᾶν τῆς
ἑαυτοῦ τέχνης κατέκλεισεν, οὔτε πρότερόν τι τοιοῦτον χαλκευσάμενος οὔτε
αὐθις δυνησόμενος. Δυσὶν γὰρ δρακόντοιιν τὰ μὲν οὐραῖα κατὰ τῶν
μεταφρένων ἐδέσμευε τοὺς δὲ αὐχένας ὑπὸ τοὺς μαζοὺς παραμείψας καὶ εἰς
βρόχον σκολιὸν διαπλέξας καὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς διολισθήσαι τοῦ βρόχου
συγχωρήσας, ὡς περίττωμα τοῦ δεσμοῦ κατὰ πλευρὰν ἑκατέραν ἀπηώρησεν.
Εἶπες ἂν τοὺς ὄφεις οὐ δοκεῖν ἔρπειν ἀλλ' ἔρπειν, οὐχ ὑπὸ βλοσυρῶ καὶ ἀπηνεῖ
τῶ βλέμματι φοβεροὺς ἀλλ' ὑγρῶ κώματι διαρροεμένους ὡσπερ ἀπὸ τοῦ κατὰ
τὰ στέρνα τῆς κόρης ἡμέρου κατευναζομένους. Οἱ δὲ ἦσαν τὴν μὲν ὕλην χρυσοῖ
τὴν χροῖαν δὲ κυανοῖ, ὁ γὰρ χρυσοῦς ὑπὸ τῆς τέχνης ἐμελαίνετο ἵνα τὸ τραχὺ
καὶ μεταβάλλον τῆς φολίδος τῶ ξανθῶ τὸ μελανθές κραθὲν ἐπιδείξηται.
Τοιαύτη μὲν ἡ ζώνη τῆς κόρης.

Around her breast she wore a band of gold; the man who had crafted it had locked all his art into it –never before had he produced such a masterpiece, and never would he be able to repeat the achievement. It was in the shape of two serpents whose tails he had intertwined at the back of the garment; then he had brought their necks under her breasts and woven them into an intricate knot, finally allowing their heads to slither free of the knot and draping them down either side of her body as if they formed no part of the clasp. You would have said not that the serpents seemed to be moving but that they were actually in motion. There was no cruelty or fellness in their eyes to cause one fright, but they were steeped in a sensuous languor as if lulled by the sweet joys that dwelt in Charicleia's bosom. They were made of gold but were dark in color, for their maker's craft had blackened the gold so the mixture of yellow and black should express the roughness and shifting hues of their scales. Such was the band round the maiden's breast.²²

(3,4)

So overwhelming is Charicleia's beauty that even inanimate beasts cannot avoid ceasing their ferociousness to fall prey to her charm. In their first encounter Theagenes and Charicleia have one thing in common, that is, that they are both displaying an imagery of snakes about them.²³ Theagenes carries the fierce figure of the Gorgoneion, the head of Medusa used as a shield, which had the power to petrify one's enemies, turning the living into inanimate statues. Charicleia, on the other hand, is adorned with two inanimate snakes that are almost brought to life (by the talent of the artist as well as by the descriptive ability of the narrator), only to be tamed by her beauty.²⁴

²² The Greek text used is that established by Rattenbury and Lumb. Translations are taken from Morgan 1989 and sometimes adapted.

²³ On the erotic description of the protagonists in 3,3-4 and on its intertextuality with the *Iliad* see Morgan 2013, 232 ff., Whitmarsh 2002, 120-1.

²⁴ The description of the snakes around Charicleia's breast has also clear metaliterary suggestions about the narration around Charicleia's character, for they are intertwined in an intricate way just like the *Aithiopika*, as shown by Morgan

If Medusa has, in a way, the power to turn the living into works of art, Charicleia can turn works of art into living creatures, which fits her character rather well, given her origin and her first introduction in the novel, when the bandits, after having observed the aftermath of the massacre on the beach, finally lay their eyes on her:

κόρη καθῆστο ἐπὶ πέτρας, ἀμήχανόν τι κάλλος καὶ θεὸς εἶναι ἀναπείθουσα,
τοῖς μὲν παρούσι περιαλοῦσα φρονήματος δὲ εὐγενοῦς ἔτι πνέουσα.

On a rock sat a girl, a creature of such indescribable beauty that one might have taken her for a goddess. Despite her great distress at her plight, she had an air of courage and nobility.
(1,2)

What they see is a girl sitting on a rock, beautiful as a goddess and in fact similar to a statue of Artemis, crowned with laurel, the quiver hanging from her shoulder, the bow in her arm, but most of all still like a sculpted work. She is first referred to as κόρη, which can refer both to people or sculptural representations of them, and the ambiguity is kept until πνέουσα. In fact it is not until she speaks, some lines below, that they can definitely tell that she is a living creature, and a few doubts still remain, since shortly after it will be questioned whether she is a breathing statue (*empnoun agalma*, 1,7).²⁵ Perhaps there is an image of Andromeda behind her first appearance, if one considers that it shows a girl on a rock near the sea. And the indecision between statue or girl would match Perseus' first thought at the sight of Andromeda in Euripides' play:

ἔα, τίν' ὄχθον τόνδ' ὄρω περίρρυτον
ἀφρώ θαλάσσης; παρθένου τ' εἰκὴ τινά
ἐξ αὐτομόρφων λαΐνων τυκισμάτων
σοφῆς ἄγαλμα χειρός;

Hold –what promontory do I see here, lapped by sea-foam, and what maiden's likeness, a statue carved by an expert hand to her very form in stone?
(fr. 125 Nauck, trans. Collard-Cropp)

This image is preserved in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, even closer to Heliodorus in that it is a movement of air (*levis aura*) that first indicates that Andromeda is not a statue:

2013, 234: 'Here then we have an image of the heroine enfolded by the serpentine beauty of the text (as she is also wound in the narrative of her birth), stressing her nature as literary artefact and inviting an erotic reading'. As Morgan noticed, when Michael Psellus describes the *Aithiopika* as the body of a snake (Dyck 1986, 93), he is employing the very same image used by Heliodorus himself.

²⁵ Though the idea that she is a living work of art seems to be discouraged by the author, who notices, focalising through the bandits, that it would be a sign of rusticity to think so: αὐτὸ ἐμπνουν μετῆχθαι τὸ ἄγαλμα διὰ τῆς κόρης ὑπ' ἀγοικίας εἰκαζον, 'was this girl the statue of the goddess, a living statue? Poor fools!' 1,7.

*Quam simul ad duras religatam bracchia cautes
vidit Abantiades (nisi quod levis aura capillos
moverat et tepido manabant lumina fletu,
marmoreum ratus esset opus), trahit inscius ignes
et stupet et visae correptus imagine formae
paene suas quater est oblitus in aere pennas.*

As soon as Perseus saw her there bound by the arms to a rough cliff –save that her hair gently stirred in the breeze, and the warm tears were trickling down her cheeks, he would have thought her a marble statue– he took fire unwitting, and stood dumb. Smitten by the sight of her exquisite beauty, he almost forgot to move his wings in the air.

(4,672-6, trans. Miller)

There are references to the story of Perseus and Andromeda here and there in the *Aithiopika*, though altogether they do not seem to be combinable in a way that could indicate the author's intention to rewrite the myth. Judging by their occurrences, however, they seem to be concentrated at relevant moments of the story, such as the first appearance of Charicleia, and the occasion when she and Theagenes fall in love at first sight (which is also the main description of their physical appearance). What connects these instances is that they offer indications of how to visualise Charicleia, with the result that when she makes important appearances there is an ongoing imagery of Andromeda connected to her, and this happens before the discovery that she derives her appearance from the painting of Andromeda. These are not to be seen as strong clues meant to lead clever readers to an early unveiling of Charicleia's origin, for this is truly unpredictable. Rather, readers are meant to appreciate these hints after finding out about Charicleia's birth, realising that there was indeed something about her that reminded them vaguely of Andromeda when they first encountered her in Book One, and that she and Theagenes, an Ethiopian and a Greek, are really destined to follow the happy steps of Andromeda and Perseus, if their appearance, when they fall in love at first sight in Book Three, is modelled through references to the myth of the Argive.

Born from a painting

Let us return to the origin of all of Charicleia's troubles, her exceptional skin colour. As we have seen, Andromeda provided, unawares, the model for the existence of a white girl born from Ethiopian parents. None of the authors who told the story of Andromeda had to explain this problem, simply because the problem did not exist in Andromeda's story. Heliodorus, however, who created a heroine precisely around this conundrum, could not get away without providing some

elucidation, for which he could rely on a long tradition of anecdotes about unconventional conceptions. What follows looks at a series of stories about weird conceptions that have been used as *loci paralleli* for Charicleia's case since Rohde.²⁶ The purpose here is to look at the contents and organise the stories into categories in order to see which one in particular was followed by Heliodorus. The same anecdotes will be later analysed in terms of context.

Children can be born with a skin colour different from their parents', as is told for example by Aristotle:

ἀποδιδοῦσιν γὰρ διὰ πολλῶν γενεῶν αἱ ὁμοιότητες, οἷον καὶ ἐν Ἡλίδι ἢ τῷ Αἰθίοπι συγγενομένη· οὐ γὰρ ἡ θυγάτηρ ἐγένετο ἀλλ' ὁ ἐκ ταύτης Αἰθίοψ.

Resemblances return after many generations, as is the case of the woman in Elis who slept with a black man: her daughter was not black, but her daughter's daughter was. (*De generatione animalium* 722a)

A white woman had intercourse with a black man, but the black skin did not show up until the second generation (a similar version also in Aristotle's *Historia animalium* 586a). Not much different is the story told by Pliny the Elder:

Quasdam sibi similes semper parere, quasdam viro, quasdam nulli, quasdam feminam patri, marem sibi. Indubitatum exemplum est Nicaei nobilis pyctae Byzantii geniti, qui adulterio Aethiopsis nata matre, nil a ceteris colore differente, ipse avum regeneravit Aethiopem. Similitudinum quidem in mente reputatio est, et in qua credantur multa fortuita pollere, visus, auditus, memoria, haustaeque imagines sub ipso conceptu. Cogitatio etiam, utriuslibet animum subito transvolans, effingere similitudinem aut miscere existimatur.

In some cases children resemble their mother, in some the father, in some neither of them; in some cases the female child resembles the father, and the male the mother. Indubitable is the example of Nicaeus, the celebrated wrestler of Byzantium. His mother was born from an adultery committed with an Ethiopian man, and although her colour was not different from that of the others, Nicaeus had the skin colour of his Ethiopian grandfather. It is in the mind that the process of resemblances takes place, in which many casual circumstances are believed to have influence, sight, hearing, memory, and the images received at the moment of conception. Even a thought, instantly passing through the mind of either of the parents, is supposed to model or combine the resemblance.

(*Naturalis historia* 7,10)

Nicaeus' grandmother committed adultery with a black man and gave birth to a white daughter, but the daughter's son, Nicaeus, was black like his grandfather. So far, Charicleia's case is close but not

²⁶ See Rohde 1876³, 476 n. 4, Morgan 1978, 361 ff., Dilke 1980, Billault 1981, Reeve 1989.

at all similar. Pliny goes on with an explanation of how it is possible to transmit a similarity which is unrelated to the parents: it comes from the mind, influenced by things seen or heard. Such an explanation does not fit too well with the story told, for Pliny's story, as well as Aristotle's, is one of recessive genes, not of influence of the mind. Pliny's words, however, recall a theory ascribed to Empedocles:

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς τῇ κατὰ τὴν σύλληψιν φαντασίᾳ τῆς γυναικὸς μορφοῦσθαι τὰ βρέφη· πολλάκις γὰρ ἀνδριάντων καὶ εἰκόνων ἠράσθησαν γυναῖκες, καὶ ὅμοια τούτοις ἀπέτεκον.

According to Empedocles, children are shaped by the mother's *phantasia* during conception; women often fell in love with statues and images, and gave birth to children similar to them.

(Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita philosophorum* 5,12 = *Moralia* 906e)

It is the mother's *phantasia* that gives shape to the children. Women can in fact fall in love with statues and images and give birth to children that are similar to them. The attention is not on skin colour and recessive genes, but uniquely on the influence of the mind. In view of this, an important word occurs, to which the process of transmitting a different similarity is attributed: *phantasia*. Another example, taken from Elias' commentary on Aristotle's *Categoriae*, stresses the power of this faculty, focussing on how a pure act of *phantasia*, in the moment of conception, can transmit a different skin colour:

Τις γυνὴ Αἰθίοπα ἔτεκε μήτε Αἰθίοπι συγγενομένη μήτε Αἰθίοψ οὔσα, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς συνουσίας Αἰθίοπα φαντασθεῖσα. προηγείται οὖν ἡ φαντασία καὶ τῶν ἐκ γενετῆς.

A woman gave birth to a black child without sleeping with a black man and without being herself black, but by fantasizing about a black man during intercourse.

Phantasia precedes even what comes from the begetter.

(9^a28 = 231,17)

The phenomena shown so far happen accidentally, but once the process is understood, it can be bridled and used for the purpose of eugenics. Such are the stories told by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Galen. The latter goes as follows:

ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ λόγος τίς ἀρχαῖος ἐμήνυσεν ὅτι τῶν ἀμόρφων τὶς δυνατὸς εὐμόρφον θέλων γεννήσαι παῖδα, ἐποίησε γράψαι ἐν πλατεῖ ξύλῳ εὐεῖδὲς ἄλλο παιδίον, καὶ ἔλεγε τῇ γυναικὶ συμπλεκόμενος ἐκείνῳ τῷ τύπῳ τῆς γραφῆς ἐμβλέπειν. ἡ δὲ ἀτενὲς βλέπουσα καὶ ὡς ἔστιν εἰπεῖν ὅλον τὸν νοῦν ἔχουσα οὐχὶ τῷ γεννήσαντι, ἀλλὰ τῷ γεγραμμένῳ ὁμοίως ἀπέτεκε τὸ παιδίον, τῆς

ὄψεως, οἶμαι, διαπεμπούσης τῇ φύσει, ἀλλ' οὐκ ὄγκοις τισὶ τοῦ γεγραμμένου
τοὺς τύπους.

An ancient story was revealed to me, that an ugly, rich man, wanting to have a beautiful boy, had another beautiful child painted on a large wooden image, and told his wife to look at that image while he was making love to her. She fixed her eyes and, so to say, her whole mind not on the begetter, but on the painted image, and gave birth to a child who resembled it. The vision, I believe, transmitted the impression of the painted child by nature, and not by some particles.

(*De theriaca ad Pisonem* 11)

An ugly man, not wanting his offspring to look like him, had his wife look at a picture of a beautiful child during intercourse, trusting the fact that the picture would transmit beautiful features to the embryo.²⁷ The mechanism behind the conception would be close to the Empedoclean theory reported in *Placita philosophorum* (notice also the presence of a work of art), but the word φαντασία is not mentioned. Still, the process described leaves no doubt as to the fact that what makes the miracle possible takes place in the mother's mind (ὄλον τὸν νοῦν ἔχουσα).

Let us sum up the main points of the tradition, before comparing it with the *Aithiopika*. It is possible for children not to resemble their parents. This can either be accidental or voluntary. In the first case what is meant is that the mother does not know what her child is going to be like, and does not want it to look any different from her and the father (Aristotle, Pliny, Empedocles, Elias). An act of adultery is implied, either real or imagined. When it is real (Aristotle, Pliny), it involves two parents with different skin colour, and the appearance of the recessive gene not in the first generation, but the second one (the unusual and unexpected colour being black). When it is imagined (Empedocles, Elias), the adultery is committed with works of art (statues and images) or men of a different colour, and *phantasia* is responsible for the transformation. In Elias' case, the imagined adultery happens during intercourse with the real father. When the change in similarity is voluntary, no adultery is committed (Dionysius, Galen). It involves the use of images as models, and it happens during intercourse with the real father.²⁸

²⁷ The similar version by Dionysius of Halicarnassus will be taken into consideration later on.

²⁸ This brief survey allows us to resume some previous considerations about the nature of Charicleia and Andromeda. Reeve 1989 has labelled these phenomenal conceptions with the title of 'Andromeda Effect'. He does not explain his reason for this choice of words, but presumably, since he starts his observations from Charicleia's birth, we are to assume that he meant to include all cases of similarly unorthodox conceptions, and Charicleia owes hers to Andromeda, hence the Andromeda Effect. Witty as this formula is, it shows precisely the contradiction that we have recently examined. For it is clear that, while providing the name for the Andromeda effect, Andromeda herself was by no means affected by it. Were it otherwise, would she not have been mentioned as a study case by Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, and the other authors who approached the theme of unexpected resemblances at birth? They did not, of course, because Andromeda had none of these problems at her conception, as we have shown above. Just like the original Oedipus had no complex, so too the original Andromeda suffered no Andromeda Effect. Andromeda can enter the picture of unexpected resemblances only because Heliodorus recognised her situation and exploited it to create Charicleia's character.

If we go back to the *Aithiopika*, we can see that the lack of surprise at Charicleia's condition can well result from the fact that similar things had happened before, and could happen again;²⁹ Similar, but not identical things. Heliodorus has picked bits from every source, but has never adopted the whole version. Basically, he merged the different stories into a new one, resembling and at the same time differing from the previous tradition.³⁰ For this is what happened to Charicleia, as we finally learn in 10,14:

Τῆς γε μὴν κατὰ τὴν χροιάν ἀπορίας φράζει μὲν σοι καὶ ἡ ταινία τὴν λύσιν, ὁμολογούσης ἐν αὐτῇ ταυτησί Περσίννης ἔσπακέναι τινὰ εἰδῶλα καὶ φαντασίας ὁμοιοτήτων ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀνδρομέδας κατὰ τὴν πρὸς σε ὁμιλίαν ὀρωμένης. Εἰ δ' οὖν καὶ ἄλλως πιστώσασθαι βούλει, πρόκειται τὸ ἀρχέτυπον· ἐπισκόπει τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν ἀπαράλλακτον ἐν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ κόρῃ δεικνυμένην.

In any case, the solution to the problem about the colour of her skin is contained in the band, where Persinna here admits to having absorbed certain images and visual forms of resemblance from the picture of Andromeda that she saw while having intercourse with you. If you desire further confirmation, the exemplar is to hand. Take a close look at Andromeda, and you will find that she is reproduced in this girl exactly as she appears in the painting.³¹

The strange birth depends on the vision of a work of art during intercourse, as in Dionysius and Galen. Unlike these cases, however, the act is completely unintentional. At the same time, the result is a baby born with a different colour of skin from her parents, as in Aristotle, Pliny and Elias, but unlike these cases no adultery is committed. Her parents share the same colour of skin, and the unusual and unexpected colour is white instead of black. It looks as if Heliodorus, in merging the different traditions, has also changed their internal rules. It is not difficult to see which principle guided the author's choices. He carefully and systematically removed from every story what seemed to be inappropriate to the calibre of his heroine. First of all, every suspicion of adultery is removed, both real or imagined. It is made clear that Persinna did not commit adultery, did not think of another man, and did not look at a picture of another man. Charicleia could never have been born from an illegal union, even an imaginary one. Second, as well as adultery, eugenics cannot be admitted to Charicleia's conception: she has to be a natural miracle, not the result of an

²⁹ A distinction should be made. The readers were familiar with this kind of story (Rohde 1876, 476, n. 4), to the point that this could be taken as an example of realism in Heliodorus (Morgan 1982, 239), but are the characters familiar with this kind of story as well, and can this account for their lack of surprise previously observed? On closer inspection, the reactions to the revelation of Charicleia's origins that do not show surprise are all verisimilar. Sisimithres and Calasiris are philosophers, therefore allowed access to that sort of knowledge. Persinna and Charicleia do not need to be acquainted with stories of weird conceptions in order not to be surprised: Persinna's criterion is her maternal instinct, and Charicleia is the person concerned and can see the reality of the facts right there and then.

³⁰ As Charicleia both resembles and differs from her ancestors. The point is made by Whitmarsh 1998.

³¹ The Greek text here presents considerable problem which will be the object of discussion shortly.

experiment. Hence, we have a case of involuntary *phantasia* from a work of art during legitimate intercourse. Heliodorus has successfully mixed and purified all the elements in order to give Charicleia all the wondrous aspects of an unnatural conception, and none of the downsides.³²

Born from a dream

This is not all, for something else did not escape Heliodorus' attention. As a matter of fact, none of the fathers mentioned in the stories ends up making a good impression. Whether they are cheated on (actually or mentally) or not, they are at best mere perpetrators of a mechanical act. This happens to the fathers whose wives have fallen in love with statues (Empedocles), and to those whose wives think of other men during intercourse (Elias), but the same goes for those whose wives are completely faithful, as in the stories by Dionysius and Galen. For, on top of being ugly, they give up their own chance to pass their resemblance on to their children. This point is crucial. The lack of resemblance in the child will always haunt the father, and this is made clear in the novel by the fact that Hydaspes is the only character who demands an explanation for Charicleia's nature. No matter how safely one can explain it with a story of innocent *phantasia*, it is very difficult to shake the feeling that Charicleia's father has only a mechanical role in his daughter's nature, just like the fathers in the previous stories. How did Heliodorus, in developing the figure of the king, solve this problem, in order to preserve the royals (and therefore their daughter) from any possible stain?

There is a passage in Book Nine that tends to pass unnoticed, given the position in between bigger and more dramatic events, that is the war in Book Nine and the final recognition of Book Ten. Charicleia and Theagenes are brought as prisoners before Hydaspes, who intends to sacrifice them as thanksgivings for the success in war. To Theagenes' reasonable claim that it might be the right time to tell the truth and escape the sacrifice, Charicleia answers that the moment is not right, and that they will have to wait for a better conclusion of their adventures and, more importantly, for Persinra's presence, for maternal instinct is the best token of recognition:

Ἄναντίρρητον γνώρισμα, Θεάγενες, ἡ μητρῶα φύσις, ὑφ' ἧς τὸ γεννῶν περὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἐκ πρώτης ἐντεύξεως φιλόστοργον ἀναδέχεται πάθος, ἀπορρήτῳ συμπαθείᾳ κινούμενον. Τοῦτο οὖν μὴ προώμεθα δι' ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἄλλα γνωρίσματα ἂν πιστὰ φανείη.

³² Olser 2012, 310-8, contends that the triangle behind Charicleia's conception (Hydaspes, Persinna, Andromeda) disrupts the love ideology (heterosexual and chaste) of the good characters of the novel. However, she does not take into due consideration the stories that served as a model for Charicleia's conception, and therefore overlooks the fact that Heliodorus has modified them precisely in order to make them chaster. She also points out Hydaspes' minimised and mechanical role (*ibid.*, 312), but we will see now that this too is not entirely correct.

The only incontrovertible token of recognition, Theagenes, is maternal instinct, which, by the workings of an unspoken affinity, disposes the parent to feel affection for her child the instant she sets eyes on it. Let us not deprive ourselves of the one thing that would make all the other tokens convincing.
(9,24,8)

Once again the father, who cannot really be trusted when it comes to the acknowledgment of his child, is relegated to a secondary role.³³ Nonetheless, as soon as Hydaspes sees his daughter for the first time, something interesting happens:

“Τοιαύτην” ἔφη “τετέχθαι μοι θυγατέρα τήμερον καὶ εἰς ἀκμὴν τοσαύτην ἦκειν ἀθρόον ὥμην· καὶ τὸ ὄναρ ἐν οὐδεμιᾷ φροντίδι θέμενος νυνὶ πρὸς τὴν ὁμοίαν τῆς ὀρωμένης ὄψιν ἀπήνεγκα.”

“I dreamed that a daughter just like this girl had been born to me this very day,” he replied, “and had matured instantly to just such a youthful beauty. I paid no attention to the dream, but now I am reminded of it by the similar appearance of the person I see before me.”
(9,25,1)

The passage’s only purpose seems to be to create suspense while ironically making fun of the king’s lack of understanding: Charicleia, Theagenes and the reader know the truth, but he is still unaware that the girl before him is his real daughter. This passage has been connected to the dream of the queen in Book Ten.³⁴ There, Persinna remembers a dream she had the previous night, in which she got pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl, who, all of a sudden, was already an adult:

Τούτων κομισθέντων τῶν γραμμάτων, ἡ μὲν Περσίinna “Τοῦτ’ ἦν ἄρα” ἔφη “τὸ ἐνύπνιον ὃ κατὰ τὴν νύκτα ταύτην ἐθεώμην, κύειν τε οἰομένη καὶ τίκτειν ἅμα καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν εἶναι θυγατέρα γάμου παραχρῆμα ὠραίαν, διὰ μὲν τῶν ὠδίνων, ὡς ἔοικε, τὰς κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἀγωνίας διὰ δὲ τῆς θυγατρὸς τὴν νίκην αἰνιττομένου τοῦ ὀνειράτος. Ἀλλὰ τὴν πόλιν ἐπιόντες τῶν εὐαγγελίων ἐμπλήσατε.”

When these letters were delivered, Persinna exclaimed: “This explains the dream I saw in my sleep last night. I dreamed I was with child and that I gave birth at the same instant: the child was a daughter, who grew in a thrice to womanhood. The dream must have been using the pains of birth to symbolize the anguish of the war, and the daughter to represent victory. Now go to the city and make it resound with your glad tidings.”
(10,3,1)

³³ On this passage and on the central role of maternity in the *Aithiopika* see Whitmarsh 2013, 288. What follows, however, aims to show that the participation of Charicleia’s parents is less unbalanced than it seems.

³⁴ See Morgan 1978, 228, Bartsch 1989, 106, and MacAlister 1996, 81 ff.

The dreams are very similar, and they both anticipate the final recognition and the fact that the royals will soon discover their child, an adult already (though it is not specified when the king had his dream). However, the tone of the king's dream is different from that of the queen. After Hydaspes has told the dream, the men from his entourage provide him with an explanation that appears as true (to the reader) as soon as it is said:

Τῶν δὴ περὶ αὐτὸν εἰπόντων ὡς φαντασία τις εἴη ψυχῆς τὰ μέλλοντα
πολλάκις εἰς εἴδωλα προτυπουμένης, ἐν παρέργῳ τότε τὸ ὄφθεν ποιησάμενος,
τίνες καὶ ὀπόθεν εἶεν ἠρώτα.

His courtiers replied that there is an imagination (*phantasia*) of the soul, which frequently prefigures the future and gives it form in dreams. So he pushed his vision to the back of his mind for the moment and inquired who they were and where they were from.

(9,25,2)

There is an imagination of the soul, that models in images the events to come. *Phantasia* is what triggered Hydaspes' dream. The king seem not to trust this explanation, for he notices that he had not dreamt of Theagenes, who claims to be the girl's brother. Why did the son not appear in the same dream as the daughter? But Hydaspes' doubt only confirms the reliability of his *phantasia*. Charicleia, Theagenes, and the readers know the answer, that it is because the boy is not the girl's brother, and Hydaspes' intelligent question only serves to increase the irony of the unfulfilled recognition.

What is interesting is that this explanation falls very close to the passage of Charicleia's final recognition (ἐσπακέναι τινὰ εἴδωλα καὶ φαντασίας ὁμοιοτήτων, 10,14). Only in these two passages out of the whole novel are the words *phantasia* and *eidola* connected. Both situations take place close to the parents' first encounter with the adult Charicleia. Both passages come as explanation of a phenomenon that has affected the parents (the dream for Hydaspes, the painting for Persinna) in relation to the birth of Charicleia. Accordingly, some lines below the king says these words:

“Ὀνειρώττει τῷ ὄντι” φησὶν “ἢ ὄνειρογενῆς αὕτη μου θυγάτηρ, ἀπὸ τῆς
Ἑλλάδος κατὰ μέσην Μερὸν τοὺς φύντας ἀναπεμφθήσεσθαι φανταζομένη.”

“My dream child (*oneirogenês*) really is a creature of dreams,” he said, “if she imagines that her mother and father will be transported from Greece to the heart of Meroe!”

(9,25,4)

Hydaspes calls Charicleia ὄνειρογενῆς, born from a dream. He means the dream he has just mentioned, but, to the readers, this recalls also the fact that the king was told by a dream to have intercourse with his wife (4,8). This dream, however, is different from the first one. To begin with, Hydaspes, a unique case among the fathers of children dissimilar from them, obtains the same faculty that so far had only been the privilege of the mothers, *phantasia*, only applied to dreams rather than works of art.³⁵ Second, thanks to his *phantasia*, he is in a way able to give birth to his daughter (hence the ὄνειρογενῆς), so that he can show a personal connection with her and get rid of the lack of influence in conception which afflicts all his predecessors. Even in regard to this was Heliodorus able to purify the previous tradition, in his successful attempt to create the perfect heroine.

5.2. *Phantasia* in Heliodorus

Phantasia is not altogether absent in the Greek novels that preceded the *Aithiopika*. For instance, it is not unusual to see characters in the act of imagining the beloved one, and since this is an activity of seeing in the mind, it can be more or less classified as an act of *phantasia*.³⁶ Compared with the other novelists, Heliodorus makes the widest and most varied use of *phantasia*. In the majority of the cases the word indicates the appearance of something or the presentation of an image, be it real, metaphorical, or existing in the realm of dreams.³⁷ With these meanings the word had been used by Chariton as well, more than once. However, in the two cases where it is connected to the birth of Charicleia, and associated with the word *eidola*, *phantasia* ceases to be the object of vision and becomes the mental faculty in charge of processing images.

³⁵ The Greek makes no distinction between the world of dreams and the world of art, for they are both peopled by images, *eidola*.

³⁶ Plutarch distinguishes these '*phantasiai* of the lovers' from other kinds of *phantasia* (*Amatorius* = *Moralia* 759b-c). A few notable examples in the novels: Chariton 6,4,6, the king imagining Callirhoe while hunting (it is not described with the vocabulary of *phantasia*, but quite similarly with 'ἀναζωγραφῶν καὶ ἀναπλάττων'); Xenophon 1,5,1, Anthia and Habrocomes imagining one another after their first encounter (εἶχον δὲ πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν τὰς ὄψεις τὰς ἑαυτῶν, τὰς εἰκόνας τῆς ψυχῆς ἀλλήλων ἀναπλάττοντες, 'they had the appearance of each other before their eyes, as they impressed the images of each other's soul'); Achilles Tatius 2,13, Callisthenes picturing Leucippe, although he has never seen her ('ἀναπλάττων γὰρ ἑαυτῷ τῆς παιδὸς τὸ κάλλος καὶ φανταζόμενος τὰ ἀόρατα, 'picturing the girl's beauty to himself and envisaging the invisible'). Slightly different from imagining the person who is absent is the theme of the impression in the soul of the image of the beloved, exploited, with an echo of Plato's *Phaedrus*, especially by Achilles Tatius (1,9; 1,19; 5,13).

³⁷ Including the two instances related to the birth of Charicleia the word occurs nine times in total: 1,20,2 (Charicleia presenting herself); 2,16,7 (images in dreams); 3,13,1 (apparitions of gods); 3,16,3 (deceptive appearances); 7,7,5 (misleading recognition of the beloved); 7,12,3 (display of guardsmen); 9,18,5 (thick volley of arrows resembling a cloud); 9,25,2 (premonitory faculty connected to dreams); 10,14,7 (imagination at conception).

Outside the novels, *phantasia* first belonged to the technical vocabulary of philosophy. The development of its meaning started with different schools attempting to differentiate between sensation, sight in particular, and imagination, and to define the latter and how it is involved in the process of thinking. As we have seen, rhetorical theory, naturally interested in the mental processes involved in the art of speaking, used philosophical studies of *phantasia* as a background for explaining the use that the orator makes of mental images in activities such as memory and imagination, and chose *ekphrasis* as the mode of speech that most aptly presents the contents of the orator's imagination, in order for the audience to visualise them. One can easily see how, if we substitute rhetoric with art, the same procedure can be applied to the creation of a work of art, which brings into existence the contents of the artist's mind, his mental images. In fact, rhetoricians who intensively applied *ekphrasis* to paintings employed, once again, the word *phantasia* to define the starting point of the creative process of the artist.

By pioneering the application of *ekphrasis* to paintings, and by reflecting on the result, the novels played a role in this development, especially in the shift from rhetoric to art criticism. This role was mainly practical, and even if at times we can detect a growing awareness of higher themes connected to *ekphrasis* of paintings, as for example in Longus, the novels never address *phantasia* from a technical point of view. After all, their main intention was the telling of stories of love and adventure, not the theoretical discussion of philosophical issues. From this point of view, even the instances of visualisation of the object of love that we mentioned earlier are perhaps to be seen more as commonplaces that must be expected in every love story (and not just the ones in prose), than as intentional exemplifications of theories of vision.

Heliodorus deserves nonetheless special consideration, because his use of *phantasia* stands out not only quantitatively, but also, as we have seen, qualitatively. The question is whether this is just a by-product of Heliodorus' verbosity, perhaps combined with the fact that the word had by then become more popular or that he simply happened to like to use it, or that it indicates a clear intention to engage with the specialised meanings of *phantasia*. As a matter of fact, Heliodorus' use of *phantasia* appears removed from the main applications that we have outlined. For instance, it is true that there is *phantasia* in connection with a painting, but this *phantasia* by no means denotes the creative imagination of the artist. Rather, it is applied to a field that does not strictly pertain to philosophy, rhetoric, or art, but instead to one slightly detached from the mainstream, that is, conceptions, and, moreover, to one bordering more on the bizarre than on the serious, that is, freakish conceptions. As we have seen, there was a tradition of tales of unusual births behind Heliodorus' idea, and it is to this tradition that we shall again turn in order to understand which

phantasia lay behind conceptions, and how it managed to infiltrate such an apparently unrelated subject.

Aristotle

To begin with, conceptions should not be regarded as entirely removed from philosophy, and this should not come as a surprise when we think that the umbrella of 'natural philosophy' was big enough to include attempted explanations for all sorts of phenomena, from meteorological problems to questions over the nature of the soul. Life, and the origin of life, was one of these phenomena. Aristotle's *De generatione animalium* is a perfect example of this. Investigating the generation of animals, Aristotle summarises the state of the topic as it had been addressed by previous thinkers. Apparently, many big names of Greek philosophy had studied the issue of generation and conception, in a manner that comes across as much more scientific than philosophical. Attempts were made to solve all sorts of questions, such as how some children are born male and some female, or who contributes most to the generation of children, the man or the woman, or who decides the sex of the child, and so on. Of course, answers of all sorts were given. That, for example, the semen for a male child comes from the right testicle, whereas that for a female child comes from the left one. Or that it depends on the temperature of the uterus, whether hot or cold. Or that it depends on which semen is stronger, the man's or the woman's, and the like.

One of the very few pieces of evidence that could be relied on in investigating such matters was, for lack of anything more accurate, the resemblance carried by the child. A strong similarity to the father or the mother, for example, would be proof of the preponderance of their semen at conception. Also, the similarity to specific parts of the body would be proof of the provenance of the semen from those parts, and the like. It is in this kind of context that Aristotle reports the story of the white woman from Elis who has intercourse with a black man, and whose white daughter in time gives birth to a black child.³⁸ The example is meant to show how the semen does not necessarily come from the whole body of the parent, as people can resemble their ancestors from whom they clearly have received no semen. An example based on skin colour is most suited for Aristotle's point, since a distinctively different skin colour (like being black when everyone else is white, as in Aristotle's story), as well as special marks on the skin, is fairly unquestionable and immediately recognisable evidence of a derived resemblance, whereas most traits, say the shape of nose or mouth, are, for lack of real measurable parameters, subject to the observer's opinion.

³⁸ *De generatione animalium* 722a, see above.

Pliny

It is in the same spirit of scientific investigation that we find the same story, only with different characters, told by Pliny. After books dedicated to the geographical description of the world, Pliny turns his attention to mankind and everything about it, including how women and men are born. The kind of facts Pliny provides must have looked wondrous to the readers: exotic tribes with uncanny features, births of quintuplets, people changing sex. He then focuses on conception and generation, again with a taste for the unusual: exceptional durations of pregnancy, signs of the sex of the child in the womb, breech deliveries, caesareans. Cases of strange resemblances are, as can be expected, soon to make the list. Pliny reports a story very similar to the one we found in Aristotle, only with different location and characters.³⁹ The main difference, however, lies not in the events of the story, but in the explanation that is provided for them. Whereas Aristotle makes it a case of recessive genes, Pliny decidedly attributes this and similar changes to the imagination of the parents, as any external influence at the time of conception can affect the resemblance of the child (*visus, auditus, memoria haustaeque imagines sub ipso conceptu*).⁴⁰ A thought travelling through the mind of the parents can imprint the corresponding image on the embryo. Proof is the fact that, among all animals, the greatest variety in appearances is seen in men, the species with the most developed mind. However, as none of this is said to have happened in Nicaeus' conception, it would seem that Pliny's explanation does not match the case at hand. Rather, he introduces elements of sense-perception, memory, and mental images, that refer more to the philosophical treatment of *phantasia* than to the research on human reproduction as we read it, for example, in *De generatione animalium*. When did *phantasia* start to be applied to the explanation of births?

Placita philosophorum

As we have seen, Empedocles is reported to have said that an act of *phantasia* taking place in the mother's mind during conception can model the child.⁴¹ He adds the interesting detail that, in view of this, mothers often transmit to the child the resemblance to images they have fallen in love with. We cannot be sure whether this was actually part of Empedocles' doctrine, but he certainly paid some attention to the subject of procreation, as his opinions are among the most quoted in Aristotle's *De generatione animalium*. In order to understand the mechanism implied in

³⁹ *Naturalis historia* 7,20, see above.

⁴⁰ *Haustae imagines* in particular is very close to Heliodorus' 'ἑσπακέναι τινὰ εἶδωλα' (10,14).

⁴¹ It is important to point out that *phantasia* would not have been the word used by Empedocles, but is rather the result of the reception of his doctrine by the author of *Placita*.

Empedocles' words it is worth examining the context in which his opinion is reported, rather than considering it in isolation.

The Pseudo-Plutarchean *Placita philosophorum* (an abridged version of a doxographical work presumably composed by Aetius in the second century BC) is a collection of statements of philosophers on various matters of natural philosophy. It ranges from the study of earth, the skies, and the weather, to the physical and spiritual analysis of men. In Book Four the discussion turns to reason, imagination, and sensation. The treatment of the rational soul is trusted mostly to the hands of the Stoics, with reference to their theory of *phantasia*, the vision that falling upon the logical mind (therefore not the mind of animals) produces thought (900a ff.). This is followed by a paragraph entirely dedicated to the terminology of *phantasia*, which again reports solely Stoic material (900d ff.). Immediately after, the subject moves to the senses, and primarily to sight, reflecting the common view that that is the most dominant of the senses.⁴² The opinions of Epicurus are reported, according to whom vision is due to small *eidola* penetrating the eye:

Δημόκριτος Ἐπίκουρος κατ' εἰδώλων εἰσκρίσεις ᾤοντο τὸ ὀρατικὸν συμβαίνειν, καὶ κατὰ τινῶν ἀκτίνων † εἰσκρισιν † μετὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἔνστασιν πάλιν ὑποστρεφουσῶν πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν.

Democritus and Epicurus suppose that sight is caused by the insinuation of little images into the visive organ, and by the entrance of certain rays which return to the eye after striking upon the object.
(901b)

In line with atomistic theory, the Epicureans believed that imperceptible as well as irreducible *eidola* constantly move from an object to our organs and to our minds, creating the representation of it (a *phantasia*) through the constant accumulation of all the *eidola*.⁴³ Empedocles' own opinion on the topic is not too dissimilar, only with the mixture of *eidola* and rays. A quicker treatment of the other senses follows, bringing Book Four to an end.

Book Five starts with opinions on divination and dreams, but then moves abruptly to the study of human generation and conception. What seed is, whether females have it, how conceptions take place, how a male or a female is generated, and what causes monstrous births, are some of the

⁴² Different philosophical currents recognised and agreed on the link between sight and thought, due to a similarity of mechanisms. See for example Aristotle's statement that there is no thought without visualisation (*De anima* 431a); cf. also Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 4,745 ff. (especially 750-51): *Quatenus hoc simile est illi, quod mente videmus | ante oculis, simili fieri ratione necesse est.* 'So far as what we see with the mind is similar to what we see with the eyes, the two must have been created in a similar fashion.'

⁴³ On this theory cf. Epicurus, *Epistulam ad Herodotum* 49 ff.. There was a work by him entirely on *phantasia*, now lost (cf. Diogenes Laertius 10,28). More can be found in Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 4,30 ff. See Bartsch 2006, 58-67, for an overview of ancient optics.

topics addressed. When it comes to resemblances, the author reports the same theory of Empedocles as quoted in *De generatione animalium*, that they depend on the predominance of the generative seed. As in Aristotle's work, other theories are reported as well, with the addition of a Stoic opinion according to which the sperm comes from the entire body and soul, and the resemblance is modelled in a way that parallels that of a painter imitating the colours of the object of his vision.⁴⁴ Immediately after, the author addresses the question of resemblance to strangers, admitting, at the beginning, that most specialists think this happened randomly and without a particular reason. He then proceeds to report different points of view on the topic, and it is here that Empedocles' opinion on *phantasia* at conception, and on women falling in love with works of art, is reported (906e).

Having set this theory in its broader context, we can now guess how *phantasia*, usually connected with sense perception and imagination, came to be used in the field of human generation. First of all, the same philosophers were responsible for studies on both the human body and the human mind, or, to put it better, the two topics were not treated separately. Second, if one of the ways in which the phenomenon of sight was explained was with the movement of *eidola* from an object-source to a receiver, that is, a flow of imperceptible particles, each identical to the object, that lodge in the receiver's mind, thus providing the vision (*phantasia*) of the object-source, then it is clear enough how the same process can be seen as the mechanism behind conception and the transmission of resemblance, the sperm behaving like the *eidola*, carrying an image and fixing it in the uterus. Bartsch introduces her discussion on the penetration of sight by saying that 'it might seem a far stretch to move from the tactility of ancient vision, and from theories of intromission or extramission in particular, to an eroticized version of how sight works'.⁴⁵ Not only is it not a far stretch, it can be even pushed farther to say that sight, with its microscopic components, resembles the very purpose of penetration, that is, ejaculation.⁴⁶ As a result, as *phantasia* governs the first

⁴⁴ *Placita philosophorum* 906d. This opinion will be analysed further.

⁴⁵ Bartsch 2006, 67.

⁴⁶ Although this is not explicitly stated, the language used to describe the two processes brings them rather close. Thus in *Placita philosophorum* the atomistic definition of semen as a detached part of the soul and the body ('Επίκουρος ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἀπόσπασμα, 'Epicurus believes that it is a fragment torn from the body and soul' 905a; notice that the Stoic definition differs only in a technicality: Λεύκιππος καὶ Ζήνων σωμά· ψυχῆς γὰρ εἶναι ἀπόσπασμα, 'Leucippus and Zeno believe it is a body: for it is a fragment of the soul' 905b) finds its counterpart in the definition of sight as penetration of *eidola* (Δημόκριτος Ἐπίκουρος κατ' εἰδώλων εἰσκρίσεις ᾤοντο τὸ ὄρατικὸν συμβαίνειν, 'Democritus and Epicurus suppose that sight is caused by the insinuation of little images into the visive organ' 901a). Lucretius provides an even better case. In Book Four of *De rerum natura* the description of the movements of the small particles that bring about and constitute our sensations (*simulacra*, whose thinness is often defined as *tenuis*; '*tenuisque figuras*' 43, '*tenuis ... imago*' 63, '*effigias ... tenuis*' 85, etc., see especially 110-115) exploits the vocabulary of emission in a flux and of penetration to a large extent, all of which is recalled in the analysis of sex and semen. See for instance the treatment of the sense of smell (*Primum res multas esse necessesse | unde fluens volvat varius se fluctus odorum, | et fluere et mitti vulgo spargique putandumst*, 'First of all, many things necessarily exist, whence a flowing stream of varied odours rolls along' 674-6) or of the particles, similar to the *simulacra* but even thinner, that enter our minds and produce thought (*Quippe etenim multo magis haec sunt tenuia textu | quam quae percipiunt oculos visumque lacessunt, | corporis haec quoniam penetrant per rara cientque | tenvem animi naturam intus sensumque lacessunt,*

process, it is entitled to participate in the second one as well. Moreover, it enables us to extend the parallelism to other spheres of *phantasia*, and to equate the embryo to other products of *phantasia*.

Galen

A confirmation that a connection was perceived between the atomistic theory and unusual resemblances at birth comes from the passage from *De theriaca ad Pisonem* where Galen tells the story of the ugly farmer. *De theriaca* is a treatise on antidotes against poisonous bites, thus not exactly the place where we would expect to find notions on peculiar conceptions. Galen focuses on the transmission of resemblances in more suitable treatises, such as the two books of *De semine* and *De foetuum formatione libellus*. The character of his analysis in these two works is mostly anatomical, which can only take him as far as a certain point when it comes to resemblances. Thus in *De semine*, after having revised and criticised some views of his predecessors, he is able to explain the appearance of offspring who resemble their parents,⁴⁷ but seems to be at a loss when it comes to children who do not.⁴⁸ The same uncertainty is manifest in *De foetuum formatione libellus*, where he addresses the topic only at the end, and only to admit his lack of understanding of it.⁴⁹ The explanations he cannot reach with medicine, he reaches with philosophy, showing an inclination for the Stoic doctrine of a providential nature rather than the Epicurean atomistic theory.

‘Indeed these are much thinner in texture than those which occupy the eyes and stimulate vision, because they penetrate through the thin parts of the body and inside put in motion the fine nature of the mind and stimulate sensation’ 728-31), and compare it with the description of the adolescent’s wet dream (*qui ciet irritans loca turgida semine multo, | ut quasi transactis saepe omnibu’ rebu’ profundant | fluminis ingentis fluctus vestemque cruentent*, ‘which (a beautiful face seen in a dream) excites and stimulates the organs swollen with much semen, so that they pour out a great flow of liquid, as if they had fulfilled their acts, and stain their clothes’ 1034-6); moreover, the semen as well is described as *tenuis* (1242); finally, and more importantly, when Lucretius talks about resemblances (1208 ff.), and of unexpected resemblances, he says: *Fit quoque ut interdum similes existere avorum | possint et referant proavorum saepe figuras | propterea quia multa modis primordia multis | mixta suo celant in corpore saepe parentes, | quae patribus patres tradunt a stirpe profecta*, ‘Sometimes it happens that children are born that are similar to ancestors, and often reproduce even the aspect of great-grandfathers, because the parents often hide in their bodies, in many ways, many primordial particles mixed, which fathers transmit to fathers from the beginning of the lineage’ (1218-1222). Resemblances can be carried by the particles (*primordia*) of the ancestors that are still present in the parents’ bodies, and *primordia* are precisely the indistructible atoms used by nature to build everything, as they have been described since Book One (cf. 1,55-7 and especially 483-502). Notice also that *primordia* and *simulacra* work more or less in the same way (cf. 4,110 ff.). On the adolescent’s wet dream in Lucretius see Bartsch 2006, 72-6.

⁴⁷ Book One of *De semine* is devoted to the study of male semen, Book Two to the study of female semen. The discussion on resemblances occupies a good part of Book Two.

⁴⁸ Despite the statement that ‘τοῖς προγόνοις ὁμοιοῦταί τινα κατὰ τοὺς σπερματικούς λόγους, οὐ μόνον τοὺς τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς τῆς μητρὸς, εὐδηλον ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων ἐστί’ (‘the fact that some become similar to ancestors in accordance with the formula of the semen not only on the father’s side but also on the mother’s is evident from what has been said’ 4,642, trans. De Lacy), there seems to be no explanation of resemblance to ancestors in the preceding text.

⁴⁹ *De foetuum formatione libellus* is devoted mainly to the anatomy and development of the foetus. Resemblances are addressed in 4,699-700, where Galen states that there seems to be a part of the souls of the parents in the seed, but ultimately confesses his ignorance: ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν ἀπορεῖν ὁμολογῶ περὶ τοῦ διαπλάσαντος αἰτίου τὸ ἔμβρυον, ‘I confess that I do not know the cause of the construction of the foetus’ (4,700, trans. Singer).

Too many phenomena can be observed that show mechanisms so harmonious and completely perfect in themselves that they reveal the work of a wise being, be it god or nature, to think that they do not happen purposely but by accident.⁵⁰

This attitude explains our passage in *De theriaca*. At the end of chapter 10 (14,249-50) Galen is describing the nature of the antidotes, stressing the fact that when we bring all the ingredients together they are mixed in a way that the resulting compound does not preserve any of the individual qualities of each ingredient unchanged, but instead possesses a unique and altogether different nature on its own. This is the reason why in the following chapter he confutes the atomists (Democritus, Epicurus, and another physician, Asclepiades), who, by believing in the immutability of the minuscule particles constantly falling, necessarily exclude the alteration that is at the basis of the new nature of the compound. In Galen's view, if the ingredients are made of immutable particles, then their qualities, carried by each particle, would remain unaltered as well, thus preventing the blending that produces a medicine with its own qualities, otherwise unattainable by the individual ingredients. Galen says he is puzzled by those who do not recognise the power of nature and the wondrous alterations produced by it,⁵¹ such as the formation of the foetus in the uterus, how it is bound to the mother and fed until it is ready, and the 'divine art and resemblance with which nature produces impressions on the offspring',⁵² which is precisely evidence against the theory of particles, as the story of the ugly farmer shows. The case is slightly different from the other stories, as the protagonist turns something that usually happens unintentionally into a technique that can be used at will. Thus, the ugly farmer has his wife look at a picture of a pretty child during intercourse, and in time the child she gives birth to resembles the child in the picture and not the father. In Galen's explanation the miracle happens 'because sight sent off the impressions of the painted figure through nature and not through some particles'.⁵³ Again, we see the belief in the mysteries (τῶν τοιούτων τῆς φύσεως μυστηρίων, shortly after) of a nature that wisely provides for itself, chosen over the belief in invisible particles.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ It is in fact to this kind of unverifiable and vague explanation that he resorts at the end of *De foetuum formatione libellum*: ἄκραν γὰρ ὄρω ἐν τῇ διαπλάσει σοφίαν τε ἅμα καὶ δύναμιν, 'I observe in this construction the utmost intelligence and power' (4,700, trans. Singer).

⁵¹ One can already begin to see that another praise of the wisdom of nature is about to take place.

⁵² 14,253: τινι θεία τέχνη καὶ ὁμοιότητι τύπον ἐν τοῖς γεννωμένοις ἐργάζεται.

⁵³ *Ibid.*: τῆς ὄψεως, οἶμαι, διαπεμπούσης τῇ φύσει, ἀλλ' οὐκ ὄγκοις τισὶ τοῦ γεγραμμένου τοὺς τύπους. The atomistic view in matters of conceptions is criticised also in *De foetuum formatione libellus* 4,687-8. Concerning resemblances to strangers, in *Placita philosophorum* 906e we are told that the Stoics believed they come from sympathy of minds conveyed through effluvias and rays, and not through *eidola*.

⁵⁴ Galen insists on the caring aspect of nature with one last example: the she-bear gives birth to a cub without shape, and then provides it with one by the use of a natural technique (τῇ φυσικῇ τέχνῃ), that is by modelling it with the tongue (14,255).

As transpires from the few sources that we have examined, births, conceptions, and resemblances, were case studies of different philosophical currents. The subject being so open to interpretation, mostly due to the fact that it was hardly verifiable, it is difficult to define what each school identified as the rules of the game, also because these rules were subject to much overlapping. If, however, Galen chooses, out of all examples to criticise the atomists and their theory of moving particles, a story about exceptional resemblances at birth (and he does so while talking about something completely different from conceptions, that is, antidotes), that must mean that atomistic philosophy was associated with such stories to begin with. In view of what we have seen in *Placita philosophorum* and *De rerum natura*, we can say that this association was based precisely on the theory of moving particles, which explained the phenomenon of sight as well as the transmission of resemblance at conception.⁵⁵

Sisimithres

We can now return to the *Aithiopika* with a richer background to appreciate the explanation given for Charicleia's peculiar conception:

Τῆς γε μὴν κατὰ τὴν χροιάν ἀπορίας φράζει μὲν σοι καὶ ἡ ταινία τὴν λύσιν,
ὁμολογούσης ἐν αὐτῇ ταυτησί Περσίονης ἔσπακέναι τινὰ εἰδῶλα καὶ
φαντασίας ὁμοιοτήτων τὰ πὸ τῆς κατὰ τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς σε ὀμιλίας
ὀρωμένην†.

⁵⁵ Once again it is worth specifying that the atomists do not explicitly make this connection. Undoubtedly, Epicurus addressed human generation, sight, movement of *eidola*, and *phantasia*, as *Περὶ φύσεως*, *Περὶ τοῦ ὀράν*, *Περὶ εἰδῶλων*, and *Περὶ φαντασίας*, according to Diogenes Laertius (10,27-28), can be counted among his works. However, given that all of them are lost, there is no way of knowing the terms in which semen was described, and whether they were similar to those applied to *eidola*. What can be inferred on this topic from the extant works of Epicurus, however little, seems to go in the same direction seen in Lucretius. Although the *Epistula ad Herodotum*, a summary of his doctrine concerning physics, makes no mention of human generation, Diogenes Laertius, in reporting the letter (10,35-83), adds to section 66 (where Epicurus is talking about the soul) a reference to the philosopher's theory on semen explained in his other works: λέγει ἐν ἄλλοις... τό τε σπέρμα ἀφ' ὅλων τῶν σωμάτων φέρεσθαι, 'elsewhere he says that semen is carried from the entire body'. The idea of the semen 'deriving from the entire body' (ἀφ' ὅλων τῶν σωμάτων φέρεσθαι), coupled with the idea of it 'detaching itself from the body' (as we found in *Placita philosophorum* 905a: 'Ἐπίκουρος ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἀποσπάσμα'), brings it close to the description of the *eidola* given by Epicurus himself in the *Epistula*, as particles constantly streaming off from the bodies ('ῥέυσις ἀπὸ τῶν σωμάτων τοῦ ἐπι πολλῆς συνεχῆς, 'a continuous flow from the surface of the bodies' 10,48). Moreover, the only times Epicurus uses the word σπέρμα he means it as an equivalent for 'atom', when talking about the composition of any object (*Ad Herodotum* 38: πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι οὐδὲν γίνεται ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος· πᾶν γὰρ ἐκ παντὸς ἐγίενετ' ἂν σπερμάτων γε οὐθὲν προσδεόμενον, 'first of all, nothing is born from what does not exist; for anything would generate from anything, without any need of germs'), and in particular of living beings (*Ad Herodotum* 74: τὰ τοιαῦτα σπέρματα ἐξ ὧν ζῶα τε καὶ φυτὰ καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα τὰ θεωρούμενα συνίσταται, 'The seeds from which animals and plants and all the rest of the things we see come into existence'), and about the generation of worlds (*Epistula ad Pythoclem* 89: ἐπιτηδείων τινῶν σπεριότων ῥυέντων ἀφ' ἑνὸς κόσμου ἢ μετακοσμίου ἢ ἀπὸ πλειόνων, '(any world arises) when some suitable seeds flow from one world or the intermundium, or from several').

In any case, the solution to the problem about the colour of her skin is contained in the band, where Persinna here admits to having absorbed certain images and visual forms of resemblance from the picture of Andromeda that she saw while having intercourse with you.
(10,14)

After ten books of *Aithiopika*, the technical explanation of how Charicleia obtained her physical aspect is confined to six words: ἐσπακέναι τινὰ εἶδωλα καὶ φαντασίας ὁμοιοτήτων. Although the idea that the image of Andromeda somehow entered Persinna's mind comes across clearly enough, the precise dynamics of the process are hardly unambiguous. To begin with, how are we to understand 'τινὰ εἶδωλα'? One interpretation of these words could be that the *eidola* are the images in the painting. The plural could be explained by recalling that in 4,8 it had been said that the bedchamber of the king was adorned with 'the loves of Andromeda and Perseus' (τοὺς δὲ θαλάμους τοῖς Ἀνδρομέδας τε καὶ Περσέως ἔρωσιν ἐποίκιλλον), which could have been referred to a series of paintings with the couple as the subject. In the same way, during the preparations for the festival in Meroe in Book Ten, the images of the heroes are displayed (ἡρώων εἰκόνες, 10,6). However, it is made clear that Charicleia derived her looks from only one image of Andromeda, and it is only that one painting that is brought and placed next to Charicleia in the final recognition (ἐκόμιζον ἀράμενοι τὴν εἰκόνα, 10,15). Rather, the plural τινὰ εἶδωλα should point us in the direction of the Epicurean theory of sight observed above. These *eidola* are not the images that belong to the painting, but rather the tiny films that detach themselves from them (each particle carrying the image of its source) and enter the eyes so as to cause vision.⁵⁶ The source of the *eidola*, however, is imprecise, for, as has been noticed, the Greek is rather odd. The manuscripts' reading 'ἀπὸ τῆς κατὰ τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς σε ὁμιλίας ὀρωμένην' is difficult to understand, for it means that Persinna absorbed images from the act of love (ἀπὸ τῆς...ὁμιλίας), whereas it is quite clear from the context that the images derive from the picture of Andromeda. A little change in the endings from Genitive to Accusative and vice versa, as well as a change in word order, reported by a smaller number of manuscripts and adopted by some editors, gives way to a more immediately understandable explanation: 'ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀνδρομέδας κατὰ τὴν πρὸς σε ὁμιλίαν ὀρωμένης', which indicates that the *eidola* are derived from the picture (ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀνδρομέδας... ὀρωμένης), as we would expect.⁵⁷

Leaving the possible solution aside for a moment, let us use this uncertainty as an opportunity for some considerations. For although it is plain to see that only one thing, that is, the

⁵⁶ Cf. *Placita philosophorum* 901a: Δημόκριτος Ἐπίκουρος κατ' εἰδώλων εἰσκρίσεις ᾤοντο τὸ ὄρατικὸν συμβαίνειν, 'Democritus and Epicurus suppose that sight is caused by the insinuation of little images into the visive organ.' Cf. also Epicurus, *Epistula ad Herodotum* 46-49.

⁵⁷ The emendation was proposed by Toup. Discussion in Morgan 1978, 363 ff.

king's semen, could have come from the intercourse, whilst the other, that is, the *eidola*, from the picture, is it so unthinkable that the two could be confounded in explaining Charicleia's conception? First of all let us recall the fact that, from the point of view of the vocabulary, technical literature, as we have seen, offered many connections between the sphere of sight and that of conception, due to similarities between their respective natures. On closer inspection, these connections are well reflected in Heliodorus' words. The verb used for the extraction of *eidola* is σπάω (ἐσπακέναι τινὰ εἶδωλα), whose derivative ἀποσπάσμα recurs in the Epicurean definition of semen (*Placita philosophorum*, 905a: Ἐπίκουρος ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος ἀποσπάσμα). Already at the beginning of Sisimithres' explanation there might be a hint that images and semen can be subject to the same action, which is functional to what follows, since it is by understanding both sight and conception as the result of the travel of minuscule particles that we can provide the closest thing to a scientific explanation of how the former can affect the latter, the *eidola* circulating in the same body as the sperm and interfering with it. Saying that the *eidola* came from intercourse, therefore, would not be technically correct, but it would well mirror the interference of *eidola* with semen that produced Charicleia's resemblance.

How are we to understand 'φαντασίας ὁμοιοτήτων'? The meanings of the Greek φαντασία are diverse, but if we were to classify them we could divide them in two main categories: that which concerns the object of vision (be it image, appearance, apparition, or presentation) on the one hand, and the mental faculty that processes vision on the other hand.⁵⁸ It should be noticed that while both meanings have a use for the singular, only the former has one for the plural. Heliodorus' use of the word in the rest of the novel confirms this.⁵⁹ Thus 'to have absorbed images of resemblances' seems to be the meaning implied by 'ἐσπακέναι... φαντασίας ὁμοιοτήτων'. This, however, looks odd. First of all it simply repeats the idea of 'images, objects of visions' already expressed, immediately before, by εἶδωλα, making it redundant. Second, if Sisimithres is going for an Epicurean explanation, as suggested by his reference to the extraction of *eidola*, then we would expect to find *phantasia* as well in an Epicurean meaning, that is as the presentation (in the singular, one for each object of vision) formed in our minds by the re-

⁵⁸ For a diachronic analysis of the meanings of φαντασία see Manieri 1998, 17-26.

⁵⁹ Compare the use of the singular with the meaning of object of vision (1,20 πῶς οὐ τὴν βελτίονα περὶ αὐτῆς εἰκότως παρίστησι φαντασίαν;; 3,13 τῷ ὁμοίῳ πλέον ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν φαντασίαν ὑπαγόμενοι; 7,7 ἐκ νώτων τῆς ὁμοιότητος τὴν φαντασίαν παρέστησεν; 7,12 φαντασίας τε δορυφόρων καὶ κόμπου τῆς ἄλλης θεραπείας ἐμπελησμένοις; 9,18 ὥστε εἰς νέφους φαντασίαν τὴν πυκνότητα παραστήναι τοῖς Πέρσαις) but also of imagination (9,25 Τῶν δὲ περὶ αὐτὸν εἰπόντων ὡς φαντασία τις εἶη ψυχῆς τὰ μέλλοντα πολλάκις εἰς εἶδωλα προτυπομένης), with the use of the plural, always meaning objects of vision alone (2,16 ἐνύπνια μὲν καὶ φαντασίας ἐξετάζοντες'; 3,16 'φαντασίας τῶν μὴ ὄντων ὡς ὄντων καὶ ἀποτυχίας τῶν ἐλπιζομένων).

agglomeration of the detached *eidola*.⁶⁰ Finally, there seems to be little reason for a plural for ὁμοιότης.

The anomaly of ‘ἐσπακέναι... φαντασίας’ continues. The nexus σπάω with φαντασία as its direct object is not a very common one. Before Heliodorus we find it only in Sextus Empiricus, in several occurrences where the author is commenting on Epicurean theory. Again, it looks like Sisimithres’ thoughts here are running according to that specific school of philosophy. Φαντασία is used in the singular in all of these occurrences, reflecting the fact that the plurality of images was indicated by εἶδωλα, but the uniqueness of the presentation by φαντασία.⁶¹ Epicurus did not speak of φαντασίας detaching themselves and flowing towards the eyes, an action performed instead by εἶδωλα, and if Sisimithres is following his doctrine, as he seems to be doing, then he is misusing one of its important terms. The singular φαντασίαν instead of φαντασίας would bring Sisimithres’ words much closer to an actual Epicurean formula, avoiding the redundancy with εἶδωλα and restoring the distinction between the images and the presentation (thus ‘to have absorbed some images and the presentation of resemblances’). An even more linear formulation would be obtained with the omission of καὶ and the subsequent understanding of φαντασίας as a genitive singular, thus indicating the assimilation of ‘certain images of the presentation of the resemblances’, which conveys properly the relationship between *eidola* and *phantasia*. In view of this, moving up the first *crux* in order to include at least three more words and hypothesising a few minor changes would seem to be the quickest way to restore the correct formulation of the theory at which the technical vocabulary of the sentence is hinting.

Having said this, and considering the abundance of corrections (including also those needed in the section ‘τὰ πὸ... ὀρωμένην†’) that would be required in a space of little more than a dozen words, perhaps it is worth asking ourselves if it is a coincidence that the copyist’s imprecision manifested itself so consistently in this sentence. An alternative option could be that Heliodorus himself is not too prepared on the subject, that he has a neophyte’s access to technical vocabulary but not much more than that. Besides, he is writing a love novel and not a philosophical treatise, so an in-depth knowledge of that kind would be unnecessary. However, a passage in Book Seven

⁶⁰ However, given the context of transmission of strange resemblances at conception, the idea that we would expect to find here is the power of the mother’s mind (φαντασία, again singular, in Empedocles, *cogitatio* in Pliny, *νοῦς* in Galen) as the engine for the transformation, thus the second aspect of *phantasia*, imagination, rather than the first one, image.

⁶¹ Cf. *Adversus logicos* 1,254, where he uses the end of Euripides’ *Alcestis* as an example (τότε ὁ Ἄδμητος ἐσπασε μὲν καταληπτικὴν φαντασίαν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλκήστιδος, ‘then Admetus drew the apprehensive presentation from Alcestis’), and 1,180, where he does the same with Euripides’ *Helena* (ἐπιβὰς τῆς Φάρου νήσου ὄρα τὴν ἀληθῆ Ἑλένην, σπῶν τε ἀπ’ αὐτῆς ἀληθῆ φαντασίαν, ‘having set foot on the isle of Pharos he sees the true Helen, drawing the true presentation from her’). Cf. also 1,176, 1,186, 1,258. Notice how the presentation drawn from a person is formulated in the first two examples (ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλκήστιδος; ἀπ’ αὐτῆς), which would encourage the emendation ‘ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀνδρομέδας’ in our passage.

testifies against this. The scene is in Memphis, where, after a separation, Charicleia and Theagenes find each other again. Since she looks like a mendicant, her face dirty and clothes torn, he does not recognise her until she speaks and says the code word, but she, on the other hand, immediately recognises him. The eye of the lover, the narrator tells us, is very prone to recognising the object of love even from the tiniest details: κίνημα πολλάκις καὶ σχῆμα μόνον κἂν πόρρωθεν ἢ κἂν ἐκ νώτων τῆς ὁμοιότητος τὴν φαντασίαν παρέστησεν, ‘often the merest movement or gesture, even if seen from a great distance or from behind, is enough to offer a presentation’ (7,7). ‘Φαντασίαν παριστάναι’ (‘to offer a presentation’) is the opposite end of the action ‘φαντασίαν σπᾶν’ (‘to extract a presentation’). It belongs to the same technical vocabulary and, accordingly, is found in the same technical literature.⁶² Heliodorus is aware of this collocation, for he uses it on another occasion, in Book 1,20: πῶς οὐ τὴν βελτίονα περὶ αὐτῆς εἰκότως παρίστησι φαντασίαν; ‘is it not inevitable that she should offer the best presentation about herself?’.⁶³ However, it is especially the connection ‘τῆς ὁμοιότητος τὴν φαντασίαν’ that catches our attention. Not only does it employ the same words used in 10,14, but it also offers a combination that would fit Sisimithres’ sentence much better than ‘ἐσπακέναί... φαντασίας ὁμοιοτήτων’, where the use of the plural seems superfluous for both words.⁶⁴

Excluding for the sake of argument a textual corruption, and excluding by means of cross reference Heliodorus’ lack of knowledge, how do we explain these inaccuracies? The third option is to not think about emending Heliodorus with Heliodorus or with external texts, but to accept the unclear phrasing and the possible mistakes as they are and try to understand the reason why they are there. We may start by noticing, for example, that unlike the gnome in 7,7, which we receive directly from the narrator, in 10,14 we depend on the words of Sisimithres, whose phrasing might be unclear simply because, behind appearances, his knowledge is wanting. If for a moment we think of Sisimithres as someone with only an approximate understanding of the matter at stake, the mistakes of the text begin to have a coherent shape. He starts with the reference to the absorption of τινὰ εἶδωλα, where the indefinite τινὰ suggests little insight into the nature of the *eidola* (some

⁶² Cf. for example Chrysippus’ words reported by Plutarch in *De Stoicorum repugnantiis*, 1055f: πολλάκις γὰρ οἱ σοφοὶ ψεύδει χρῶνται πρὸς τοὺς φαύλους καὶ φαντασίαν παριστᾶσι πιθανήν, ‘wise men often use lies with the simple-minded and offer a plausible presentation.’

⁶³ Both cases bring into question the truthfulness of the presentation (in 1,20 Thyamis is speculating on Charicleia’s identity), which is precisely the context in which we find the same collocation in *De Stoicorum repugnantiis*, 1055f. There is a third case, *Aithiopika* 9,18, where the arrows shot at the Persians from the turrets on top of the elephants give the impression of a cloud: ὥστε εἰς νέφους φαντασίαν τὴν πυκνότητα παραστήναι τοῖς Πέρσαις, ‘so that the denseness (of the arrows) offered to the Persians the presentation of a cloud’ (here εἰς is out of place).

⁶⁴ Heliodorus uses the word ὁμοιότης only three times: here, in 10,14 (φαντασίας ὁμοιοτήτων), and a few lines below (10,15 ‘πρὸς τὸ ἀπηκριβωμένον τῆς ὁμοιότητος... ἐκπλαγέντων’). The comparison with 10,15 highlights that there is no reason for the plural ὁμοιοτήτων in 10,14, as it is one resemblance that was transmitted from Andromeda to Charicleia.

images, certain images), continues with the misuse of *phantasia* and with the use of a plural, ὁμοιοτήτων, which makes little sense and is shortly after changed into singular by the narrator, and finishes with the confusion concerning the origin of Charicleia's resemblance from intercourse rather than from the painting. Individually, each of these inconsistencies calls for emendation, together they form a sequence of mistakes consistent with the point of view of someone who has dabbled in this branch of philosophy enough to grasp its vocabulary but not enough to master it. Far from delivering a clear explanation, Sisimithres reveals some uncertainties.

This would account also for the fact that the theory that Sisimithres is employing is not coherent in following one particular philosophical current. Generally speaking, among the theories seen above, the one that best fits Charicleia's case would be Empedocles': children are shaped by the mother's *phantasia* during conception (*Placita philosophorum* 906e). The fact that Empedocles goes on to exemplify this with cases of children that resemble works of art would confirm this. The difference, small but crucial, is in the number: Empedocles' φαντασία refers to the mother's imagination, whilst Heliodorus' φαντασίας, unless corrections are made, means 'images'. Moreover, τινὰ εἶδωλα seems to derive from the atomistic theory of vision best represented by Epicurus (although Empedocles' own theory of vision was not too dissimilar, cf. *Placita philosophorum* 901b). Adopting the atomistic theory of sight on this occasion would make sense, because, as seen above, the atomists could provide a coherent explanation for the influence of vision on conceptions, and a coherent explanation is exactly what is needed during a trial such as the one taking place in Meroe. It is impossible to say which theory would more likely have convinced Hydaspes, whether that of particles or that of the wisdom of nature (as had been put by Galen). Moreover, adding to this imprecision, the Stoics as well held an opinion which seems tailored for Charicleia's case:

Οἱ Στωικοὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος ὅλου καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς φέρεσθαι τὰ σπέρματα, καὶ τῆς ὁμοιότητος ἀναπλάττεσθαι ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν γενῶν τοὺς τύπους καὶ τοὺς χαρακτῆρας, ὡς περ ἂν εἰ ζωγράφον ἀπὸ τῶν ὁμοίων χρωμάτων εἰκόνα τοῦ βλεπομένου.

The Stoics believe that the sperm derives from the whole body and soul, and that the impressions and characters of resemblance are modelled from the family, as if a painter modelled from similar colours the image of what is seen.
(*Placita philosophorum* 906d)

One thing that can be inferred from this is that different schools of philosophy were not entirely in disagreement concerning these matters, and that syncretism was therefore to be expected. Secondly, the amalgamation of fragments from different theories suggests that the knowledge of the topic at

stake was obtained perhaps not from the study of one individual doctrine as much as from a reading of all of them. With this in mind, it is tempting to consider a doxographical work like *Placita philosophorum* as Heliodorus' source of information. Doxographical works were collections of statements which constituted a *vade mecum* for those who wanted an overview of the most eminent doctrines. Accordingly, *Placita philosophorum* has provided us with many of the references so far considered. What is more, all of these statements could be found one next to the other in a relatively short space. In Book Four the reader can find the treatment of sensations, vision, and *phantasia* (899f ff.), and Book Five, which starts with the study of divination and dreams, jumps immediately from the mention of wet dreams to the study of semen and conceptions (904f-905a):⁶⁵ thus human generation was introduced by dreams, which once again befits Charicleia's case quite well. Shortly after, one can find all the theories on conceptions and resemblances in rapid succession: the Empedoclean, the Epicurean, the Stoic, and more. The concomitance in Sisimithres' explanation of ideas coming from different theories would reflect the fact that Heliodorus based himself on this kind of source in looking for the technical explanation for Charicleia's resemblance.

As Heliodorus proves, elsewhere, to be able to use the technical vocabulary of *phantasia*, the imprecision of the statement should be attributed to his characterisation of Sisimithres. There is, perhaps, rather than lack of knowledge, disbelief, on Sisimithres' side, that any of these explanations could really convince anyone for good, the father of the unressembling child least of all. The matter is of a delicate nature and could lead to unhappy consequences, were the king to doubt the queen's version of the facts. On top of that, there is Sisimithres' own involvement in the circumstances around the exposure of the baby Charicleia, which can be very easily misinterpreted, especially from the king's viewpoint. When Sisimithres' name is first mentioned at the end of 10,10, the omniscient narrator provides the readers with the information that he is the one who collected the exposed Charicleia, kept her for some time, and then handed her to Charicles (cf. 2,31). Shortly after, Sisimithres reads the contents of the band together with Hydaspes:

πολλὰ μὲν αὐτὸς θαυμάζων πολλὰ δὲ καὶ τὸν Σισιμίθρην ἐκπεπληγμένον καὶ
 μυρίας τροπὰς τῆς διανοίας ἐκ τῶν ὄψεων ἐμφαίνοντα ὁρῶν συνεχῆς τε εἰς
 τὴν ταινίαν καὶ εἰς τὴν Χαρίκλειαν ἀτενίζοντα.

As the king read, he was filled with wonderment and could see that Sisimithres was equally astounded, for his expression testified to an infinity of shifting emotions and his gaze was fixed on the band and on Charicleia.
 (10,13)

⁶⁵ Interestingly, exactly the same transition can be found in Lucretius' *De rerum natura* 4,1026 ff.

Whilst the reaction of the king, who for the first time in seventeen years has received information about his daughter, whom he thought dead, is one of wonder (θαυμάζων), Sisimithres' is one of shock (ἐκπεπληγμένον), which may well be due to the fact that he is the only one, apart from the queen, for whom the reappearance of Charicleia could mean bad news. Seventeen years before he found an abandoned baby and, reading the contents of the band, realised who she was. In spite of this, he decided not to return the baby to her family, but instead kept her hidden in a country estate for seven years. We are not given an insight into the reasons behind his choice, so all we can do is speculate. Returning the baby would have probably led to the king's twofold anger, due at that point not just to the baby's skin colour but also to her exposure at the hands of the queen. It may be that at that time Sisimithres, a philosopher still in training, could not provide any explanation for the baby's skin colour, and even the comparison with the painting of Andromeda would not have helped, for Charicleia is identical to Andromeda only when she grows up to approximately the same age. Thus, his choice of keeping Charicleia aims at protecting her and her mother, who could have been accused of both adultery and of the baby's abandonment.⁶⁶ Regardless of how well-intended Sisimithres is, this makes him an accomplice, with the consequence that at some stage he might have to protect himself as well. The problem re-surfaces seven years later, when Charicleia has grown and starts manifesting the unbelievable beauty that will always accompany her. In order to keep her away from Ethiopian eyes, Sisimithres manages to have himself sent as an ambassador to Egypt on a diplomatic mission concerning the emerald mines. The mission is a failure, for Sisimithres is expelled from the country: Ethiopia and Egypt will contest the emerald mines until Hydaspes wins the war ten years later (events of Books Eight and Nine). However, the young Gymnosophist has managed to give custody of Charicleia to a trustworthy Greek, solving for the time being, if not the country's, at least the queen's problem.

The end justifies every one of Sisimithres' means, but one can see why the philosopher is taken aback when the past re-presents itself ten years later, for some of the questions the king is likely to ask might concern him directly. The first question, to be precise:

Τίς δὲ ὁ ἀνελόμενος καὶ διασώσας καὶ θρέψας, τίς δὲ ὁ διακομίσας εἰς Αἴγυπτον οὗ καὶ αἰχμάλωτος εἴληπται;

Who was it who took her up, saved her, and fed her? Who was it who took her to Egypt where she has now become my captive?
(10,13)

⁶⁶ The ultimate reason is, of course, that the story needed Charicleia to be separated from her family. Earlier we saw how Persinna falls in a similar predicament: Charicleia's resemblance to Andromeda was a sign of belonging to the royal Ethiopian family, not of adultery.

The king's first question is not about his daughter or about the contents of the band, but about the person who took up the baby and later brought her to Egypt.⁶⁷ From now on, Sisimithres must accomplish a difficult task: see to Charicleia's indisputable recognition, while at the same time clearing the queen's name (and his own) from possible accusations. In order to do so, he starts by taking control of the flow of the conversation and directing it towards safer waters. He admits his actions (stressing the saving and feeding more than the keeping), avoids providing an explanation for them, and instead bursts into the declaration of the Gymnosophists' incorruptible honesty: ὡς οὐ θεμιτὸν ἡμῖν τὸ ψεῦδος οἶσθα, 'you know that lies are forbidden to us' (10,14). Having established this rule as well as re-established the authority that moments before he could have lost, he then directs the attention towards the tokens of recognition.

The just and imperturbable sage of the beginning of Book Ten, who until only a few lines before was philosophising on justice and on the search for truth and not appearances,⁶⁸ has turned rather quickly into a lawyer who does not disdain rhetorical tricks worthy of a sophist, little omissions, and a fair amount of misdirection. This does not pass unnoticed, as Hydaspes' remark underlines:

“Ταυτὶ μὲν ἄριστα, ὦ Σισιμίθρη» πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Ὑδάσπης «καὶ ὡς ἂν τις ἐκθυμότερα συνηγορῶν μᾶλλον ἢ δικάζων. Ἄλλ' ὄρα μὴ μέρος τι λύων ἕτερον ἀνακινεῖς ἀπόρημα δεινὸν τε καὶ οὐδαμῶς ἀπολύσασθαι τὴν ἐμοὶ συμβιοῦσαν εὖπορον· λευκὴν γὰρ πῶς ἂν Αἰθίοπες ἀμφοτέροι παρὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἐτεκνώσαμεν;” Ὑποβλέψας οὖν ὁ Σισιμίθρης καὶ τι καὶ εἰρωνικὸν ὑπομειδιάσας κτλ.

“This is all very well, Sisimithres,” retorted Hydaspes, “the kind of thing one might expect from an impassioned advocate rather than from a judge. But beware. lest, in answering one point, you raise another question, a serious one that is far from easy for my consort to answer: how could we, Ethiopians both, produce, contrary to all probability, a white daughter?” Sisimithres shot him a wry glance and said with a slightly condescending smile (...)
(10,14)

Sisimithres has obtained the effect he wanted, for the king is now caught up in the skin problem, and the Gymnosophist's mocking smile crowns the fulfillment of his strategy. His past actions are disregarded and will not be brought up again, and what is left is to clear Persinna's name and

⁶⁷ Whether his daughter died at birth or was exposed does not change the fact that, from his point of view, she is not there. As he still does not believe that Charicleia is his daughter, the new information does not make much difference in his life.

⁶⁸ Cf. the series of maxims on justice in 10,10 (e.g. τὰς ὑπεροχὰς οὐ δυσωπεῖται τὸ δίκαιον, 'justice does not stand in awe of station'; οὐ τοῖς προσώποις μόνον τὰ δίκαια γίνεται ἰσχυρὰ παρὰ τοῖς σώφροσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς τρόποις, 'for a wise man a person's character is as important as the color of his face in reaching a judgement').

guarantee the recognition of Charicleia as the daughter of the royal family. In order to do this, Sisimithres backs up the words on the band with his specialised knowledge on the topic. He must be aware that the matter is rather complicated and can easily be doubted, so he feeds Hydaspes just about the amount of technical words necessary for him to believe that there is an explanation, but does not give him enough time to realise that this explanation is obscure and not particularly exhaustive. No one, however, is able to contradict Sisimithres, the people of Meroe because he is speaking Greek, which most of them do not understand, and the king presumably for lack of knowledge but mostly because he is not given a chance to reply. As if to prevent any further questions from Hydaspes, who may well protest that this explanation has made him none the wiser, Sisimithres wisely refers to the painting, the incontrovertible evidence: Εἰ δ' οὖν καὶ ἄλλως πιστώσασθαι βούλει, πρόκειται τὸ ἀρχέτυπον, 'If you desire further confirmation, the exemplar is to hand'. The doubts running in the king's mind should indeed be many (e.g. what the *eidola* are and how they move, or what *phantasia* is), but no one can question the soundness of the theory once they have seen the truth of the practice.

Like Calasiris, the other philosopher in the novel, Sisimithres possesses a level of knowledge of the events higher than that of the people around him. Like him, the Gymnosophist clearly has Charicleia's interest in mind and the emergence of the truth as the ultimate goal, and, again like him, he does not mind controlling the learning of others in the way that is most advantageous to this goal.⁶⁹ He is also able to combine all of this with a hidden agenda of his own, that is, the abolishment of human sacrifices, which came across as his main concern in 10,9 and is finally ratified in 10,39. Sisimithres' strategies are different from Calasiris', for the Gymnosophist, who is also one of Charicleia's adoptive fathers, again like Calasiris (and Charicles, who makes an appearance, and lies, in 10,36), is less of a blatant liar. Rather than manipulating the facts (the imminent ending of the novel requires that no more lies be told), he is concerned with his audience's belief in the difficult truth, because they (the king as well as the people of Meroe) are not like the many passers-by encountered in the course of the novel, who could be fooled and left with only partial knowledge without too much remorse, but those among whom the protagonists will establish themselves for good. Obscure-talking and bilingualism are two of the means used by Sisimithres in orchestrating the solution of the story. Knowing that no theory can fully convince Hydaspes that he is the father of a white girl, he provides the opinion that is expected of him, but does so abstrusely and in a way as to puzzle rather than clarify. Moreover, he does it in Greek,

⁶⁹ See Winkler 1982 for Calasiris' at times mendacious control of the story. Calasiris and Sisimithres provide the two hyperintelligent perspectives to the novel (157). Just like Sisimithres', Calasiris' past too is not immaculate (cf. 2,25).

which greatly restricts the number of people who can understand, and consequently doubt. Finally, to prevent questions, he produces the evidence of the painting:

Ἐκόμιζον ἀράμενοι τὴν εἰκόνα προσταχθέντες οἱ ὑπηρέται καὶ πλησίον τῆς Χαρικλείας ἀντεγείραντες τοσοῦτον ἐκίνησαν παρὰ πάντων κρότον καὶ θόρυβον, ἄλλων πρὸς ἄλλους, ὅσοι καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν συνίεσαν τὰ λεγόμενα καὶ πραττόμενα, διαδηλούντων καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀπηκριβωμένον τῆς ὁμοιότητος συν περιχαρεῖα ἐκπλαγέντων, ὥστε καὶ τὸν Ὑδάσπην οὐκέτι μὲν ἀπιστεῖν ἔχειν, ἐφεστάναι δὲ πολὺν χρόνον ὑφ' ἡδονῆς ἅμα καὶ θαύματος ἐχόμενον.

At a word of command from the king, the attendants went to take down the picture, which they brought and set up next to Charicleia. This occasioned universal cheering and acclaim: those members of the crowd with the slightest understanding of what was being said and done explained it to their neighbors, and the exactitude of the likeness struck them with delighted astonishment. Even Hydaspes could hold out no longer in his disbelief but stood motionless awhile, possessed by a mixture of joy and amazement.

(10,15)

Very few have understood Sisimithres' words (their language, let alone the message), but they do not need to, since the exactness of what they see is the most convincing proof. When, however, it is in his interest that they understand his words, as when, for example, he wants to say the final word on Charicleia's case as well as to ratify his point on human sacrifices, he wisely switches from Greek to Ethiopian, in order to increase the number of his witnesses (ὁ Σισιμίθρης, οὐχ ἑλληνίζων ἀλλ' ὥστε καὶ πάντας ἐπαίειν αἰθιοπίζων, 'Sisimithres, speaking in Ethiopian and not in Greek so that everyone could understand').

Tracing back the story of Charicleia's unusual conception has shown that the reason behind Heliodorus' choice goes far beyond the telling of a curious and entertaining fact. Previous accounts of weird conceptions all belong to a consistent block of philosophical/scientific texts that, some more directly than others, pertain to the wider discourse of perception and thought, whose roots go back a long way in Greek literature. Previous novels had manifested interest in the same areas, and especially, given their focus on love, in the field of sight. The understanding of sight as a process of penetration, drawing on ancient philosophical theories, had been amply employed by Achilles Tatius in building erotic undertones.⁷⁰ Heliodorus operates in a similar field, not, however, drawing on sight as an image of sexual penetration, but, taking it one step further, as a contributor to conception. The philosophical sources for the explanation of Charicleia's skin colour are, appropriately, conveyed through a philosopher. As we have seen, Heliodorus shows ample

⁷⁰ Cf. for instance Clinia's speech in 1,9,4 or Clitophon's in 5,13. On this see Bartsch 2006, 68-9.

awareness not just of previous stories of unusual conceptions, but also of the context whence the stories came, and where they were used by way of example.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *De imitatione*

There is, however, an instance where one of these stories, that of the ugly farmer, appears in a rather different context, that of a rhetorical treatise. The author in question is Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and the work is what is left of his *De imitatione*. At the beginning of the epitome, the author wants to convey the idea that constant familiarity with good models of literature will imprint in the reader not only proper subject matter but also proper style. The story of the ugly farmer comes in handy, because the farmer's wife, by constantly looking at beautiful images, is able to transmit the resemblance of the images, overcoming the natural resemblance transmitted by the father. Dionysius' reason for telling the story is not to demonstrate one or another theory of sight against the evidence of resemblances at birth, but, from a completely different perspective, to provide an example for the practice of literary imitation:

“Ὅτι δεῖ τοῖς τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐντυγχάνειν συγγράμμασιν, ἵν' ἐντεῦθεν μὴ μόνον τῆς ὑποθέσεως τὴν ὕλην ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν τῶν ἰδιωμάτων ζῆλον χορηγηθῶμεν. ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ τοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος ὑπὸ τῆς συνεχοῦς παρατηρήσεως τὴν ὁμοιότητα τοῦ χαρακτῆρος ἐφέλκεται, ὁποῖον τι καὶ γυναῖκα ἀγροῖκου παθεῖν ὁ μῦθος λέγει· ἀνδρὶ, φασί, γεωργῶ τὴν ὄψιν αἰσχροῦ παρέστη δέος, μὴ τέκνων ὁμοίων γένηται πατήρ· ὁ φόβος δὲ αὐτὸν οὗτος εὐπαιδίας ἐδίδαξε τέχνην. καὶ εἰκόνας παραδείξας εὐπρεπεῖς εἰς αὐτὰς βλέπειν εἴθισε τὴν γυναῖκα· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα συγγενόμενος αὐτῇ τὸ κάλλος εὐτύχησε τῶν εἰκόνων. οὕτω καὶ λόγων μιμήσεσιν ὁμοιότης τίκτεται, ἐπὶ ζῆλῳσι τις τὸ παρ' ἑκάστῳ τῶν παλαιῶν βέλτιον εἶναι δοκοῦν καὶ καθάπερ ἐκ πολλῶν ναμάτων ἔν τι συγκομίσας ῥεῦμα τοῦτ' εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν μετοχετεύσει.

It is necessary to meet with the scripts of the ancients, in order to be supplied not only with the subject matter but also with emulation of expressions. For the soul of the reader absorbs the similarity of style through constant frequentation, similarly to what happened in the story of the farmer's wife. An ugly farmer was afraid of becoming father of children that resembled him; this fear taught him an eugenic technique. Having exhibited beautiful images, he got his wife used to look at them; and having afterwards slept with her, he fortunately obtained the beauty of the images. Similarly, resemblance is generated by imitation of words, when one emulates what seems to be best in each of the ancient authors and channels this flow towards the soul as if bringing many streams into one.

(*De imitatione*, epitome 1,1-3)

This is an appropriate introduction for what follows, since Dionysius will go on to list which authors should be imitated (according to genre: poetry, drama, historiography, philosophy, oratory), and which of their characteristics should be imitated. Though not enough, in itself, to define an entire era, *De imitatione* is a good touchstone for the understanding of literature of the Imperial age, as it reflects the tendency to look at the past rather than the present, under the general assumption that the best had already come and gone. Naturally, imitation was a significant topic in this sort of environment. Equally naturally, previous theories of imitation, especially the negative ones inherited from Plato, were being questioned.⁷¹ We have already observed this change when talking about the development of art criticism, underlining how around this period a purely imitative theory of art started to be felt as lacking, an issue whose complexity is well outlined in Phidias' response to the question of the origin of his statue of Zeus in Dio Chrysostom' *Twelfth Discourse*. In the sculptor's explanation the statue was not, for obvious reasons, the copy of a model, but instead the elaboration in art of what previous poets, Homer first, had said about the god. Imitation is involved in the process, but crucial to it is also the creative component, which, a century later, the Philostrati would call *phantasia*. If we place Dionysius and Dio side by side, it appears that art criticism represents only a part, and a later one, of a much greater debate over imitation that interested the early centuries of the Imperial age and overcame the boundaries of different artistic media, as the answer given by Phidias for sculpture has many points in common with the principle advocated by Dionysius for literary composition. Moreover, Dionysius' introduction implicitly suggests which kind of judgement should be bestowed upon literature in a way that anticipates the later reflections of art theory, for the allegory of the ugly farmer allows us to equate the literary product to a newborn baby, bringing about an image of life which carries a message of novelty that prevails over the imitation of external, older models.

The story of the ugly farmer, however, is not concerned with art. Though not unimportant, there is only a small artistic element in the story reported by Dionysius, the beautiful εἰκόνας displayed for the farmer's wife. However, what follows the story of the ugly farmer is another story, which not only talks solely about art, but also sketches out some ideas that will be central to the discourse on art of the early centuries of the Imperial age. Immediately after the passage that we have just seen, Dionysius reports a famous anecdote regarding the painter Zeuxis:

καί μοι παρίσταται πιστώσασθαι τὸν λόγον τοῦτον ἔργω· Ζεῦξις ἦν ζωγράφος, καὶ παρὰ Κροτωνιατῶν ἐθαυμάζετο· καὶ αὐτῷ τὴν Ἑλένην γράφοντι γυμνὴν γυμνὰς ἰδεῖν τὰς παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐπέτρεψαν παρθένους· οὐκ ἐπειδὴ περ ἦσαν ἅπασαι καλαί, ἀλλ' οὐκ εἶκος ἦν ὡς παντάπασιν ἦσαν

⁷¹ Further on these themes see Whitmarsh 2001, 26-9 and 47-57.

αἰσχροί· ὁ δ' ἦν ἄξιον παρ' ἑκάστη γραφῆς, ἐς μίαν ἠθροίσθη σώματος εἰκόνα, κάκ πολλῶν μερῶν συλλογῆς ἔν τι συνέθηκεν ἢ τέχνη τέλειον [καλόν] εἶδος.

One fact suggests to me the idea that this (i.e. his theory on imitation) is to be trusted. Zeuxis was a painter feted among the people of Croton. Now, when he was painting *Helen naked*, the people sent him the local maidens for him to scrutinise naked –not because they were all beautiful, but because it was unlikely that they were all totally ugly. The aspects that were worthy of painting in each of them united them into a single representation of a body. Out of the collage of many parts, artistry composed one complete form.

(*De imitatione*, epitome 1,4, trans. Whitmarsh 2013, 284)

The same story is reported with slight variations by other authors. Pliny (*NH* 35,29) sets the story in the temple of Juno in Agrigentum, and counts five girls used as models. Cicero (*De inventione* 2,1) complicates the plot by telling that the Crotonians first showed to Zeuxis the beautiful bodies of the boys of the city, then told him that the girls were the boys' sisters (presumably in order to let his imagination run wild in trying to visualise how beautiful the girls must be), and finally led him to the girls, among whom he selected five.⁷² Whereas Pliny inscribes this episode in the history of painting and of famous painters of antiquity, Dionysius and Cicero are making a statement on the art of eloquence: the orator should read the best examples of literature from the past, select the best parts of them, and those which are most apt for what he is writing, and combine them in his work.⁷³

In short, Dionysius introduces his treatise on literary imitation with two examples that combine themes of human generation, artistic creation, and the interaction of the two. It is interesting to observe the relationship between the 'final product' and its models. The child of the ugly farmer resembles his models, but is at the same time something entirely new. Similarly, the story of Zeuxis, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, shows that imitation alone is insufficient in defining the final product of art. In the painting of Helen single parts can be traced back to single models, but the ensemble finds no parallel, no one model that can be said to be imitated by the painting. 'Creative imitation' is what best defines Zeuxis' work, and, given the context in which we find his story in Dionysius and Cicero, we are meant to extend this principle to rhetoric, and more generally to literary productions. If anything, the stories chosen by Dionysius call into question the limits of imitation, or at least show that, by his time, the meaning of the word had extended far beyond the idea of mere reproduction.

⁷² Whitmarsh 2013, 285 ff. highlights the androcentric aspect of this story.

⁷³ Notice also Dionysius' previous use of the water metaphor for literary compositions, for which see above p. 126, n. 92: καθάπερ ἐκ πολλῶν ναμάτων ἐν τι συγκομισσας ῥεῦμα τοῦτ' εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν μετοχετεύσει, 'channels this flow towards the soul as if bringing many streams into one' (1,3). Further on the aspects of literary criticism of *De imitatione* see the illuminating analysis in Hunter 2009, 107-27.

There is one more aspect to these stories, one that neither Dionysius nor Cicero (for Zeuxis' story alone) particularly stress, and yet one that constitutes the main reason for the stories to exist in the first place, and that is the search for beauty. The farmer's stratagem originates from the fear that he might have offspring as ugly as himself (ὁ φόβος δὲ αὐτὸν οὕτως εὐπαιδίας ἐδίδαξε τέχνην), and Zeuxis' ability is triggered by the will to portray perfect beauty ('συνέθηκεν ἡ τέχνη τέλειον [καλὸν] εἶδος' in Dionysius, '*excellentem muliebris formae pulchritudinem*' in Cicero). By analogy, then, literary efforts too should ultimately aim for, and talk about, beauty.

Lucian's *Imagines*

About two centuries later, a famous work by Lucian dwells on the exact same themes. The work is the fictional dialogue *Imagines*, in which Lycinus, in the attempt to describe to his friend Polystratus a breathtakingly beautiful woman he has come across, borrows the most notable parts from the best-known works of art of antiquity and combines them into the unique portrait of the equally unique woman. For example, she has the head of the Cnidian *Aphrodite* by Praxiteles, the cheeks and face of Alcamenes' *Aphrodite of the Gardens*, the nose of Phidias' *Athena*, the neck of his *Amazon*, and so on. The colours of the most famous paintings partake as well in this spectacular collage. Polystratus recognises the person Lycinus is describing as Panthea, the mistress of the emperor Lucius Verus, and proceeds, in turn, to describe her soul and character by using Lycinus' same strategy, but drawing from works of literature rather than works of art. Unlike Zeuxis, who used living models to produce a work of art, Lycinus and Polystratus use works of art to recreate a living woman.⁷⁴ However, although Lucian reverses and complicates the terms of Zeuxis' story, his dialogue revolves around the same themes of imitation and recreation of models from the past. What Lycinus sets out to do for the unknown beauty he saw walking on the street follows precisely the idea that Dionysius conveys in the introduction of *De imitatione*. First of all, one needs knowledge and familiarity with the excellent works of the past, which emerges in paragraph four of *Imagines*, where Lycinus investigates Polystratus' knowledge of art:

Λ· Ἐπεδήμησάς ποτε, ὦ Πολύστρατε, τῇ Κνιδίῳ;
 Π· Καὶ μάλα.
 Λ· Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εἶδες πάντως αὐτῶν;
 Π· Νῆ Δία, τῶν Πραξιτέλους ποιημάτων τὸ κάλλιστον.
 Λ· (...) σὺ δὲ—ταύτην γάρ, ὡς φῆς, εἶδες—ἴθι μοὶ καὶ τόδε ἀπόκρισαι, εἰ καὶ τὴν ἐν κήποις Ἀθήνησι τὴν Ἀλκαμένους ἐώρακας.

⁷⁴ There is a continuous self-generative process operating here, as the works of art would have had living models as sources of inspiration.

Π· Ἡ πάντων γ' ἄν, ὦ Λυκίνε, ὁ ῥαθυμότητος ἦν, εἰ τὸ κάλλιστον τῶν Ἀλκαμένους πλασμάτων παρεῖδον.

Λ· Ἐκεῖνο μὲν γε, ὦ Πολύστρατε, οὐκ ἐξερήσομαί σε, εἰ πολλάκις εἰς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἀνελθὼν καὶ τὴν Καλάμιδος Σωσάνδραν τεθέασαι.

Π· Εἶδον κάκείνην πολλάκις.

Λ· Ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἰκανῶς. τῶν δὲ Φειδίου ἔργων τί μάλιστα ἐπήνεσας;

Π· Τί δ' ἄλλο ἢ τὴν Λημνίαν, ἣ καὶ ἐπιγράψαι τούνομα ὁ Φειδίας ἠξίωσε; καὶ νῆ Δία τὴν Ἀμαζόνα τὴν ἐπερειδομένην τῷ δορατίῳ.

L: Were you ever in Cnidus, Polystratus?

P: Yes indeed!

L: Then you certainly saw the Aphrodite there?

P: Yes, by Zeus! The fairiest of the creations of Praxiteles

L: (...) Since you have seen her, as you say, tell me whether you have also seen the Aphrodite in the Gardens, at Athens, by Alcamenes?

P: Surely I should be the laziest man in all the world if I had neglected the most beautiful of the sculptures of Alcamene.

L: One question, at all events, I shall not ask you, Polystratus –whether you have often gone up to the Acropolis to look at the Sosandra of Calamis?

P: I have often seen that, too.

L: So far, so good. But among the works of Phidias what did you praise most highly?

P: What could it be but the Lemnian Athena, on which Phidias deigned actually to inscribe his name? Oh, yes! and the Amazon who leans upon her spear.

(*Imagines* 4, trans. Harmon)

Lucian wants to establish the two interlocutors as two connoisseurs of art who have travelled (not unlike Lucian himself) not to miss any of the famous masterpieces (they are in Asia Minor, possibly in Antioch, as they speak, but they have been to Cnidus and Athens).⁷⁵ This slightly redundant passage does not only show them making sure they have ticked all the sightseeing off the tourist guide, but also underlines the frequent attendance one needs to have with works of art (Εἶδον κάκείνην πολλάκις, 'I have seen her often'), which resembles what Dionysius says about readers and about the wife of the ugly farmer:

ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ τοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος ὑπὸ τῆς συνεχοῦς παρατηρήσεως τὴν ὁμοιότητα τοῦ χαρακτῆρος ἐφέλκεται, ὁποῖόν τι καὶ γυναῖκα ἀγροίκου παθεῖν ὁ μῦθος λέγει.

The soul of the reader absorbs the similarity of style through constant frequentation, similarly to what happened in the story of the farmer's wife.

(*De imitatione*, epitome 1,1)

Second, reflecting the process of selection adopted by the ugly farmer (ἐπὶ ζηλώσει τις τὸ παρ' ἐκάστῳ τῶν παλαιῶν βέλτιον εἶναι δοκοῦν, 'when one emulates what seems to be best in each

⁷⁵ Cf. Hall 1981, 20, n. 31.

of the ancient authors'), comes the selection of the parts deemed the best and the most appropriate for the subject matter:

Λ· (...) φέρε δὴ, ἐξ ἀπασῶν ἤδη τούτων ὡς οἶόν τε συναρμόσας μίαν σοι εἰκόνα ἐπιδείξω, τὸ ἐξάριετον παρ' ἐκάστης ἔχουσαν.

L: Come now, out of them all I shall make a combination as best I can, and shall display to you a single portrait-statue that comprises whatever is most exquisite in each.

(*Imagines* 4, trans. Harmon)

Already the fact that Lycinus operates on works of art in the same way in which Dionysius and Cicero suggest that the orator should operate on works of literature could indicate a rhetorical background to his procedure, but when Polystratus offers to do a similar kind of composition precisely with works of literature, the rhetorical path that is being followed by Lucian becomes even clearer.⁷⁶ In order to describe a beautiful woman, Lycinus and Polystratus use the tools of imitation that rhetorical theory prescribed for literary creations. Panthea, therefore, is not the only one who is the result of composition of imitated models from the past, for so is the dialogue itself, as a literary creation.

Works of art, a beautiful woman, and the text that contains and describes them, are all equated, and talking about one of them means talking about the others as well. Consequently, parallel to every flattering praise elaborated by Lucian for Panthea is an indirect praise of his own work, as transpires everywhere in *Imagines*, and particularly in the final paragraph:

Π· Ἀληθῆ φῆς, ὦ Λυκῖνε· ὥστε εἰ δοκεῖ, ἀναμίξαντες ἤδη τὰς εἰκόνας, ἣν τε σὺ ἀνέπλασας τὴν τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἃς ἐγὼ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐγραψάμην, μίαν ἐξ ἀπασῶν συνθέντες εἰς βιβλίον καταθέμενοι παρέχωμεν ἅπασιν θαυμάζειν τοῖς τε νῦν οὔσι καὶ τοῖς ἐν ὑστέρω ἔσομένοις. μονιμωτέρα γοῦν τῶν Ἀπελλοῦ καὶ Παρρασίου καὶ Πολυγνώτου γένοιτ' ἂν, καὶ αὐτῇ ἐκείνῃ παρὰ πολὺ τῶν τοιοῦτων κεχαρισμένη, ὅσῳ μὴ ξύλου καὶ κηροῦ καὶ χρωμάτων πεποιήται, ἀλλὰ ταῖς παρὰ Μουσῶν ἐπιπνοίαις εἰκασται, ἥπερ ἀκριβεστάτη εἰκὼν γένοιτ' ἂν σώματος κάλλος καὶ ψυχῆς ἀρετὴν ἅμα ἐμφανίζουσα.

P: You are right, Lycinus. So, if you are willing, let us put our portraits together, the statue that you modelled of her body and the pictures that I painted of her soul; let us blend them all into one, put it down in a book and give it to all mankind to admire, not only to those now alive, but to those who shall live hereafter. It would at least prove more enduring than the works of Apelles and Parrhasius and Polygnotus, and far more pleasing to the lady herself than anything of that kind, inasmuch as it is not made of wood and wax and colours but portrayed with inspirations from the Muses; and this

⁷⁶ On the different approaches to portrait of Lycinus and Polystratus see Romm 1990.

will be found the most accurate kind of portrait, since it simultaneously discloses beauty of body and nobility of soul.
(*Imagines* 23, trans. Harmon)

Concerning imitation, the resulting description of Panthea leads us to the same questions addressed to Zeuxis' *Helen*: can she be said to be the product of pure imitation? Just like Helen, Panthea is the result of the combination of imitations, but Lucian seems to have exaggerated the number of models. Helen's features came from five different girls, whereas Panthea's come from a dozen works of art and no fewer works of literature. The increased number of individual imitations, however, dismisses all the more the idea that the final product as a whole is an imitation, a mere copy, for not just the quality, but also the quantity of the models only testifies to the uniqueness of the ensemble. This is exemplified by the use of one word, ἀρχέτυπον. It appears first in 3,11:

Π· Οὐκοῦν ἐπεὶ λίθου τοῦτό γε ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐποίησας οὔτε παρακολουθήσας οὔτε τὸν Σμυρναῖον ἐκείνον ἐρόμενος, ὅστις ἦν, κἂν τὸ εἶδος ὡς οἶόν τε ὑπόδειξον τῷ λόγῳ· τάχα γὰρ ἂν οὕτως γνωρίσαιμι.
Λ· Ὁρᾶς ἠλίκον τοῦτο ἤτησας; οὐ κατὰ λόγων δύναμιν, καὶ μάλιστα γὰρ τῶν ἐμῶν, ἐμφανίσει θαυμασίαν οὕτως εἰκόνα, πρὸς ἣν μόλις ἂν ἡ Ἀπελλῆς ἢ Ζεῦξις ἢ Παρράσιος ἱκανοὶ ἔδοξαν, ἢ εἴ τις Φειδίας ἢ Ἀλκαμένης· ἐγὼ δὲ λυμανοῦμαι τὸ ἀρχέτυπον ἀσθενείᾳ τῆς τέχνης.

P: Well, inasmuch as you really and truly behaved like a stone in one way, at least, since you neither followed her nor questioned that Smyrniote, whoever he was, at least sketch her appearance in words as best you can. Perhaps in that way I might recognise her.

L: Are you aware of what you have demanded? It is not in the power of words, not mine, certainly, to call into being a portrait so marvellous, to which hardly Apelles or Zeuxis or Parrhasius would have seemed equal, or even perhaps a Phidias or an Alcamenes. As for me, I shall but dim the lustre of the original (*to archetypon*) by the feebleness of my skill.

(*Imagines* 3, trans. Harmon)

Asked by Polystratus to describe the woman, Lycinus is at first worried that he might be incapable of performing a task that would have proven arduous even for the best artists, and is afraid that his lack of skill will spoil Panthea. On this occasion the original (τὸ ἀρχέτυπον) seems to be Panthea, as she is the starting point of the discussion and the marvellous image (θαυμασίαν εἰκόνα) which the interlocutors intend to reproduce. At the same time, however, the original will be each individual masterpiece by famous artists from the past which serve as a model for the description. Later, when it is his turn to describe her virtues, Polystratus proposes to paint one image for every individual virtue:

σκόπει δὲ δὴ καὶ τὰς ἄλλας [εἰκόνας]· οὐ γὰρ μίαν ὥσπερ σὺ ἐκ πολλῶν συνθεῖς ἐπιδείξει διέγνωκα—ἦττον γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ γραφικόν, συντελεσθὲν κάλλη τοσαῦτα καὶ πολυειδές τι ἐκ πολλῶν ἀποτελεῖν αὐτῶ ἀνθαμιλλώμενον— ἀλλ’ αἱ πᾶσαι τῆς ψυχῆς ἀρεταὶ καθ’ ἐκάστην εἰκὼν μία γεγράφεται πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον μεμιμημένη.

And now look at the others (pictures of Panthea’s virtues) –for I have decided not to exhibit a single picture made up, like yours, out of many. That is really less artistic, to combine beauties so numerous and create, out of many, a thing of many different aspects, completely at odds with itself. No, all the several virtues of her soul shall be portrayed each by itself in a single picture that is a true copy of the model (*to archetypon*).

(*Imagines* 15, trans. Harmon)

There is, again, ambiguity as to what *to archetypon* refers to. Each virtue will have a separate image, and the image will imitate the original, but is this original the virtue, or each example used to describe it? Imitation presupposes an original and a copy drawn from it, but when both these elements can be called *archetypon*, then model and reproduction become indistinct and rival one another (αὐτὸ αὐτῶ ἀνθαμιλλώμενον). Romm makes a point that Polystratus’ intentions differ from Lycinus’ in that the latter forms one hybrid out of different models whilst the former creates one individual copy from each model, but in the end both of them end up displaying the same short circuit of model and copy.⁷⁷ We have already observed this with reference to the relationship between painting and novel in Longus, and it is therefore not surprising to find in Lucian almost exactly the same solution, that is, that this constitutes a pleasurable conundrum that deserves being written and given to mankind in order for them to admire it forever:

εἰ δοκεῖ, ἀναμίξαντες ἤδη τὰς εἰκόνας, ἦν τε σὺ ἀνέπλασας τὴν τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἃς ἐγὼ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐγραψάμην, μίαν ἐξ ἀπασῶν συνθέντες εἰς βιβλίον καταθέμενοι παρέχωμεν ἅπασι θαυμάζειν τοῖς τε νῦν οὔσι καὶ τοῖς ἐν ὑστέρω ἐσομένοις.

If you are willing, let us put our portraits together, the statue that you modelled of her body and the pictures that I painted of her soul; let us blend them all into one, put it down in a book and give it to all mankind to admire, not only to those now alive, but to those who shall live hereafter.

(*Imagines* 23, trans. Harmon)

⁷⁷ See Romm 1990, who identifies in Polystratus the old view of art and in Lycinus the new one (87-90). *Archetypon* occurs again shortly after in *Imagines* 16, when Polystratus sets out to describe the first of Panthea’s virtues, her *paideia*, only to admit that there is no archetype for that, for no one before has ever made an image of *paideia*. Romm sees in this Polystratus’ failure to uphold what he promised, but it rather seems the conscious compliment of a *pepaideumenos* (Polystratus, Lucian) to himself.

Two more aspects ensue from this discussion. The first one is that, in Lucian, the type of speech that best problematizes these dynamics is *ekphrasis*. The aim of the entire dialogue is a description as complete as possible, and a few lines recall the technical vocabulary of *ekphrasis* (3: τὸ εἶδος ὡς οἶόν τε ὑπόδειξον τῷ λόγῳ; 12: τὰ ἀδρῆλα ἐμφανίσαι τῷ λόγῳ). Being itself about the recreation of reality, description is by nature the most entitled to talk about imitation. The second aspect is one that we have already seen in the stories of the ugly farmer and of Zeuxis, and that is beauty. The dialogue is brought about by Panthea's perfect beauty, its purpose is the description of that beauty, and as a result the text itself becomes a thing of beauty.

Final remarks

The analysis of these passages provides an additional interpretation for Heliodorus' choice of a story of unusual conception for the origin of his heroine, as the story of the girl born from a painting maintains the allegorical significance of the story of the ugly farmer. The observations made on Dionysius' use of the story, and the subsequent observations on the story of Zeuxis and on Lucian's *Imagines*, can well be extended to Charicleia's case.⁷⁸ Charicleia carries in herself a number of model-stories from the past, such as the myth of Andromeda, the first white Ethiopian, the stories of weird conceptions, but also the characteristics of the heroines of previous novels. The method used by Heliodorus to combine these models follows the principle explained by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and exemplified by Lucian, based on knowledge of, and familiarity with, past models, selection of their best and most suitable parts for the subject at stake,⁷⁹ and combination of these in an original creation. Thus, literary models from the past play an important role in Charicleia's conception, but so does art, as is the case of Lucian's Panthea. Concerning imitation, the answer is one that we have already seen. Although all of Charicleia's features can be traced back to a previous model, their combination produces something unprecedented and unparalleled. Regardless of her perfect resemblance to Andromeda, Charicleia is not a simple reproduction of the mythical heroine. The painting of Andromeda is said to be the archetype (10: εἰ δ' οὖν καὶ ἄλλως πιστώσασθαι βούλει, πρόκειται τὸ ἀρχέτυποι), but the same word is used long before for Charicleia herself (2,33: καθάπερ ἀρχέτυπον ἄγαλμα πᾶσαν ὄψιν καὶ διάνοιαν ἐφ' ἑαυτὴν ἐπιστρέφει). Charicleia is no mere copy, she is effectively a new original.

⁷⁸ A parallel between Dionysius' story of the ugly farmer and Charicleia is noticed by Whitmarsh 2013, 287-9.

⁷⁹ We have observed, for instance, how carefully Heliodorus polished the tradition of unusual conceptions, deleting every negative aspect and combining all the positive ones in order to provide his excellent heroine with a purified pedigree.

Finally, let us consider the fact that also the particular attention that Heliodorus paid to the connection between heroine and text follows in the steps outlined by previous authors. Zeuxis' *Helen* in Dionysius is an image for the literary product, and Panthea is an image for Lucian's own work. In a similar way, Charicleia speaks for the entire novel, and the two are connected even more deeply because she was wrapped in her own story immediately after birth. The equation between work of art, beautiful girl, and the text that contains and describes her, is entirely maintained.⁸⁰ We are therefore entitled to read in the nature of Charicleia a statement made by Heliodorus on the nature of the novel, a product that imitates the best elements of innumerable previous models, but that at the same time offers an innovative and unequalled result. This also came as the result of a process that started when early novelists compared their heroines to works of art and thus introduced art as an agent in the story, and continued with the deepening of the relationship of works of art with both the protagonists and the story, to the point that entire narratives were written starting from the idea that 'the girl is like a painting' or that 'the story is like a painting', which Heliodorus skilfully managed to combine. Increasingly, it became a way to define what the novels were and what the novelists were doing.

⁸⁰ This is promoted also by the unveiling of Charicleia's last token of recognition, a black birthmark on her arm, in 10,15. This is a case of intertextuality with the *Iliad*, but also a symbol of the Ethiopian presence in Charicleia, and, as Morgan suggests, an image of ink on papyrus (Morgan 2013, 231-2). See also Laplace 1992, 224-5.

CONCLUSIONS

The connection between the heroine and a work of art that resembles her characterises the first novel that survived in its entirety and constitutes the nucleus of the last one. In between stood about three centuries during which the novels evolved, as did the way in which novelists used works of art.

As we learnt in Chapter Two, already Chariton had devised an important role for works of art in his novel, to the point that tracing the presence of works of art in *Chaereas and Callirhoe* leads inevitably to the encompassment of the entire novel. The portraits of the protagonists are important for the development of the characters, but they are also strategic elements that contribute to changes in the story and thus produce plot. This is a trend that might have started as early as the Ninus romance. Xenophon of Ephesus seems to be playing with the reversal of some of the patterns set by Chariton with regard to works of art, but is particularly relevant because he introduced the description of a work of art that, unlike those seen before, carries a story and not just the likeness of a person, and this story is connected to the events of the novel. Incidentally, this work of art, the nuptial canopy, was something he borrowed from Chariton. This is the start of a coherent pattern whereby novelists picked up on the artistic aspects they found in the work of their predecessors, and elaborated on them.

Achilles Tatius built an important part of his novel on the relation between the stories narrated in the paintings and the main narrative, and, to do so, he worked extensively on the detailed descriptions of the paintings. In order to better understand his work, a look was taken into the extant rhetorical material containing theoretical discussion on *ekphrasis*, determining the rhetorical tools which were in the author's possession, as well as the fact that in his *ekphraseis* of paintings one should rather see an innovative feature than the replication of school exercises. Other than from other factors discussed in Chapter One, this seems to be confirmed by the analysis of the novelist's work. Achilles Tatius tried different combinations in the sources he used for the paintings described, which possibly included actual artworks, in the connections he established between the contents of the paintings and the contents of the story, and in the blending of description and narration. Overall, the novelists demonstrates a keen eye not only for art, but also for its making, which he uses, at least in one case, as a parallel for his own activity as a writer.

Although in a very different way, this last aspect is explored by Longus as well. Rather than practising the detailed description of a painting, Longus manifests a deeper reflection on the nature of *ekphrasis* of paintings. The fact that he transformed the *ekphrasis* of a painting into his novel shows awareness of the fact that the parallel with art could become a way to define the nature of the

novels. Moreover, the fact that he recognised *ekphrasis* of paintings as an instance of *ut pictura poesis* contributed to its development into an autonomous genre, which flourished in the third century at the hands of the Philostrati.

Heliodorus paid unequalled attention to the peculiar nature of his heroine. Moreover, the metaliterary aspect of Charicleia emerges throughout the novel, and this suggests that the circumstances of the conception of Charicleia, which could be seen as the crucial point of the whole story, should be read as hinting at the circumstances of the composition of the novel. Charicleia is born from a painting, which shows how Heliodorus resumed and amplified a pattern that had been laid down by the early novelists, that is, the connection between the heroine and a work of art. By using art as a referent, Heliodorus drew a fortunate parallel between literary and human creation.

Art in the novels is not only about descriptions of paintings or wonderful objects to admire here and there in the world travelled by the protagonists, and it does not occur in each novelist in isolation from the others. This thesis has provided close textual analysis of the relevant passages concerned with works of art in all the five extant Greek novels, and, through this, has brought to light the idea that the presence of works of art was felt by the novelists as a feature of the genre, which evolved, following the evolution of the novels. The novelists recognised the use of works of art in the predecessors and constantly innovated it. More and more, and especially after *ekphrasis* became the preferred way to display works of art, it became a metaliterary way to talk about the novels themselves.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AClass* = *Acta Classica*
AJA = *American Journal of Archaeology*
AJPh = *American Journal of Philology*
AN = *Ancient Narrative*
ANRW = *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
BAGB = *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*
CB = *Classical Bulletin*
CFC = *Cuadernos de filología clásica. Estudios griegos e indoeuropeos*
CJ = *The Classical Journal*
ClAnt = *Classical Antiquity*
CPh = *Classical Philology*
CQ = *Classical Quarterly*
CW = *The Classical World*

EAA = Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica
JHS = Journal of Hellenic Studies
JRS = Journal of Roman Studies
LIMC = Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae
MD = Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici
PAPhS = Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society
PCPhS = Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society
QUCC = Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica
REA = Revue des études anciennes
REG = Revue des études grecques
RhMus = Rheinisches Museum
TAPhA = Transactions of the American Philological Association
TPAPhA = Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association
WS = Wiener Studien
YCIS = Yale Classical Studies
ZPE = Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik