

Landmarks and Turning Points in the Study of the Ancient Novel since the Fourth International Conference on the Ancient Novel, Lisbon, 2008

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Since the first Conference held in the UK in 1976, the ICAN meetings have been important academic and cultural events for those involved not only in the study of the Ancient World but also for those interested in the history and development of the novel, which arguably represents the ultimate and major cultural and literary product of Western culture. The ICAN meetings have been decisive in advancing research on the ancient novel and have steadily attracted the growing interest of classicists. They have also greatly transformed the nature of classical scholarship because the ancient novel is nowadays one of the fastest growing fields of research and an extremely innovative area in the field of classical, comparative, and literary studies in general.

The main goal of the Fourth International Conference on the Ancient Novel (ICAN 2008), held in Lisbon, in the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, was to provide a forum for sharing the excitement of the accelerated pace of scholarly study of this late, hybrid genre. The ancient novel gives more prominence to gender and sexuality and more attention to different cultures and classes than the classical, canonic genres of the past. It is thus much more congenial to 20th and 21st century concerns than the previous forms of classical literature. The study of the ancient novel has played a vital role in classicists' ongoing effort to modernize the discipline. This shift of emphasis has been coupled with politically and intellectually progressive approaches, which replace paradigm (and discipline) based methodologies with an open re-examination of concepts that have a history of 'travelling' between disciplines, historical periods, contexts, and even cultures.

Bakhtin defined the novel as a ‘pluristylistic, plurilinguistic and plurivocal phenomenon’.¹ The main basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel lies in its dialogic nature, namely in the fact that it encompasses multiple resonances of social voices and languages, and a point of convergence of other texts, having necessarily to participate actively in social dialogue. In the ancient novel, this dialogue finds its expression in the crossing of cultures, races, languages, religions, experiences, and mentalities, in a framework of cultural syncretism, hybrid identities, and competing values and religious beliefs.

The novel is, in itself, a syncretic genre that embodies all ancient literary genres, from epic to historiography, including lyric poetry and drama. However, this unifying, centripetal quality also worked in an opposite direction, spreading to and contaminating future literatures. Over the centuries, from Antiquity to the present time, there have been many authors who drew inspiration from the Greek and Roman novels or used them as models, from Cervantes to Shakespeare, Sydney or Racine, not to mention the profound influence these texts exercised on, for instance, sixteenth-to eighteenth-century Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish literature.

Therefore, the ancient novel became, more and more, a crucial tool in the interpretation of ancient culture, ethnic identity and self-representation, reading practices, and the history of the modern novel. Focusing on the pivotal theme ‘Crossroads in the Ancient Novel: Spaces, Frontiers, Intersections’, the ICAN IV brought together scholars from thirty countries to discuss new developments in the study and interpretation of ancient narratives. The papers presented were at the forefront of scholarship in the field, reflecting a wide array of topics that are at the center of contemporary cultural debates: spaces, frontiers, and intersections, which serve as metaphors for a host of questions, concerns, and issues.

After the conclusion of the Conference, a group of scholars decided to publish a selection of the two hundred and eighty papers from the seventy regular sessions, thirteen plenary lectures, and two round-tables. Having adopted a thematic criteria for each volume, the publication of the whole series offers a conspectus of promising insight into issues such as *eros*, gender and sexuality; early Christian and Jewish narratives; myth, religion and ritual; frontiers of the genre; cultural crossroads; philosophy; literary memory and intertextuality; poetics, rhetoric and modern critical theory; along with an interest in cultural margins and literary reception.

The rhythm of the publication has been one volume per year (eight volumes are already published), and the completion of the whole series is estimated for 2019. The main goal of this challenging project is to continue to shed light on the

¹ Bakhtin 1978, 99 ff.

cultural and literary story of post-classical Hellenism from the angle of a multi-cultural, syncretic genre. Most influential on European literature, most difficult in dealing with the multiple strands of their dialogic nature, most difficult to classify and to contextualize and, finally, most challenging in what concerns their impact in the development of literary theory and criticism, these texts continue to need broad and international investigation.

ICAN IV

Reception

The study of the role of reception is of the utmost interest within the modern discipline of Classics. It is noteworthy that reception seems to have largely displaced the use and theoretical understanding of the so-called classical tradition.² Over the centuries, from Antiquity to the present time, classical literature and culture have been objects of constant appropriations, transformations, and (re)visitations because they enthused authors that drew inspiration from the classical sources or that used them as models. However, rather than establish a mere similitude between an original and its re-reading (whatever material or *medium* is employed) or consecrate past monuments as a model for any creative acts, it has been acknowledged that, according to Gadamar's concept of the 'fusion of horizons'³, underlying the appropriation and transformation of texts and themes of Antiquity is the idea that tradition and (re)invention are indissociable.⁴ This movement of fusions, hybridity, and aesthetic and cultural renegotiation has attained its highest point with the novel in particular. In the Hellenistic and Imperial periods, with the spread of the Greek language and culture to Europe and the Orient, the clashing worldviews and different ways of thinking enabled the construction of multiple identities and social models.⁵ In no other genre has literary and cultural heritage manifested itself in such a lasting and versatile manner as in the novel, the most eclectic, flexible, and lasting literary genre. Reception is, thus, one of the most appealing issues in the story of the ancient novel and its literary and cultural heritage. The two first volumes of the ICAN IV series, *Fictional Traces: Receptions*

² See Hardwick 2006, Martindale and Thomas 2006, Kallendorf 2007, Hardwick and Stray 2011, Goldwyn and Nikopoulos 2016.

³ Gadamer 1997, 302.

⁴ I thank Marcus Mota, from the University of Brasilia, for this remark on the role of reception.

⁵ See Goldhill 2002, Hall 2002, Détienne 2005, Whitmarsh 2011, Vlassopoulos 2013.

of the Ancient Novel,⁶ are an up-to-date introduction and overview of this burgeoning field and explore the impact of the ancient novel on ancient and later literature, culture, art, and thought. Contributions illustrate a range of different approaches and methodological tools, and employ material from distinct fields, from radio broadcasting to the visual arts, from politics to performance (operatic, theatrical, and ballet adaptations).

The first volume brings together fourteen essays by an international group of scholars, whose contributions cover a wide variety of viewpoints that focus on the survival of the ancient novel in the ancient world and its postclassical influence in medieval Byzantine literature and art, the Renaissance, the 17th and 18th centuries, and the novel's modern receptions. The fourteen contributors in the second volume center on the repercussions of the ancient novel in the domain of artistic representation, secular writing, popular literature, and the performative arts. Some issues related with the transmission, interpretation, and adaptation of the novelistic texts are also addressed. The papers in these two volumes on reception were at the forefront of scholarship in the field and stimulated research on the ancient novel and its influence up to modern times, thus enriching not only the discipline of Classics, but also modern languages and literatures, cultural history, literary theory, and comparative literature.

Gender and sexuality

Another booming field reflected in a significant number of the ICAN IV papers is the representation of gender and sexuality in the ancient novel. Despite the recent explosion of scholarly interest in the field of ancient sexuality,⁷ inquiry into major shifts in erotic consciousness is still in a preliminary stage. The ancient novel is privileged ground for a debate on gender in Antiquity.⁸ It is the prevalence on the 'feminine' that has decisively contributed to a renewed interest in this genre, having become a major research topic and one decisive factor in the genre's rehabilitation.

There is an ambivalence concerning the representation of the feminine in the ancient novel: apparently, female characters reveal a 'virile' appearance, but, in reality, they are subjected to a restrictive and violent education according to the social norms of the Greek city of classical times,⁹ which clearly aim to preserve a balance of the city's social body. This ambivalence raises the question of whether

⁶ See Futre Pinheiro and Harrison 2011.

⁷ See e.g., Skinner 2005.

⁸ See Finkelpearl 2014 and Lalanne 2014.

⁹ See Lalanne 2006 and 2014.

such behavior is part of an ideology grounded on traditional androcentric models or whether, on the contrary, a series of cultural and social circumstances under the Roman Empire forced the literary canon to accept women's new social role as subverting traditional gender rules and breaking away from established patterns and social conventions. This topic has been the object of important insights into generic genre patterning from a dialogic standpoint, through which it is assumed that gender, seen from a semiotic perspective, is a dynamic and inter-relational system. The *I* takes shape and defines itself through the way in which it sees the OTHER and projects itself upon it or, in other words, the awareness of the polysemous features of gender can be envisaged as a part of a process of self-definition. To unravel the dynamics of power relationships within these texts, it is necessary to examine the identifying patterns of male and female sexual identity within a framework of a dialectic game of mutual dependence and conflict, of misunderstanding and complicity.¹⁰ Areas of intense cross-cultural interaction, such as Greco-Roman Egypt and the Near East, seemed especially fertile grounds to explore the intersection between ancient conceptualizations of gender and ethnicity. But the matrix of the empire also affected the religious, social, political, and gender-oriented self-understandings of the inhabitants of the early imperial period.

The application of feminist theory and a wide range of points of view that employ a spectrum of methodological tools (from reception theory to anthropological analysis) broaden our perspectives on ancient gender ideology. Reception theory tests the possibility of female reader identification with the novelistic genre, thus contributing to a reinforcement of the thesis that there occurred a significant improvement in the social status of women and an increase in the degree of literacy.¹¹ Anthropological theory depicts women as an integral part of a cultural symbolism, assuming basically that gender is capable of functioning as a means of communication, as a kind of language, or as a basic organizing principle of culture or society.¹² 'Women may...be reduced to sign, and the closed body of the chaste women come to signify or embody the cultural integrity of a particular social group'.¹³ Nowadays, there is a trend in feminist criticism that envisages female identity within gender studies as a cultural and socially marked construction. The followers of this trend propose a new reading of social and literary history within the context of a growing awareness of the

¹⁰ See Futre Pinheiro 2013, 28–35.

¹¹ See Winkler 1990, Elsom 1992, Montague 1992 and Egger 1994.

¹² See Lévy-Strauss 1974, 61. See also Rubin 1975, Rabinowitz 1993, Zeitlin 1996, 1 and *passim*, Haynes 2003, 13–14 and *passim*.

¹³ Haynes 2002, 74.

importance of women in the civilization process, taking upon itself to identify the constraint and coercion structures that lead to feminine cultural construction.¹⁴ The fourteen essays in the third volume of the collection, *Narrating Desire. Eros, Sex, and Gender in the Ancient Novel*,¹⁵ which focus on the representation of the desiring subject in prose fiction, advance our understanding of this subject considerably as they explore the ambiguities surrounding the ostensible opposition of male and female as well as the main patterns of male and female sexual identity in these texts.

Christian fictional narratives

The early centuries of the Common Era were a period of significant social change with regard to the evolution of the Roman Empire, as well as the rise of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism. Christian literature emerges within a complex and multi-cultural world that watches the collapse of Classical values and paradigms. In this new world, built upon ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, Christian literature originates as a surrogate for those alternative values that best suit the tastes of a community committed by faith to their Christian identity and new principles and values.¹⁶ Christianity accomplished in the Greco-Roman world a 'far-reaching ideological rearrangement'¹⁷ and worked a revolutionary change in relation to the Greco-Roman secular context, which gave, for the first time in the history of mankind, a voice and sympathetic place to the sick and the poor. Since its very beginnings, Christianity established itself as a counterpower ideology, based in a new paradigm whose marks were sexual asceticism, a detachment from material goods, and a predisposition to suffering and death.¹⁸ As Perkins stresses, 'Hagiography, like the *Acts* of the Martyrs, inverted the values of its contemporary society'.¹⁹ Within this framework emerged the non-canonical religious texts (the Christian apocrypha, particularly the *Apocryphal Acts*),²⁰

¹⁴ Following in de Beauvoir's footsteps, the cultural distinguishing features of the 'gender' category determine the epistemological approach of recent analyses of the 'feminine', mainly those that represent women in the Modern Age as belonging to an inferior human category, seen as a deviation from a model of universal mankind that is based on the construction of the 'masculine' that is taken as the norm. Therefore, women are relegated to a demeaning category of mankind and thus subject to social and cultural contingencies as well as to the specificities inherent to their inferior condition.

¹⁵ See Futre Pinheiro, Skinner, Zeitlin 2012.

¹⁶ See Tertulian, *De Spect.* 29,4,5.

¹⁷ Perkins 1995, 201.

¹⁸ See Uyftangue 1993, 173–175 and Musurillo 2000, liv–lvii.

¹⁹ Perkins 1995, 209.

²⁰ See Pervo 1987.

fictional narratives that are generally similar in form to biblical genres, but ‘with long recognized similarities to, as well as major differences from, romantic and other novels’.²¹

Marginal subjects also began to occupy a literary-social space in early Christianity. Amongst all the tendencies of subversion, irreverence, and transgression as regards the Roman Empire’s *status quo*, one of the most revolutionary aspects manifests itself in the role played by women in the history of the primitive church and in its narrative representation.²² The novelistic heroines have been compared with the strong female figures of some Christian texts, namely Thecla and Perpetua, who assumed traditionally male roles, presenting themselves as exempla of a reversal of biological and traditionally accepted social norms.²³ The fourth volume, *The Ancient Novel and Early Christian and Jewish Narrative: Fictional Intersections*,²⁴ explores the vital role played by fictional narratives in Christian and Jewish self-fashioning in the early Roman imperial period. Employing a diversity of interdisciplinary approaches, including cultural studies and gender studies, the papers emphasize historical contextualization and comparative methodologies in the approach to a genre that arose in the context of an emerging Roman Empire—the novel is recognized as a privileged site where various social, political, and religious constituencies constructed and negotiated their cultural identities.

Myth, religion, and ritual

Simultaneously, myths are traditional narratives and literary fictions. As megatexts, myths are part of a cultural machine that constantly brings forward new forms by variation and combination.²⁵ Every myth contains a paradox. It is false and at the same time true. It is both real and imaginary. But its strength comes from the powerful mystery it irradiates. ‘Religion, myth and ritual are ubiquitous features of the novel’²⁶ and are indispensable ingredients that weave

²¹ Pervo 2012, xvi. For a discussion of the concept of the Christian canon, see Pervo 2012, xiii–xvii.

²² In the field of the developing area of feminist biblical scholarship, see e.g., Brooten 1985 and 1986, Kraemer 1992, Corley 1993, and MacDonald 1996. See also Fiorenza’s challenging interpretations of biblical texts (1983, 1988, and 1992), which have had quite an impact on the New Testament scholarship, and Brenner and van Dijk-Hemmes 1993. Also Haynes 2003, 30–43 contextualizes the literary representation of women within a Christian context. For a reader-oriented literary approach to the Hebrew Bible see Davies 2003.

²³ See Kraemer 1992, 153, Bremmer 1996, and Haynes 2002, 79.

²⁴ See Futre Pinheiro, Perkins, and Pervo 2012.

²⁵ Bierl 2013, 83.

²⁶ Bierl 2013, 82.

together the various threads of the narrative. Myth and ritual generate patterns of action and form the greater part of the material of the ancient novel—both the love and adventure in the idealized novel and the comical and farcical in the Latin novel. Myths can also be used as exempla to stress analogies between the mythological character and the fictional hero and/or heroine, as well as a plot-structuring device.²⁷ Myth can be employed to illustrate a moral or religious principle; it can be used selectively as analogue in narrative key-places to support, explain, or enhance meaning. Myth and ritual are forms of expression that are built according to flexible models that include performance, narrative, folktale, fantastic, and magic. The novel shares with myth and ritual the structure of the ‘rite of passage’ and is linked to puberty initiation rites and the discovery of sexuality. However, despite the recent and intensified scholarly interest in the field of myth and ritual, inquiry into major shifts in mythical and ritual poetics is still in a preliminary stage. A renewed focus on religious issues in the novel is required. Myth and ritual are no longer mere ingredients or the underlying religious basis of a secularized form of literature, but interactive components of a dialogic process, constituent of the intertextual web, linked to the basic structure of the novel.

The fourteen papers gathered in the fifth volume of the collection, *Intende, Lector-Echoes of Myth, Religion and Ritual in the Ancient Novel*,²⁸ take an interdisciplinary approach, putting together different methodological tools, highlighting the intersections of myth and ritual with the plot of the novels. Topics include issues such as poetics and intertextuality; myth, rite, and magic; rites of passage; gendered ambiguities and transgression; morality and religiosity; and narrative, folktale, and performance. Despite the variety of texts examined, one common purpose is to question the assumption that myth and ritual are a mere underlying religious basis, and to focus instead on how they influence and shape the plot of the novel, which, to some extent, is a modernized and new form of myth that focuses on the quintessential question of love.

Fringe-novels

The *uexata quaestio* of the genesis, nature, and historical development of the theory of genres and generic modes is one of the most complex issues in literary

²⁷ See Cueva 2004.

²⁸ See Futre Pinheiro, Bierl, and Beck 2013. The ‘Roundtable Myth and the Novel’, which is also included in the volume, gathers the seven presentations in a Roundtable organized by Anton Bierl and Marília P. Futre Pinheiro.

studies.²⁹ The nature of what we call genre has changed throughout the ages, depending on the aesthetic and philosophical stances of scholars. Hence, the various viewpoints adopted, from the common practice that, until recently, defined genre in stratified and hierarchical terms—simply taking it for granted that genres are definable and mutually exclusive—to that of Croce, who emphatically denies the existence or validity of genres. The modern genre theory is undoubtedly descriptive, endowing genre with a non-normative, instrumental, and operative nature. In this hermeneutic context, discussion of literary genres usually implies a compromise between the theory of absolute categories and post-modern stances that defend the abolition of genres.

All of us are aware of the oxymoronic nature³⁰ of the term ‘novel’ applied to ancient prose fiction, a late child of classical literature, as well as of the conceptual amplitude and theoretical in-definition of the term. Fictional prose had not yet come into existence in Aristotle and Plato’s time and, for that reason, it was excluded from the traditional literary canon. Nevertheless, as Frye stresses,³¹ this *outsider* status has been a constant throughout the novel’s long and controversial existence. The history of the novel is a complex one, and the form proliferates so rapidly in postmodern literature that some authors defend the suppression of modal generic boundaries. However, ‘it would be wrong to suppose that generic transformation is peculiarly modern. Or rather, that modernism itself is new. In the dialectical progressions of literary history, there have been many times when the urge to go beyond existing genres has recurred’.³²

Despite the fact that postmodern aesthetics deny the existence or validity of genres, the tendency nowadays is nonetheless to assume that there was in Antiquity a homogeneous group of works of narrative prose fiction that, despite their differences, displayed a series of recurrent, iterative, thematic, and formal characteristics, which allows us to label them as novels. However, besides the so-called eight canonical novels, five Greek and three Latin, our inventory of ancient narrative prose has considerably increased by the inclusion of fragments and epitomes, whose main features reveal similitudes to the canonical specimens. The papers assembled in the sixth volume of the collection, *The Ancient Novel and the Frontiers of Genre*,³³ include extended prose narratives of all kind and thereby

²⁹ For a discussion of the novel’s literary genre, see Futre Pinheiro 2014b.

³⁰ The expression is from Tatum 1994, 3.

³¹ Frye 1976, 23.

³² Frye 1976, 32. Genre mixture (*poikilia*) was a phenomenon widely known in Antiquity. Plato (*Republic* 397d4) defends the unmixed type of diction, ‘the unmixed imitator of the good’, and is adamant when it comes to the mixture of genres that, in his view, is highly responsible for political degeneration (*Laws* 700a–701c).

³³ See Futre Pinheiro, Schmeling, and Cueva 2014.

widen and enrich the scope of the canon. The essays explore a wide variety of texts, crossed genres, and hybrid forms, which transgress the boundaries of the so-called ancient novel, providing an excellent insight into different kinds of narrative prose in antiquity.

Philosophy and the ancient novel

The emphasis on the interdisciplinary character of ancient fiction opens up new approaches and directions for further research and debate. The papers assembled in the seventh volume of the series³⁴ explore a relatively new area in scholarship on the ancient novel: the relationship between an ostensibly non-philosophical genre and philosophy.³⁵ ‘Platonic fiction’ was popular in the Second Sophistic and the appeal to Platonic theory is expressed through a variety of forms, ranging from the intertextual to the allegorical level. ‘The presence of Plato in the ancient Greek novel reflects his renewed status among the Greek elite as an intellectual pillar central to their cultural hegemony under Roman rule’.³⁶ Moreover, ‘discussions of the origins of the novel-genre in antiquity have centred on the role of Socratic dialogue in general and Plato’s dialogues in particular as important precursors’.³⁷ Besides Plato’s philosophical presence, the effect that the doctrines and motifs of other philosophical schools of the Greek philosophical tradition (Stoic philosophy and Cynic doctrines) have on ancient fictional texts is also explored. The ten papers assembled in this collection illustrate how philosophical thought is reflected in fictional texts. Ranging from the Greek and Roman novels to utopian narratives and fictional biographies, these essays offer analytic-hermeneutic readings of the ancient fiction as philosophically oriented texts.

Cultural crossroads

Focusing on the crossing of cultures, languages, races, mentalities, spaces, and frontiers, *Cultural Crossroads in the Ancient Novel*,³⁸ the eighth volume of the collection, aims at contributing to a better understanding of the cultural and literary story of the post-classical ecumenic Hellenism and its capability to assimilate the remains of what was previously regarded as barbarian.³⁹ The new cultural needs can be accounted for in terms of the construction of a new identity, based

³⁴ Futre Pinheiro and Montiglio 2015.

³⁵ See Morgan, Jones 2007.

³⁶ Provencal 2015, 110.

³⁷ Fletcher 2015, 99.

³⁸ Futre Pinheiro, Konstan, and MacQueen 2018.

³⁹ See Bowersock 1994.

on alterity, and closely linked to the reaffirmation of cultural differences within a homogeneous and peaceful administration. The fictional narratives of this new era, marked off by new transforming forces and complex social changes, confronted issues such as the interrelation of religion and imperial politics, hybridized identities, and colonizer and colonized people. Crossroads and intersections reflect the diversified nature of the ancient novels (both Greek and Latin) that deal with both the Greek and Roman homelands and with the periphery of the ancient world: Ethiopia, Babylon, Egypt, and the Far North. The very range of intersections must therefore be understood in a wide sense, which means a variety of topics, cross-sections, and approaches.

The first section of the volume deals with the topic of ‘mapping the world’—the papers explore the topic of the geographically hybrid world of the novel and the organization of space. The second section is devoted to the Bakhtinian notion of ‘dialogic imagination’,⁴⁰—the essays bring the ancient novel into dialogue with literature and history. Under the heading ‘Turning Points in Scholarship on the Ancient Novel’, section three brings together contributions that shed a new light on issues such as the transmission, adaptation, translation, and readership of ancient fiction. Geographical and metaphorical boundaries, as *loci* of cultural interaction and exchange, are the topics of the next part. The papers in this section open up the discussion on components that mirror a heterogeneous society, in which not only geographical frontiers were broken up, but also cultural, sexual, and social barriers—probably appearing to indicate a challenge to power and imperial authority. The fifth and final section examines character and emotion and how these are portrayed in ancient fiction.

Modern critical theory—poetics and rhetoric

Modern critical terminology is full of references to ancient literary theory, whose precepts are often used as a starting point for new theories. Unfortunately, the opposite situation does not occur often. While there has been some progress in recent years in applying the methods of modern critical theory to classical literature and specifically to the area of the ancient novel,⁴¹ and despite the growing tendency to publish innovative, interdisciplinary work that brings to the study of ancient texts the insights and methods of related disciplines such as narratology,

⁴⁰ Bakhtine 1978, 87.

⁴¹ See, e.g., the pioneering monographs by Hefti 1950 on Heliodorus; Hägg 1971 on Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Longus, and Achilles Tatius; Winkler 1985 on Apuleius; Futre Pinheiro 1987 on Heliodorus; Ruiz-Montero 1988 and Fusillo 1991 on the Greek novel; Nilsson 2001 on Eumathios Makrembolites’ *Hysmine & Hysminias*, and an increasingly number of articles that have been published in the last two decades.

reader-response theory, modern and post-modern criticism,⁴² only sporadically has classical literature been studied and analyzed according to these exegetical trends. This change in perspectives is all the more urgent and necessary since, as it is acknowledged today, the biggest shortcoming of classical literary criticism involves the analysis and description of the structure of a literary work.⁴³

The course taken by research in literary studies has also demonstrated that rhetoric is a fundamental discipline for Theory of Literature and for literary praxis. It is not only a science for the future, but also a science *à la mode*, which finds its own place on the edge of structuralism, 'New Criticism', and semiology. Perelman's work⁴⁴ on the theory of argumentation has played a major role in bringing about this new status of rhetoric. In his Neo-Aristotelian approach to rhetoric, Perelman states that rhetoric should be interpreted according to a dialogic inter-relation with other disciplines associated with it, such as grammar, logic, politics, philosophy, and dialectics.

This revival of rhetoric is not an isolated phenomenon within the context of literary history. Rhetoric, which originally was understood as an art of argumentation and persuasion, an art of practical civic oratory in the law courts and political assemblies, became, with Isocrates, a much more complex cultural discipline, a *paideia*. The cultural movement, characterized by the extraordinary efflorescence of rhetorical and literary activity in the Greek world under the Roman Empire, was named as 'Second Sophistic' by Flavius Philostratus. Dominated by rhetoric, this literary 'empire' reached its heyday in the second century A.D. Rhetoric became, thus, an object of study in itself, enhancing the relevance of style and gradually swerving from its classical status as a *praxis*. The canonical literary forms authorized by the Second Sophistic are closely related to the tradition of rhetorical learning,⁴⁵ which was based on the *Progymnasmata*, treatises or handbooks of compositional exercises for students. Such school exercises, with their multitudinous rules and *clichés*, testify that rhetoric learning in the Roman Empire was based on the learning by heart of a series of *topoi* followed by its practical application.

Despite the emphasis on rhetoric, the centerpiece of the sophistic movement, literary culture *lato sensu* was also part of it, granting a special place to poetics and literary criticism. In the wake of this hermeneutical and interdisciplinary approach and trend, the papers assembled in the ninth volume of the collection⁴⁶

⁴² See Grethlein and Rengakos 2009; see also de Jong and Sullivan 1993 and de Jong, Nünlist, and Bowie 2004.

⁴³ See Kennedy 1993, xiv.

⁴⁴ Perelman 1958.

⁴⁵ See Delgado, Pordomingo, and Stramaglia 2007, and Delgado y Pordomingo 2017.

⁴⁶ Futre Pinheiro, Nimis, and Fusillo (forthcoming).

explore significant issues, which are linked to the narrative structure of the novel, envisaged as a web of well-constructed narrative devices.

Literary memory and new voices

The mechanism of the literary discourse's semantic transformation, which develops itself within a diachronic process, presupposes that every text is a crossroad of semic elements in permanent dialogue. This dialogic principle, emphasized by Bakhtin,⁴⁷ establishes that every literary text is a complex and polymorphous phenomenon, characterized by the more or less remote and sometimes almost imperceptible resonance of texts of all literary types that influenced it. Thus, the ancient novel falls into the literary tradition of the dialogue between *hypotexts* and *hypertexts*.⁴⁸ The novel orchestrates this web of allusions and intertextual references, creating a sort of inner boundaries by means of which the fictional prose texts, in the process of a verbal exchange, interact with and respond to other texts that support them and serve as their models or other rhetorical and literary genres.

However, this dialogue can also be envisaged or interpreted in a broader sense. In the last two decades of the 20th century, the relationship between literature and visual arts became an issue so widely discussed that it originated a true 'intellectual industry'. The aesthetic evolution of the 20th century and the importance accorded to the intercommunicability of different cultural voices (the dialogue inter-arts or any other form of mediated communication) can be seen as efforts to understand certain aspects of intermediated relationships in general and, in particular, of the literary response to visual art and vice-versa.

The last volume of the ICAN IV series aims to identify the marks that dialogue leaves on the narrative: on the one hand, the plurilinguistic and plurivocal intertextual dialogue that the author holds with the literary tradition; on the other hand, the dialogue between text and image, which is intimately linked with the aesthetics of intermediality and transmediality.⁴⁹ These border crossings sometimes merge in an intricate pattern of dialogic relationships, with mutual implications, which define the polysemic and complex ambiguity of the genre. The papers in this volume discuss, at different levels, the meeting of the ancient novel with the literary works of its predecessors, in light of some of their most frequently echoed antecedents (Homeric epics, traditional and nuptial poetry, the

⁴⁷ On Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, see Peradotto 2002, 63–64. On the dialogic principle, see Branham 2002, xviii–xxi.

⁴⁸ See Genette 1982.

⁴⁹ See e.g., Rippi 2015 and Bruhn 2016.

historiographical tradition, Greek theatre, Latin love elegy and pantomime) as part of an intertextual and interdiscursive play.

ICAN V

The overarching theme of the Fifth International Conference on the Ancient Novel (ICAN V) was 'From Tradition to Re-Writing the Ancient Novel', a topic that clearly indicates that scholarship on the novel is accompanying the rhythm and pace of literary studies, in general, and progressively moving towards new insights and discussion topics, breaking new ground, justifying a bold trajectory to new analytical and operational tools and new methodologies. Writing and re-writing points to the manifold relationships a text may have with its antecedents and narrative traditions, and to the multiple ways a later text aims to engage the reader in a silent, virtual conversation with an earlier one and ask him to respond to it. The umbrella heading of the Conference was broad enough to include a wide range of sessions dedicated to issues such as intertextuality and reader-response; myth and metafiction; cognition and emotion; ekphrasis; poetics and discourse analysis; fiction and imagination; magic; reception; classical Egyptian narrative; genre and cultural history; psychology and the senses in the ancient novel; empire and history; sex, desire, and jealousy; literature and intergeneric relationships; narratology; construction of characters; papyrology and the history of scholarship; philosophy; and Christian narratives. The papers included in the two ICAN V volumes fall under the following rubrics: philosophy, the reception of the ancient novel, poetics, narratology, gender and sex, magic and ritual, modern critical theory, poetics and rhetoric, intertextuality, crossroads, and Christian narrative.

Philosophy

Using a philosophical approach, GEOFFREY C. BENSON draws attention to subtle but significant gaps between *Cupid and Psyche*, the longest inserted story in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, and Apuleius' Platonic texts and argues that the problem of envisaging and representing the unseen and invisible is one of the central themes in the story. MELISSA BARDEN DOWLING shows how Heliodorus is indebted to Pythagorean philosophy by analyzing the use he makes of Pythagorean pedagogical techniques, allegory, cosmology, and the theory of the transmigration of souls to model his protagonists' characters and journeys.

Reception

ANDREA CAPRA explores *I neoplatonici*, a 19th-Century 'Milesian tale' by Risorgimento hero Luigi Settembrini (1813–1877) and argues that the Greek novel proves a major source of inspiration. ROBERT H. F. CARVER examines the reception of the *Aethiopica* in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. CORRADO CONFALONIERI claims that Tasso's inclusion of the *Aethiopica* in his theory of poetry aims at legitimizing both Heliodorus' novel and the *romanzo* in general in the light of the aesthetic patterns of his time as well as bridging the gap between epic and romance. MARY COZAD centers on four sixteenth-century continental European translations/adaptations of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* and highlights the aspects that differentiate Caro's adaptation from the other three. MASSIMO FUSILLO examines Alexander Hardy's tragicomedy *Les Chastes et loyales amours de Théagènes et Cariclée, réduites du Grec de l'histoire d'Héliodore* and finds a strong consonance between the Greek novel, tragicomedy, and baroque poetics. HEINZ HOFMANN deals with the reception of the *Aethiopica* in the West from the fifteenth century onwards, from the time when the first manuscripts of the Greek text became known in Europe to the first printed editions in the sixteenth century and the first translations into Latin and the vernacular between the middle of the sixteenth and the middle of the eighteenth centuries. LAURENCE PLAZENET interprets the process of Heliodorus' reception and imitation in the works of Mlle de Scudéry. STEFAN SEEGER looks at Johannes Zschorn's translation of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika* into German and argues that Zschorn creates a simplified translation contained by paratexts that guide the reader.

Gender and sex

MICHEL BRIAND examines Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*'s metafictional functioning, focusing on *ekphraseis* of abused female bodies and gendered violence. EMILIO CAPETTINI emphasizes the erotic ambivalence of Charicleia's character, suggesting that such a trait mirrors the ambivalence of the genealogy that Heliodorus has crafted for her. GIULIA SARA CORSINO notes that the dichotomy between *mythos* and *logos* in Longus' novel represents a move away from traditional erotic customs toward a more egalitarian conception of the relationship between the sexes. ERIK FREDERICKSEN focuses on a single scene: the description of the crocodile at 4,19, to discuss penetration and permeability between interior and exterior spaces in order to bring together Achilles Tatius' disparate interests in sex, violence, vision, and bodily integrity. FROMA I.

ZEITLIN analyzes oral obsessions in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*, underlining the erotic power of the kiss and the seductive properties of the mouth.

Magic and ritual

LEONARDO COSTANTINI reconstructs the presence of literary magic and mystical silence in ancient sources and novels, concluding that these two *topoi* enhance the ludic component of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. REGINE MAY argues that there is no contradiction in Lucius' devotion to Isis and his previous interest in magic, once there is a crucial link between low magic and high Isiac mystery in other novelistic Isiac priests, such as Apuleius' Zatchlas and Heliodorus' Calasiris.

Modern critical theory, poetics, and rhetoric

Based on the premise that Longus' pastoral novel is a highly sophisticated and auto-referential text, grounded on the aesthetic ideas of the Second Sophistic, ANTON BIERL offers us a new reading and a reappraisal of Longus' pastoral novel's ideology, aesthetics, and poetics according to ancient and (post)modern terms. SUSAN TOWER HOLLIS uses concepts from modern literary scholarship, cultural anthropology, and folkloristics to examine three late New Kingdom Egyptian tales, concluding that only the combination of different analytical approaches results in a clearer understanding, still not definitive, of the meaning and purpose of each narrative. BENEDEK KRUCHIÓ presents a new reading of Charicles' and Sisimithres' recapitulatory accounts that are delivered in the last chapters of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, and maintains that each of them alerts the reader to the heterogeneity of Heliodorus' narrative technique, while both speakers provide biased interpretations of the story of the *Aethiopica*, thus subverting the ostensibly unambiguous ending of Heliodorus' work. PAULINE A. LEVEN proposes three connected readings of the paradoxographical description of the hippopotamus and the elephant in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* (an intratextual reading, a narratological one, and an intertextual one) with the aim of enhancing the layered nature of Tatius' text. According to VALENTINA POPESCU, Phlegon's collection of marvels displays characteristics and generic features typical of the early Greek novel, which reflect the contemporary aesthetics in which the ancient novel flourishes. HELENA SCHMEDT's analysis of Antonius Diogenes' style and language clarifies Antonius Diogenes' position regarding the two major stylistic and intellectual

trends of his time: Atticism and Second Sophistic, and points out his independence with regard to both movements.

Intertextuality

TIZIANA RAGNO traces back the literary sources of Petronius' *Troiae Halosis* and speculates that the combination of the tragic and epic genres uncovers Petronius' intention to meditate—in meta-literary terms—on the *Aeneid*, which is the main model of his poem. NIALL W. SLATER undertakes a close analysis of the fragments of the *Protagoras Romance*, concluding that the blending of elements known from the standard Greek novels with others that show affinities with comedy, and with specific features that are closer to the world of Petronius, yield a rich generic mixture. Taking as starting point the inset stories of the *Metamorphoses* as well as the comparison with the Λούκιος ἡ ὄνομα and Apuleius' *De magia*, NADIA SCIPPACERCOLA scrolls through the text of the novel, which she interprets as containing a spiritual message: once the mankind is dominated by evil, the only way out is to live a life devoted to the highest deities.

Crossroads

DONALD LATEINER questions the social effect of smell, which he considers a relatively and unduly neglected sense and its intimate connection to gender, age, slave/free, and rural/urban hierarchical distinctions. Although extant Latin fictions refer to odors more than their Greek counterparts, in both, nevertheless, the olfactory sense plays a more or less privileged role in the structure and economy of the plot. SILVIA MATTIACI sees in the opposition between the periphery and the center of the Empire, which is mirrored in the intersection of ethnic and geographical identities in the tale invented by the false robber Haemus in Apul. *Met.* 7,5–8, an example of Roman and imperial perspective and policy inside Apuleius' novel. PAOLA FRANCESCA MORETTI interprets the symbolic meaning of color in Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, explaining that color terms invite the *scrupolous reader* to uncover and interpret paradoxical aspects of reality, which are beyond the surface of things and words. TIMOTHY M. O'SULLIVAN examines the role that the sense of touch plays in Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, and considers that the immaterial contact encouraged by literary activity is more akin to the novel's spirit than any specifically religious or philosophical salvation, as is the case of Lucius' rescue by Isis from the world of violent touch at the end of the novel. MARILYN B. SKINNER examines the strategies of social reproduction employed by Petronius' freedmen to give their communal network of relations

continuity and assigns education a primary role in replicating power structures across generations. BENJAMIN WHEATON shows how the *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri* reflects the political conditions and the transformation of civic power in the Late Empire, thus revealing a pro-centralizing message that celebrates the emperor's absolute authority at the expense of local aristocracy.

Christian narrative

JUDITH PERKINS' unique offering in Christian narrative places the theme of non-retaliation and valorization of martyrdom contained in the Apocryphal *Acts* of the Apostles as well as in the saints' *Lives*. However, the long record of interreligious violence raises questions about this model. Taking up sections of the fourth-century apocryphal *Acts of Philip*, she argues that the message of non-retaliation for inflicted injuries contained herein points to a fourth-century ecclesiastical conflict.

ICAN V confirmed that the scholarly study of the ancient novel is moving in the right direction, and the papers included in these two volumes are the result of a valuable and effective exchange of knowledge and experience among researchers active in this area. In this respect, it became undeniable and widely accepted that the ancient novels are not the dull narratives Classical Philology used to consider them, but highly artificial and intellectual products referring to archaic and classical canons in the vein of the Second Sophistic.

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