

# Introduction

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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 and the insights of related disciplines such as narratology, reader-response theory and modern and post-modern criticism to classical literature and specifically to the area of the ancient novel,<sup>1</sup> only sporadically has classical literature been studied and analyzed according to these exegetical trends.

The course taken by research in literary studies has also demonstrated that rhetoric is a fundamental discipline for the 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.<sup>2</sup> In the Greek world under the Roman Empire, the tradition of rhetorical learning reached its heyday in the second century A.D., with the cultural movement named the “Second Sophistic”. Despite the emphasis on rhetoric, literary culture *lato senso* was also part of it, granting a special place to poetics and literary

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958 on the theory of argumentation has played a major role in bringing about this new status of rhetoric.

criticism. In the wake of this hermeneutical and interdisciplinary approach, the papers assembled in this volume explore significant issues, which are linked to the narrative structure of the ancient novel and to the tradition of rhetorical training,<sup>3</sup> both envisaged as a web of well-constructed narrative devices.

The volume's papers fall into three related categories: literary theory, poetics and rhetoric.

Narratology is the focus of Fucecchi's paper, which he deploys to consider the functions of trial scenes in the Greek novels and in Apuleius. In the former they play various structural functions, especially for closure, but also serve to foreground issues of narrative in the novel tradition itself. Indeed, trials are basically competing narratives of the same events from different perspectives, something that the ancient novels themselves thematize and which is the particular object of narratology. Fucecchi goes on to distinguish Apuleius from the Greek novels in his use of trial scenes, noting the same preoccupation with perspective, but deployed for quite different purposes that seem to be ironizing the Greek tradition.

A very different theoretical impulse animates MacQueen's discussion of *Daphnis and Chloe*. The cultural and biological theory of neoteny – that lengthy periods of dependence and ignorance produce a more complex development – allows MacQueen to take a fresh look at the nature/nurture opposition in this novel. A lengthy process of erotic *paideia* that is not “natural” (or at least not wholly natural) is articulated in the novel that resonates with other theories of the construction of the soul, from Plato to Freud. Here fiction travels a path parallel to neuroscience and philosophy. Although the adventures of separated lovers and love at first sight will become a trope with a long tradition, the model of Longus, deliciously extending the smouldering love of protagonists is the one that will dominate the thematics of love in the modern novel.

Guez discusses the relationship of speech and magic in Philostratus' *Apollonius of Tyana* in a way that recalls Derrida's famous essay, “Plato's Pharmacy.” Despite the generally negative connotation of a charge of being a magician in this period, Guez shows that a network of tropes from medicine, rhetoric and theater serves to redeem magic as an aesthetic category. Philostratus chooses Apollonius of Tyana to be the living embodiment of second sophistic aesthetics, the heir of Gorgias, an aesthetics that is poetic, healing, enigmatic and a source of pleasure.

Leading off the section on poetics, Reig Calpe analyzes the concept of *homoiotes* in Heliodorus as a response to the Platonic and Aristotelian ideas of *mimesis*. This response reflects Heliodorus' own agonistic conception of the novel genre,

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<sup>3</sup> On rhetorical training in Greek scholar practice and its literary influence, see Delgado, Pordomingo Pardo, Stramaglia (eds.) 2007, and Ureña y Miguélez-Cavero (eds.) 2017.

which is evidenced in his highly mannered narrative. Whereas Plato and Aristotle conceive of *mimesis* as a creative transformation (to be rejected as producing chaos or embraced for its didactic capacity), *homoiotēs* (“resemblance”) is put forward as an alternative notion of narrative and creativity. Key passages that display a preoccupation with images (the ring of Calisiris and the image of Andromeda) are read as engagements with Plato’s *Republic*. Reig Calpe makes a compelling case for an intimate connection between the thematics of the ancient novel and its narrative poetics.

Tilg’s contribution considers the poetics of the ancient novels by way of their engagement with Homer. Chariton is most important for Tilg, whom he considers to be the inventor of the genre and the one who deploys Homer most systematically, and the only one who quotes him in his own voice rather than that of a character. Other texts in both Latin and Greek deploy Homer in different ways and with different effects, but those various purposes and effects are also responses to the way Chariton and his own imitators evoked the figure and the words of Homer.

Protopopova focuses on the use of color and other themes in the many types of description that are found in Achilles Tatius. She notes a cumulative use of language with erotic associations in the characterizations of heroes and actions, particularly the opposition and union of male and female, most dramatically represented in the figure of the phoenix.

The final section is on the impact and deployment of rhetoric in the ancient novels. José-Antonio Fernández Delgado organized a series of research projects specifically on the topic of the impact of rhetorical education on the novels, and his contribution was produced under these auspices, as well as those of Cavero, Equihua and Bracero. Delgado’s analysis of *Daphnis and Chloe* begins with the observation that one of the standard rhetorical exercises (*progymnasmata*) is a “seasonal ephrasis” that combines description of various natural phenomena with its effects on humans. Delgado argues not only that the author’s rhetorical education guided his organization and elaboration of the narrative, but that the rhetorical education of his audience would have guided their response to its effects.

Miguelz Cavero notes how traditional rhetorical tropes guide the deployment of animal imagery in Heliodorus for the purpose of characterization. Heliodorus’ audience would immediately recognize how various characters’ behavior towards animals reveal their personal potential, their narrative evolution and their differences with each other. Once again rhetorical training is a component of both authorial production and audience reception.

Pavlovskis-Petit's paper on the riddles in *Apollonius of Tyre* uses folklore theory – especially that of V. Propp – to elucidate the web of relationships between the incest theme and the use of riddles to establish identity. The riddles the daughter uses to distract her father from his grief become the basis for a classic *anagnorisis*. In this way traditional motifs are manipulated for a novel structural outcome.

Gonzalez Equihua gives an account of the kind of rhetorical exercises—*ecphrasis*, the paraphrase and the *ethopoeia*—that mediated between the traditional genres, especially the epic, and the novel genre that appropriated them. These rhetorical exercises, he argues, paved the way for the novel both from the standpoint of composition and reception. He gives a number of specific examples of the way these exercises are legible in the *Aithiopica*, particularly the transmutation of narrative elements and themes from the *Odyssey*, a text as important to the rhetorical tradition as it is to the novel.

Jensson begins his discussion of narrative voice in the *Satyrica* by citing ancient rhetorical theory on delivery, specifically on the use of the gesture and vocal features when imitating the speech of others. He surveys many instances of “directions” embedded in the *Satyrica* that indicate how the narrative was to be delivered when read aloud. At the same time, the frequent statements made about the manner of speaking of various characters also indicate Encolpius' own mode of recollection of these past speech acts, an important difference between a first-person novel and drama. Once again rhetoric, both theory and practice, mediates between the poetic genres and the emergence of the novel.

Marinčič's contribution on *ecphrasis* in *Leucippe and Clitophon* combines rhetorical analysis and narrative theory. He argues that Achilles Tatius not only deploys the “proleptic” *ecphrasis* in his novel, but that he uniquely theorizes that phenomenon and creates a character, Clitophon, who is himself a “sophistic *ecphrast*,” an orator who is fashioning his own story in retrospect using all the resources of rhetoric. By using Moschus' *Europa* as an intertext, Marinčič lays out a complex view of the novel as a set of variations and elaborations of that scenario prompted by the picture of Europa/Astarte/Selene viewed by the author and Clitophon at the beginning. Marinčič's attention to narrative voice allows him to make a number of interesting observations about this exceptionally complex text.

Ureña Bracero extends the study of the literary impact of ancient rhetorical training to the Byzantine novel, specifically to the 12th century *Hysmine and Hysmenias*. Here the influence of various types of *progymnasmata* is clear and in several instances attested in marginal comments in manuscripts. These include *ecphrasis*, *ethopoeia*, proverbs, etc. Ureña Bracero explores a number of

descriptions that have parallels in Achilles Tattius, who was clearly an inspiration for the Byzantine novel; and often in these cases it is possible to identify the influence of rhetorical exercises in the later novel by comparison with the earlier one. In addition, there are a number of explicit references to rhetorical *paideia* that reinforces the connection, which indicates an astonishing continuity in rhetorical education from antiquity throughout the middle ages.

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