

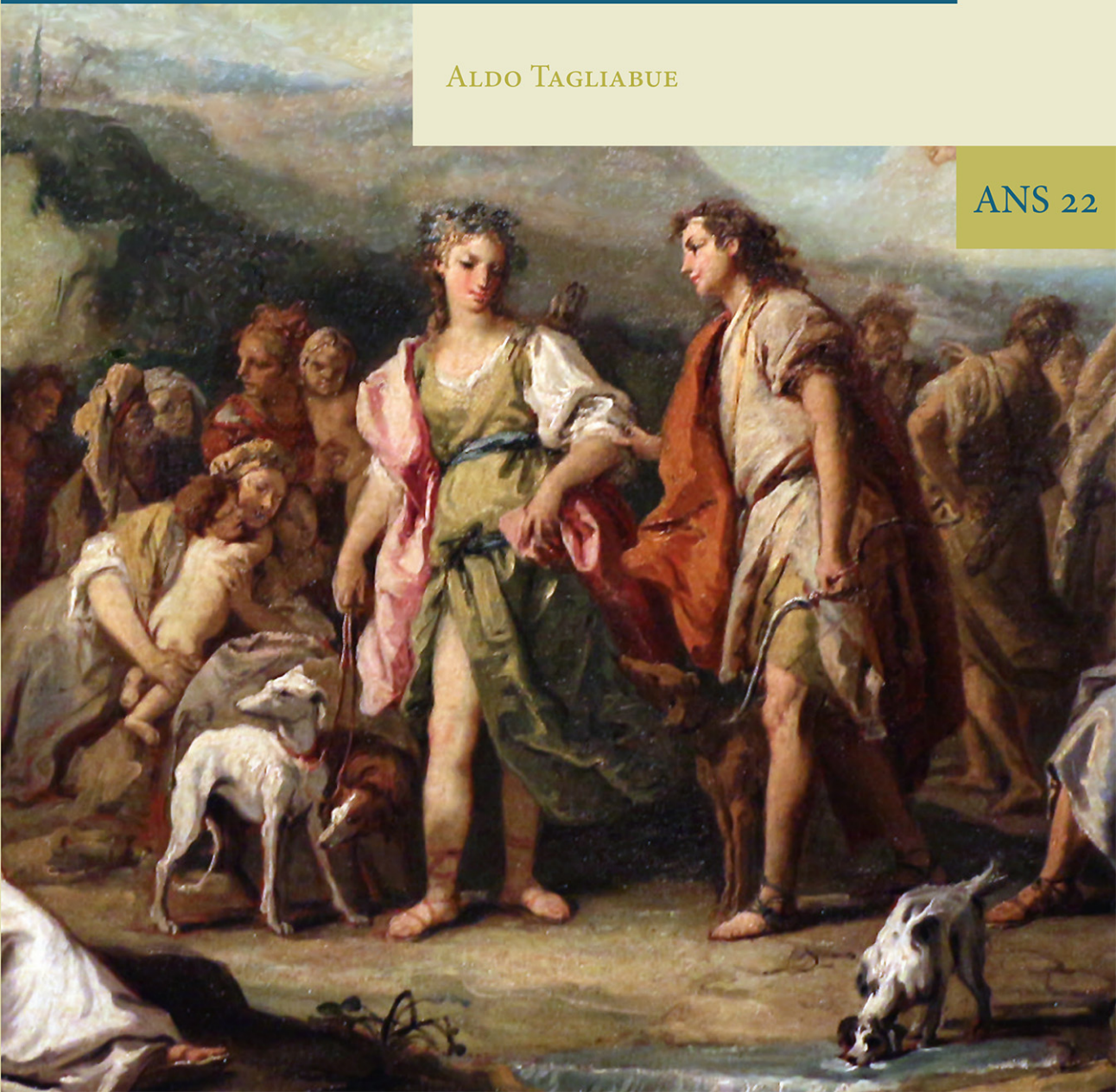
Xenophon's *Ephesiaca*

A Paraliterary Love-Story
from the Ancient World



ALDO TAGLIABUE

ANS 22



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A Paraliterary Love-Story from
the Ancient World

ANCIENT NARRATIVE

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*A Paraliterary Love-Story from
the Ancient World*

by

Aldo Tagliabue

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Introduction

§IN.1 The Ephesiaca as a unique contribution to the ancient Greek novel

After many decades of neglect, the last forty years have seen a renewed scholarly appreciation of the literary value of the Greek novels. This critical renaissance reached an unprecedented high in 2008, with the huge ICAN 4 held in Lisbon.¹ Within this trend, four monographs have been published so far which focus on individual novels; I refer to the specialist studies of Achilles Tatius by Morales and Laplace and of Chariton of Aphrodisias by Smith and Tilg.² This book adds to this short list and takes as its singular focus Xenophon's *Ephesiaca*.

The ancient Greek novel is a challenging genre to reconstruct for two main reasons: the lack in antiquity of a word for the novel and the scanty number of fully preserved texts.³ In the tradition of scholarly criticism, the *Ephesiaca* is numbered with Chariton's *Callirhoe*, Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Cleitophon* and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* as one of the five extant Greek novels – which I henceforth identify collectively as the 'Big Five'. These texts are believed to belong to a common subgenre, since they share 'common motifs, subject matter and narrative structure'.⁴ Conversely, the now fragmentary romances are classified as 'fringe novels',⁵ a typology which has recently attracted scholarly interest.⁶

¹ On which explosive trend, see Schmeling 2012.

² Achilles Tatius: Morales 2004, Laplace 2007. Chariton of Aphrodisias: Smith 2007, Tilg 2010.

³ For a general discussion of these two significant problems, see Whitmarsh 2008.

⁴ Morales 2009, 2. Along with this typological approach (the most common within modern scholarship), see Whitmarsh 2005 for a definition of the novelistic genre based on the novels' titles.

⁵ See Holzberg 1996, who adopts this distinction between traditional and 'fringe' novels, and Graverini 2006 for a more recent discussion of these categories.

⁶ I agree with Morales' criticism of the distinction between 'centre' and 'fringe': 'mapping the novels into "novels proper" and "fringe fiction" implicitly suggests that the ancient novel is in some way "central" to the literature of its period(s), but there is nothing to suggest this' (2009, 6). However, I would not go as far as to say that the 'Big Five' do not

Within the 'Big Five', scholars draw a distinction based upon both the works' estimated dates of composition and their literary quality: the early and less complex novels written by Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus are named 'pre-sophistic' (normally dated to first or early second century A.D.) and the later, more developed romances written by Achilles Tatius, Longus and Heliodorus (from middle second to fourth century A.D.) are the 'sophistic' ones.⁷ The origin of this distinction lies in the latter novels' closeness in form and ideals to the so-called 'Second Sophistic', a controversial label for the sophisticated Greek literary revival in the Imperial Era (50-300 A.D.).⁸

As has been argued by Anderson, 'one of the most obvious traits of the three "sophistic" novels is their sophistication'.⁹ They present a 'complex, convoluted and competently managed narrative with ambitious structural features', as well as 'subtlety rather than directness of outlook'.¹⁰ Morgan has also identified a further trait of their sophistication in the way in which these novels 'most reward intertextual exploration'.¹¹ Since in recent years scholars have imputed to Chariton's novel a complex plot and subtle references to ancient tragedy and historiography,¹² nowadays *Callirhoe* is considered to be close to the 'sophistic' novels: four of the 'Big Five' are regarded as *sophisticated* pieces of writing.

Within this framework, the *Ephesiaca* is the exception on account of its simple form. This novel, unlike the other four, has a basic plot and, at least on the surface, does not contain overt allusions to classical literature. Furthermore, there are a number of possible anomalies in its structure, as well as frequent, and arguably useless, repetitions of both scenes and phrases. With these features in mind, most scholars have assessed the *Ephesiaca* as the product of an incompetent writer – and thus as a sort of 'bad copy' of the other extant Greek novels. This approach is exemplified by Schmeling's book written in 1980,¹³ and is still the default basis

constitute a subgenre, since, as recently shown by Whitmarsh 2013, 3-48, this is suggested by a comparative intertextual analysis of these novels.

⁷ For this distinction, see e.g. Hägg 1994, 47. On the date of the *Ephesiaca* (and the chronology of the fully extant ancient novels), see §AP.1. Since I agree with Whitmarsh 2013, 41 that the relative chronology between Chariton's *Callirhoe* and the *Ephesiaca* cannot be established, I have chosen not to include discussion of any intertextuality between these two texts.

⁸ For a recent discussion of this term and of its use in scholarship since the end of the twentieth century, see Whitmarsh 2013, 2-3.

⁹ Anderson 1996, 108.

¹⁰ Anderson 1996, 109.

¹¹ Morgan and Harrison 2008, 221.

¹² See e.g. Trzaskoma 2010b and Tilg 2010.

¹³ See e.g. Schmeling 1980, 82: 'The episodes in the plot fill out the plot without meaning anything' and 96: 'like an uninterested newspaperman Xenophon gives the reader the bare

of interpretation in novel studies, as shown by Morgan's two following comments:

... almost every modern reader has the sense that the narrative is cripplingly bare and undeveloped (Morgan 2004b, 489, n. 1).

It is hardly a surprise that the relative sophistication of the novels is reflected in the use each makes of intertextuality. In this respect, as in most others, Xenophon's *Ephesiaca* seems the most primitive of the five (Morgan and Harrison 2008, 221).

Moreover, this perception of the *Ephesiaca* as a primitive novel has led some scholars to argue that the text we have is an epitomized version of a more sophisticated lost original. This argument was first formulated by Rohde in 1876 and then in 1892 Bürger offered its *demonstration*, the so-called epitome theory.¹⁴ In more recent times, Hägg and O'Sullivan have given valid refutations of Bürger's theory,¹⁵ as a result of which his *demonstration* can no longer be accepted. However, none has refuted the *possibility* of the epitome,¹⁶ which still looms on the scholarly horizon.

In my view, each of these scholars who argue for the *Ephesiaca* as a primitive or an epitomized text share a problematic starting point, since they use the other four sophisticated novels as term of comparison: their negative assessment of the

facts of the story'. See also Anderson 1984, 144: 'Xenophon of Ephesus ... has given a very adequate illustration of how not to tell a story and how not to write a novel ...', and Holzberg 1995, 39: '[Xenophon's] language is in general almost primitive in its syntax, and he does not shrink from using stereotype expressions or the same connectives over and over again'.

¹⁴ See Rohde 1914³ and Bürger 1892. The scholars who uphold that the *Ephesiaca* as we have it represents an epitomized text find support for their theory in the *Suda*'s lemma about Xenophon of Ephesus, which assigns 10 rather than 5 books to the *Ephesiaca* (for discussion of this lemma, see AP.1). Against this view, however, I agree with O'Sullivan 2014, 48 that 'the best and simple solution here is to see with Salvini and others the "ten" of the *Suda* (represented in Greek by the letter ι) as an error for "five" represented by ε.' In fact 'the transmission of numbers in Greek manuscripts is notoriously unreliable and there are similar errors elsewhere in the *Suda*' (*ibid.* 55, n. 26). For further contributions after Bürger in defence of the epitome theory, see Merkelbach 1962, 91-113, Gärtner 1967, 2056-2060 and Kerényi 1971. I will return to these contributions in §8.1.

¹⁵ See Hägg 2004², O'Sullivan 1995, 100-39, and see Whitmarsh 2010 for a comprehensive discussion of epitomes in the ancient Greek literature.

¹⁶ See Kytzler 1996, 349, with reference to the epitome theory: 'Although it has not been entirely abandoned, it is understood at least that once again there is no definite proof of the theory, nor any unequivocal refutation of it either'.

Ephesiaca depends on the fact that they look for sophistication in this novel, an element which, even at a quick reading, does not seem to be part of this text.

Within this scholarly framework only O'Sullivan stands out as the exception, as he reads the *Ephesiaca* as a text 'deriving from a background of oral storytelling'.¹⁷ The strength of this approach lies in its handling of this novel from a different lens, which O'Sullivan chooses to be orality. O'Sullivan finely identifies in the *Ephesiaca* 'a tissue of kaleidoscopic repetition at the three intimately related levels of scene (or theme), theme-element (i.e. a single action *vel sim.* as a basic element or building-block of a scene), and verbal formulae or standard key-words that regularly express theme-elements'.¹⁸ In O'Sullivan's view, 'the only adequate parallel for what I have presented here is provided by works of known oral background, e.g. the poetry of Homer and Irish Finn Tales'.¹⁹

Scholars, however, have not altogether accepted O'Sullivan's results. Along with a generally scarce reuse of his arguments, they have forwarded two main kinds of criticism. To begin with, it is commonly acknowledged that the Imperial Era was permeated with written literature, to the point that even 'much of what was passed on in oral form in Imperial circles was originally written down'.²⁰ As a result, O'Sullivan's choice of an oral-derived interpretation of the repetitive and formulaic language of the *Ephesiaca* is not the only one acceptable, since a purely written interpretation of the same phenomenon (without resort to an oral background) can be offered.²¹

¹⁷ O'Sullivan 2014, 50. O'Sullivan builds upon Trenkner's analysis of the subject-matter of the Greek novel as the stuff of popular story-telling, on which see Trenkner 1958, 178-86. The suggestion of an oral origin for the ancient novel as a whole is also discussed in Merkelbach 1962, 333-40 and Scobie 1983, 1-73.

¹⁸ O'Sullivan 2014, 48-9.

¹⁹ O'Sullivan 2014, 50.

²⁰ Kim 2013, 303. See also Hägg 1994, 49 specifically on the genre of the Greek novel: 'Rather than having any kind of oral origin as a genre, the ideal Greek novel in my opinion is the typical product of a literate society'.

²¹ See e.g. Morgan 1996a, 200: 'Many of the verbal repetitions involve colourless key-words and are not exact; even where they are, they *may* just be the most natural way for a stylistically colour-blind author to express a recurrent idea'. Cf. also Ruiz Montero 1982, 316, who takes the repetitions of the *Ephesiaca* more positively in the light of the loose style (*lexis eiromene*) proper to Herodotus and Attic prose. Overall, scholarship is more keen on relating orality to the reception rather than the composition of the ancient novel, starting from both the *Ephesiaca* and Chariton's *Callirhoe*: see Hägg 1994, 58-64, West 2003 and Upton 2006. König's approach is also interesting, since he addresses orality by discussing how the *Ephesiaca* offers an image of itself as 'being on the borderline between orality and literacy' (König 2007, 2).

Moreover, if the theory of an oral-derivation were accepted, it would be still very difficult to assume, as O'Sullivan does, that the *Ephesiaca* derived from 'a single orally composed narrative', as Kim argues:

The best explanation ... is not that Xenophon has written down a version of a single orally composed narrative, as James O'Sullivan has argued, but rather that he has incorporated a variety of oral tales into his ideal love novel (Kim 2013, 310).

In ancient Greek literature, in fact, oral-derivation is always limited to 'folk tales or *novelle* that ... were first popularised in legend before eventually finding their way into written texts'.²² As a rule it does not pertain to longer texts, novelistic or otherwise.

In this book, I will follow O'Sullivan's general approach in addressing the *Ephesiaca* on its own terms without the sophistication of the other 'Big Five' acting as a point of reference. However, I will choose a different lens from him, namely paraliterature, a term coined in 1967 by French scholars to designate a literature which is formally simple and lacking in typical literary sophistication.²³

By undertaking a (para)literary analysis of the *Ephesiaca*, my study relates to a recent strain of criticism which consists of a number of articles showing the existence of some literary quality in individual passages of the *Ephesiaca*, with a focus on style, narrative techniques and intertextuality. The first issue is addressed by Ruiz Montero, who argues that the style of the *Ephesiaca* is an example of the contrived simplicity widespread in the Imperial Era.²⁴ Second, Garson and Konstan discuss the symmetry between the male and the female protagonists, Shea the *ekphrastic* discourse, Chew the sudden disappearance of Eros, Bierl the dreams, and Morgan, followed by Capra, the pursuit-plot.²⁵ Finally, contributions from

²² Kim 2013, 303.

²³ For a foundational definition, see Tortel 1970; for my own terms, see especially Chapter 7, where I defend my use and manipulation of paraliterature. My choice of this term is additionally indebted to Kytzler's short but highly original assessment of the style of the *Ephesiaca*, according to which simplicity and repetitions are deliberately chosen by its writer in order to lead the readers through an action-filled story (Kytzler 1996). See e.g. Kytzler 1996, 350-1 and especially 351: 'What the modern scholar sometimes is inclined to call monotonous, the ancient reader (and especially listener) has accepted thankfully as a signpost on his way through an action-filled story.'

²⁴ See Ruiz Montero 1982 and 2003b. De Temmerman 2014, 118-151 identifies the same simplicity in 'broader issues of narrative technique and the presentation of material' (149).

²⁵ See respectively Garson 1981, Konstan 1994, Shea 1998, Chew 1997-8 and 1998, Bierl 2007, Morgan 2007b and Capra 2017.

Laplace, Doulamis, Capra and Trzaskoma point out some sparse intertextual allusions.²⁶ None of these scholars makes a sustained claim on the *Ephesiaca* as a whole, but some of their points contribute to my reassessment of the text.

My analysis starts with a focus on the text of the *Ephesiaca* we have, and in Chapters 1-6 I will identify the following seven features:

- careful construction of the text as a novel focused on the protagonists' progression in love;
- thematic intertextuality with easily accessible models;
- action-filled narrative;
- repetitions at every level;
- direct and rigid guidance for the readers;
- unintrusive narrator;
- and fixity of secondary characters.

Following this thorough re-examination, I will continue my comprehensive assessment of the text of the *Ephesiaca* we have in Chapter 7. First, I will argue that its author is a writer in full artistic control of his novel rather than an incompetent one, because his work has a coherent focus on the protagonists' progression in love and also includes references to classical texts. Moreover, the author of the *Ephesiaca* displays significant and suspenseful control of the unfolding drama, and he is able to let his readers immerse themselves in the story (§7.2). Then, with the help of Couégnas' study,²⁷ I will argue that the *Ephesiaca* can be defined as a narrative text leaning towards paraliterature (§7.3),²⁸ and because of its paraliterary nature, this novel differs from the other 'Big Five', which due to their complexity and subtlety can be defined as highly literary texts (§7.4). Furthermore, in §7.5 this new assessment of the *Ephesiaca* will be supported by comparison with other ancient and modern paraliterary narratives which share with our novel simplicity in form, a focus on plot and standardly thematic intertextuality. In ancient and modern literature there has always been space for works that take a simple kind of form, introduce a high number of actions, develop a coherent theme and employ thematic intertextuality. I will argue that the *Ephesiaca* can be included in this number. Furthermore in Chapter 8 I will address the epitome the-

²⁶ See Laplace 1994, Capra 2009, Doulamis 2007 and forthcoming, Trzaskoma 2011. Cf. also Jones 2012, 13: 'even the apparently naive Xenophon shows an awareness of elite cultural and literary concerns'.

²⁷ See Couégnas 1992.

²⁸ Throughout the book, I use 'narrative' according to Genette's influential and basic definition: 'one would define narrative without difficulty as the representation of ... a sequence of events' (Genette 1982, 127).

ory: since the possibility of the epitome cannot be ruled out altogether, the paraliterary text of the *Ephesiaca* that we have will be taken as either the original text or a later epitome, and I will speculatively argue that the former hypothesis is more likely than the latter.

In conclusion, with this book I hope to create space for the acceptance of the *Ephesiaca* as a novel both belonging to the sub-genre of the ‘Big Five’ and having a different nature from the other four extant Greek novels. Moreover, the *Ephesiaca* gives new proof about the existence of paraliterary narratives in the ancient world (or the late-antique one, if the text we have is an epitome).

In the proceeding sections of the introduction, I will provide a theoretical framework for the two key notions of my analysis that will be used throughout the book, namely the protagonists’ progression in love and the heuristic tool of thematic intertextuality.

*§IN.2 The Ephesiaca as a novel focused on the protagonists’
progression in love*

The *Ephesiaca* focuses on the protagonists’ progression in love. This special construction of the novel is shown by its intratextuality, the study of which focuses on ‘readings of the relationship between the parts’.²⁹ Through this analysis I hope to show that the author of the *Ephesiaca* was ‘consciously in control of the intratextual relationships in the text’³⁰ – a key point which indicates his artistic competence. These intratextual relationships mostly consist of repetition of themes, but in a few cases I will include reference to terms which introduce nuances in presenting the protagonists’ love, namely *sophrosyne* and *andreia* in §3.3, the comparison between body and soul in §4.2 and terms denoting adoption in §6.2.

Throughout the *Ephesiaca* the protagonists undergo a process of development which relates to their approach to love. Anthia and Habrocomes start their erotic relationship as lustful lovers focused on sexual passion and end the novel as adults who are bound by mutual fidelity and both display and appreciate the value of it.

²⁹ Sharrock and Morales 2001, 6. This approach is well-established in scholarship. Even in antiquity issues of unity and diversity within a text were of primary concern to readers and critics. On the notion of intratextuality, see also Perri 1978.

³⁰ Sharrock and Morales 2001, 10 (this phrase summarizing Newlands’ book chapter on Ovid’s *Fasti*).

This shift, which lies at the core of the *Ephesiaca*, is accompanied by three more specific kinds of change, concerning the protagonists' balance in the relationship, their individual personalities and their attitudes towards the broader society. First, the mutual balance in Anthia and Habrocomes' relationship develops from the initial leadership shown by the former to the proposal of mutuality between the two lovers, which is achieved on the wedding night and confirmed at the end of the novel. Second, throughout their journey both Anthia and Habrocomes develop an ability to resist the enemies' threat: this active resistance leads to a growth in both characters' personalities. Finally, throughout the novel both Anthia and Habrocomes change their attitudes towards the societies in which they live. At the beginning of the novel they both enjoy the privilege of belonging to wealthy Ephesian families, and the development of their love is made possible through their parents' and the city's support. Conversely, at the end of the novel, the protagonists arrive in Rhodes poor and exclusively moved by the desire to find the other's beloved. Moreover, the protagonists' subsequent return to their homeland does not fully reintegrate them into the *polis* in which they had grown up, since they rather give birth to an 'exclusive society of love' in which they share their lives only with their ex-servants and a couple of foreign friends.

Overall, this focus on the protagonists' attitude to the societies in which they live interacts with Lalanne's interpretation of the ancient Greek romances as 'building upon and developing the classic tripartite passage rite',³¹ namely separation, liminal phase and reintegration. In Lalanne's view, throughout the novels the protagonists advance in their social status, and at the end, in Whitmarsh's words, 'the[ir] final reunion ... coincides with the reintegration of the lovers into their communities as adults'.³² This is the result not of their individual efforts but of the influence upon them of the society's cohesive power.³³ In my reading of

³¹ As detailed in Lalanne 2006, and cited in Whitmarsh 2011, 43.

³² Whitmarsh 2011, 43.

³³ On which see especially Perkins 1995, 46. Dowden 1999, 223 clarifies that this reference to rites of passage does not imply a religious meaning, since 'the rite of passage is a clear instance of literary "myth"' and is possibly genetically related to fiction. On the other hand, Bierl 2007 offers a different interpretation of rites of passage in the ancient novels, including the *Ephesiaca*. In his view, the protagonists' misadventures narrated in these texts are the result of 'eine spielerische Phantasie' (257), which reflects the anxiety typical of adolescents and needs not be related to the historical context of the Imperial Era. An additional sign of this 'Phantasie' is that, when the novel focuses on the protagonists' journey, the style of the narration begins to follow a symbolic and associative pattern that resembles the logic of human dreams. For an application of this theory to the *Ephesiaca*, see Bierl 2006. Although I do not see full evidence in the text for a resemblance to the logic of human dreams (as Bierl does), I find his interpretation attractive because it supports the idea that the protagonists of the *Ephesiaca* develop during their journey.

the *Ephesiaca*, I will partially revisit Lalanne's theory by pointing out that in this novel the protagonists' reintegration into the society does not fully take place. This pattern appears to highlight the birth in the protagonists of an exclusive interest in love.

Overall, my analysis of the protagonists' progression in love builds on a recent trend in novelistic scholarship revisiting common assumptions about character change. Many years ago Rohde elaborated on the idea that the protagonists of the ancient novels are passive and emotionally static, and Bakhtin added the remark that nothing changes in their life between the beginning and the end of these texts.³⁴ In recent years, both Rohde's and Bakhtin's views have been challenged: with the help of gender studies, different scholars have offered a refined analysis of the characterization of the novels' protagonists.³⁵ Among the many available contributions, I will briefly mention the ones most relevant to my study.

My analysis of Habrocomes and Anthia's approach to love as well as of the mutual balance of their relationship is indebted to Konstan's 1994 book *Sexual Symmetry*. In this contribution, Konstan argues that the ancient novel as a genre places a special interest in portraying the protagonists' love as a mutual one, subverting the standard pattern of dominance typical of erotic relationships in ancient Greece.³⁶ Moreover, Konstan argues against Bakhtin's view of static characterization in the novels by remarking that 'the events in the Greek novel are signed to test the love of the primary couple', and 'in the process, their loyalty or commitment to one another becomes the defining characteristic of their relationship'.³⁷ In my analysis, the events of the *Ephesiaca* have exactly this effect on Habrocomes and Anthia's relationship, as they lead the protagonists to achieve mutual fidelity.

Second, my study of growth in personality draws upon Jones' study of masculinity in the ancient novel:³⁸ with the help of Goffman's notion of 'social performance'³⁹ Jones pays close attention to the protagonists' performance of a role in the society of the Greek novels, and especially to their presentation of idealized

³⁴ See Rohde 1914³, 426, with special reference to the characters of the *Ephesiaca*, whom he defines as 'blosse Marionetten, welche dieser stümperhafte Poet vor uns tanzen lässt' and Bakhtin 1981, 89: 'the love between the hero and the heroine ... remains absolutely unchanged throughout the entire novel'. This view of Bakhtin was first published in 1937-8. Cf. also Frye 1976, 86, who takes the generic preservation of female chastity in the Greek novels as proof of their lack of change.

³⁵ Konstan 1994. For further elucidation of this point, see Egger 1988, Goldhill 1995, Jones 2012, and De Temmerman 2014.

³⁶ See §4.3 for references and more details on this issue.

³⁷ Konstan 1994, 46.

³⁸ See Jones 2012, esp. 1-19.

³⁹ See Goffman 1969.

version of themselves and display of gender. In my analysis of the *Ephesiaca*, I will show how both Anthia and Habrocomes show their growth in personality by displaying in front of their enemies *sophrosyne* and *andreia*. *Sophrosyne* designates the virtue that throughout the ancient Greek literature is 'commonly understood as "chastity" or sexual "self-restraint" and is often used in the novels as a counterpart to *eros*'.⁴⁰ *Andreia* is the classical virtue of 'manliness'⁴¹ which in the ancient novels represents not only 'manly courage' but also one's 'endurance of circumstances',⁴² 'protection of chastity'⁴³ and erotic courage.⁴⁴ As a result of this wide range of meanings, *andreia* can also be used of women.⁴⁵

Finally, my overall belief in the protagonists' change throughout the *Ephesiaca* relates to De Temmerman's recent literary study of characterization in the ancient novels,⁴⁶ which shows in different ways that 'character development has a role to play in these narratives'⁴⁷ and also argues that this change 'does not imply any profound transformation of existential or psychological outlook of the sort found in the modern *Bildungsroman*'.⁴⁸ The developmental change that I trace in

⁴⁰ Kanavou 2015, 9. For the combination of chastity with the idealization of marriage in Greek novels, see Chew 2000 and Burrus 2005. For broad studies of *sophrosyne* in the ancient world, see North 1966 and Rademaker 2005.

⁴¹ *LSJ*, s.v. ἀνδρεία.

⁴² Jones 2007, 112.

⁴³ Jones 2007, 120. Cf. also Jones 2012, 92-173.

⁴⁴ As De Temmerman 2007, 106 argues, in erotic literature *andreia*, along with other traditional virtues, is subjected to a transfer of its normal connotations to the erotic sphere. As a result, in the Greek novels it becomes the virtue of active lovers.

⁴⁵ See Jones 2012, 106: 'masculine connotations do not exclude women from the exhibition of *andreia* altogether'; and see *ibid.* 106-117 for a discussion of 'Female *andreia* in the novels and elsewhere'.

⁴⁶ For a survey on this issue, see De Temmerman 2014, 18-26. My interpretation of the *Ephesiaca* as focused on the protagonists' progression in love might recall Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*: in Morgan's convincing demonstration (Morgan 1996), in this novel the protagonists undergo an educational process. However, this process has some differences from that of the *Ephesiaca*, for which see §7.4g.

⁴⁷ De Temmerman 2014, 20.

⁴⁸ De Temmerman 2014, 20. For this reason, and also following Morgan's caveat (1996, 188-9), I revisited Tagliabue 2012 and decided not to use the notion of *Bildungsroman*, which designates the type of romance that 'follows the account of the development of the hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity' (Baldick 2008, 24). This notion is related to the subgenre of modern novels starting with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries – a subgenre that offers a focus on introspection and development of the self that is unparalleled in the ancient novel.

Habrocomes and Anthia is visible through their actions (as typical of ancient characterization),⁴⁹ and lacks any kind of psychologising introspection.

Moreover, the fact that the protagonists' change focuses on virtues such as fidelity and mutuality as well as on their response to the society well matches the notion of 'character' which Gill imputes to the ancient world, namely a view of the person focused on the achievement of excellence of virtues and therefore of an ideal moral attitude.⁵⁰ This notion of character differs from the modern and Cartesian notion of 'person', which is focused on introspection (perceptions, memories, and emotional responses) and suggests an approach to characterization centred on psychological analysis.⁵¹ Moreover, Gill also points out that in the ancient world, unlike in the modern one, 'the ethical life of a human being is, at the most fundamental level, shared rather than private and individuated'.⁵² I would then argue that Anthia and Habrocomes' progression towards an experience of faithful and mutual love, which gives them a new role in their society, constitutes a progression of 'character' rather than of 'person'.

§IN.3 *This book's approach to intertextuality*

Along with intratextuality, intertextuality is the second feature of the *Ephesiaca* which contributes to its focus on the protagonists' progression in love, and thus to its reassessment as a fully coherent text.⁵³

The protagonists' erotic change, which is traced in the *Ephesiaca* through intratextuality, is then further highlighted through a consistent recalling of themes from the *Odyssey*, sections of Plato's dialogues on love and the Isis and Osiris

⁴⁹ See De Temmerman 2014, 37: 'it was generally assumed in antiquity that character could best be understood by examining one's *actions (praxeis)*'.

⁵⁰ Gill 1996, 1-28.

⁵¹ See De Temmerman 2014b, 231: 'Ever since nineteenth-century novelistic literature put character in the foreground as one of its hallmarks by famously and abundantly dissecting the inner life in minute detail, such psychological analysis and introspection have become central notions in the way we approach literary characterization'.

⁵² Gill 1996, 15. Within the scholarship on the ancient world, Sorabji takes issue with Gill by arguing for the importance of selfhood in antiquity (see e.g. Sorabji 2006). For a critical review of this debate, see Verheij 2013. I warmly thank Emilio Capettini for drawing my attention to this debate. Because of its overall simplicity, the *Ephesiaca* does not include a profound view of the self, and, therefore, I do not think that it relates to Sorabji's theory.

⁵³ On the close relationship between intratextuality and intertextuality, see e.g. Sharrock and Morales 2001, 24: 'if we are considering how parts relate intratextually, we need to keep in mind also how they relate intertextually'.

love-story. Each of these models was part of the common literary canon of the Imperial Era,⁵⁴ and most of the recalled passages have an erotic focus.

The *Odyssey* supports the *Ephesiaca*'s move from a merely physical love to a fully experienced faithful one, as Odysseus and Penelope's reunion night is recalled at the end of the novel, while Habrocomes and Anthia's wedding night might relate to Demodocus' account of Ares and Aphrodite's affair (§1.2). Plato's dialogues are recalled in passages describing the protagonists' progressive achievement of mutuality in their relationship (§4.3-5). Finally, the Isis and Osiris love-story relates to the striving towards deathlessness of the protagonists' relationship: Anthia and Habrocomes' love might thus last beyond the end of their life (§5.5-6).

Having outlined the relationship between intertextuality and progression in love, I will clarify here my approach to the former. As is commonly known, 'intertextuality' is a term coined by Kristeva to describe what Genette later called 'a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts',⁵⁵ which can be based on words, themes and/or situations. Despite the simplicity of this definition, this phenomenon lies at the origin of one of the most debated issues of scholarship of both modern and ancient literature. In the last seventy years, two different foci of interest have emerged: the dichotomy between intentional allusion and reader-response intertextuality, and the identification of parameters to establish the relevance of an echo.⁵⁶ In this book I adopt a moderate version of 'text-and-reader oriented intertextuality' which I will shortly describe.

⁵⁴ For the popularity of the *Odyssey* in the Imperial Era, see Hunter and Russell 2011, 9; for Plato and especially the *Phaedrus*, see Trapp 1990. In the case of the Egyptian myth, it is difficult to identify the precise source of the *Ephesiaca*, but, as proven by Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris* and other older Greek and Roman sources, the Isis and Osiris story was commonly known by Greeks of the Imperial Era (evidence given in §5.1). Scholars have argued that in the *Ephesiaca* there are also references to Attic drama (Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Electra*) and to Herodotus' *Histories*. I will say something more on these potential intertextual connections throughout the book, but I will not include them in my overall analysis of the *Ephesiaca*, because, unlike the models I have just mentioned above, these ones are too rarely exploited and therefore do not contribute to the protagonists' progression in love.

⁵⁵ Genette 1997, 1.

⁵⁶ For the sake of space, I do not intend to give a full historical survey of the contributions on these topics. For recent surveys, see Citroni 2011 and the first 2013 issue of *American Journal of Philology*.

§IN.3a *The scholarly debate: intentionalism versus intertextuality*

The notion of intentional allusion was first elaborated in 1942 by Giorgio Pasquali. His interpretation of literary traces focuses on the binary relationship between texts, on the individuation of ‘one intention-bearing subject, the alluding poet’⁵⁷ and on a pattern of agency-causality which ‘emphasizes the importance of the precursor at the expense of that of the successor’.⁵⁸ In contrast, intertextual theory was created in 1966 by Julia Kristeva, who argued that any text bears traces of every other work written. This different approach focuses on the readerly consumption of texts and on a synchronic view of them as ‘infinitely plural sites’,⁵⁹ and at its beginning it aimed to abolish the notion of authorial intention, as proclaimed by Barthes’ *The Death of the Author*.⁶⁰ This focus on readers led to ‘a symbiotic union of intertextual theory with reader-response criticism’,⁶¹ which gave birth to the so-called ‘text-and-reader oriented intertextuality’.⁶²

Although in a very short time ‘intertextuality took the literary critical world by storm’,⁶³ the study of patterns of intentional allusion persisted in classical scholarship, to the point that nowadays intentionalism and intertextuality can still be seen as ‘contending paradigms’.⁶⁴ Moreover, the existence of these two different approaches led some of their exponents to reformulate their views. The reaction from ‘intentionalists’ was radical: Thomas, for example, circumscribed even more narrowly the notion of allusion and renamed it ‘reference’.⁶⁵ The response from some of the ‘intertextualists’ was ambivalent. Pucci and Edmunds left the author out of the equation completely,⁶⁶ while a greater number of them favoured a compromise, so as to avoid an ‘infinite regress into meaninglessness and uninterpretability’.⁶⁷ The result of this mediation was the elaboration of three new notions: a revised concept of authorial intention and the notions of code-model and

⁵⁷ This term is taken from Hinds 1998, 47.

⁵⁸ Baron 2012, 9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ See Barthes 1977.

⁶¹ Hubbard 1998, 15.

⁶² Hinds 1998, 49.

⁶³ Baron 2012, 8.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* This situation is confirmed by one of the most recent contributions written on intertextuality in the Greek novels, which starts with the question: ‘should emphasis be placed on authorial intention or on textual relations?’ (Doulamis 2011b, VII).

⁶⁵ Thomas 1986.

⁶⁶ See Pucci 1998 and Edmunds 2001.

⁶⁷ Hubbard 1998, 8.

literary filiation. First, Genette and Riffaterre reinstated authorial intention as a phenomenon worthy of critical consideration, defining it as the communicative intention of the text.⁶⁸ Second, Conte, as summarized by Boyd,

distinguishes between the 'Exemplary Model' and the 'Code Model' as the bases of stylistic and generic imitation, respectively. The Exemplary Model ... is the one that philological precision is best able to detect and interpret; the Code Model ... is the system of generic rules familiar beforehand to both a poet and his or her audience. (Boyd 1997, 33, based on Conte 1986)

Finally, literary filiation was created by Bloom to stress that 'every strong poet selects, often unconsciously, a poetic father whose work is determinative in the younger poet's self-fashioning as an independent creative agent'.⁶⁹ This last category, however, has often been simplified into the choice of restoring the traditional directionality in the interpretation of an intertextual relationship, in contrast with Kristeva's synchronic view. Currently, these three modifications are used in many studies of intertextuality and often produce a moderate kind of 'text-and-reader oriented intertextuality', which I have also decided to adopt.

§IN.3b *The choice of a moderate 'text-and-reader oriented intertextuality'*

In my model of 'text-and-reader oriented intertextuality', three more specific features can be identified: the *Odyssey's* status as both the 'exemplary' and 'code-model' of the *Ephesiaca*, the combination of intertextuality with the reception of the models, and thematic intertextuality.

The Odyssey as both the 'exemplary' and 'code-model' of the Ephesiaca

In examining the *Ephesiaca's* relationship with the *Odyssey*, I will speculatively adopt Conte's distinction between 'code-model' and 'exemplary model'. In my view, the author of the *Ephesiaca* not only exploits themes of the *Odyssey* treating this text as his 'exemplary model', but also 'writes like Homer' and uses the *Odyssey* as 'a code-model, provided with generalizable traits'.⁷⁰

This use of the *Odyssey* as a 'code-model' can be first advanced on the basis of the *Ephesiaca's* structural debt towards the Homeric poem, which is shown by

⁶⁸ See Riffaterre 1981 and Genette 1997b.

⁶⁹ Hubbard 1998, 11.

⁷⁰ I borrow here terms used by Barchiesi 1984, 95 in his intertextual study of Virgil.

the exploitation of one or even two Odyssean nights in the novel and by the sharing of proleptic function between the oracle of Apollo in the *Ephesiaca* and the Odyssean prophecy of Tiresias. Moreover, this reuse of Homer as a ‘code-model’ is confirmed by some parallels established between the *Ephesiaca*’s protagonists and those in the *Odyssey*.⁷¹ Finally, the Homeric model also has an influence on the novel’s style, since I will demonstrate that the *Ephesiaca* contains some ‘epic prosified formulae’. A case in point is highlighted by Hunter: ‘it is tempting to believe that when Xenophon of Ephesus’ characters set up at the end of the *Ephesiaca* a *graphie πάντων ὅσα τε ἔπαθον καὶ ὅσα ἔδρασαν* (‘of all they had suffered and done’ [5,15,2]), the “epic” heritage of the novel resonates strongly’.⁷² Here readers might be reminded of the Odyssean formula *ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη* (‘acted and endured’),⁷³ which is a perfect synthesis of Odysseus’ life.⁷⁴ I see these ‘epic prosified formulae’ as a way in which the author of the *Ephesiaca* both writes as if he were imitating Homer and keeps his status as a prose writer.

Overall, this reading of the *Odyssey* as the *Ephesiaca*’s ‘code-model’ gives a specific expression to the common scholarly assumption that this poem – both in theory (being a sort of romance in poetry) and in practice (its plot and themes) – is the archetype (and thus ‘the code-model’) of the Greek novel as a whole.⁷⁵

Intertextuality combined with the ancient reception of the models

The study of intertextuality in the *Ephesiaca* is inseparable from the history of the reception of its models.⁷⁶ A number of scholars have already made this point with regard to the other Greek novels, demonstrating the influence of contemporary

⁷¹ We see here a common concern of intertextuality – its function as a ‘device of characterisation’ (Doulamis 2011b, XIV).

⁷² Hunter 2005, 159.

⁷³ *Od.* 4,242, 271.

⁷⁴ See Montiglio 2013, 63.

⁷⁵ This is an important thesis of Lowe’s book. See e.g. Lowe 2000, 224: ‘The five novels’ generic storyline, with its twin hero-goals of homecoming and beloved, originates undisguisedly with the *Odyssey* and in its tragic rewritings (especially *Helen*)’. Cf. also Morgan and Harrison 2008, 220: the *Odyssey* ‘with its combination of travel adventures and marital reunion validated as a correct narrative destination, is the principal foundation-text of romance’.

⁷⁶ Schlunk 1974 and Barchiesi 1984 were the first to stress in their studies of the *Aeneid* the importance of the ancient reception of the models in the study of intertextuality. They both approach Vergil’s debt to the Homeric poems, taking into account the ‘lunga continua transcodificazione’ (Barchiesi 1984, 9) which both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had since the Classical Era. Cf. also Kaiser 1964, 110 for an interpretation of Horace’s reception of Odysseus in his *Epistle* 2,1 through the influence of moralising interpretations of the *Odyssey*.

theatrical representations (especially mime) on Achilles Tatius' and Heliodorus' engagement with Attic tragedy,⁷⁷ and the significance of Homeric rhetorical criticism upon Achilles Tatius' and Heliodorus' reuse of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.⁷⁸

My intertextual study of the *Ephesiaca* will systematically take into account the ancient reception of the models, especially with regard to the exploitation of Homer's *Odyssey*: the possible references to this poem in the protagonists' nights of the *Ephesiaca* are better understood if combined with the moralising interpretations of the same text which were available in the Imperial Era.⁷⁹

The tradition of moralising exegesis of the *Odyssey* began in the sixth century B.C. with Theagenes from Rhegium and then diffused as a significant interpretive practice in Athens, where the Sophists defended Homer from the harsh criticism voiced by Xenophanes and other contemporary philosophers.⁸⁰ From the Hellenistic Era onwards, every important philosophical school dedicated part of its curriculum to Homer.⁸¹ Since this exploration took place in interaction with both the literary world and the educational system, it progressively gave birth to a corpus of collective moral interpretations of the epic poems, which was clearly established by the Imperial Era, as proven by Heraclitus' *Homeric Allegories*, Plutarch's *How a Young Man Should Read Poetry* and the Pseudo-Plutarch's *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*.⁸² In addition, Maximus of Tyre in some of his orations and Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophistae*, as well as scholiasts, often discuss interpretations of passages from the Homeric poems. The wide accessibility of

⁷⁷ For Achilles Tatius, see Mignogna 1996; for Heliodorus, see Webb 2013, especially her interpretation of Cnemon's story, in which 'tragedy and mime are not simply juxtaposed but intricately interwoven into a single story' (294). For a similar phenomenon concerning Petronius and Apuleius' novels, see Panayotakis 1995 and Fick 1990 respectively.

⁷⁸ See Graverini 2008-9 for the former, and Telò 1999, 2011 and Morgan 2006, 55 for the latter. Cf. also Pontani 2005, 80, n. 172, who shows how the scholium V λ 613 on Heracles' τελαμών ('belt') is quoted when Charicleia's ζώνη ('belt') is described in Hld. 3,4.

⁷⁹ See Schlunk 1974, 107: 'every educated reader in antiquity was well trained in these moral criticisms and aesthetic appreciations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, if only as a result of the standard schooling of the times'. More precisely, the dominance of Homer in ancient criticism and education in the Imperial Era is beyond doubt (see Hunter and Russell 2011, 9).

⁸⁰ See Ramelli 2004, 49-78.

⁸¹ See Ramelli 2004, 233-402.

⁸² On the relationship between the Pseudo-Plutarch's treatise and the educational system, see Lambertson 2002, 187, who argued that this text 'had its origins in the classrooms'. Conversely, the recipients of Heraclitus' text are unknown and its connection with the same environment is no more than speculation.

these texts in the Imperial Era confirms that educated people of that time read moralising interpretations of the *Odyssey*.⁸³

These interpretations, however, are texts of a different kind from their model: they can be compared to anecdotes, which LeVen has recently defined as a ‘narrative form shared by a community ... and often not attributed to an author’.⁸⁴ For this reason, these interpretations are recalled in the *Ephesiaca* in a less precise manner than the *Odyssey* is, and, in analogy with Nicholson’s study of Pindar’s exploitation of oral traditions, ‘to think in terms of allusion is to misconceive the relationship’.⁸⁵ What is at issue is whether such interpretations were ‘a real possibility at a given moment’⁸⁶ or not, and, as I have shown above, in our case the answer is positive.

Similarly, thematic allusions in the *Ephesiaca* to Plato’s *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* concern passages, themes and expressions which are also recalled by other authors of the Imperial Era such as Plutarch, Lucian and other novelists. The engagement of the *Ephesiaca* with at least some sections of the original Platonic texts will be less decisive for my interpretation than the identification of contact points between our novel and contemporary references to Platonic theories of love.

The importance of ancient reception in the study of the intertextuality of the *Ephesiaca* will also concern the novel’s exploitation of Egypt. By referring to Egyptian elements including Isis and Osiris’ love-story, the writer of this novel seems to adopt the repertoire of common views of Egypt available in the Greek tradition which started with Hecataeus and Herodotus and was especially developed by Diodorus and Plutarch.

Thematic intertextuality as a key characteristic of the Ephesiaca

The *Ephesiaca*’s intertextuality with its models is notably thematic. This phenomenon constitutes a key difference between the *Ephesiaca* and most postclassical literature, which, including the other ‘Big Five’, is keen on pointed references to classical texts.

In contrast with my previous discussions of the Odyssean intertextuality and the reception of the models, a full analysis of thematic intertextuality cannot be offered without addressing the issue of the editorial status of the *Ephesiaca* that

⁸³ For a recent analysis of Imperial authors, both Greek and Latin, who adopt a moralising approach to Odysseus and often label him a philosopher, see Montiglio 2011, 124-47.

⁸⁴ LeVen 2013, 25-6, n. 11.

⁸⁵ Nicholson 2013, 15.

⁸⁶ Nicholson 2013, 11.

we have: if the possibility of the epitome is accepted, it could be well imagined that the original text of this novel had pointed references as do the other 'Big Five'. On the other hand, if the possibility of the epitome is not accepted, it can be argued that with its thematic intertextuality the *Ephesiaca* well matches the literary context of the Imperial Era, in which other genres such as the *progymnasmata*, mime and pantomime were very keen on establishing thematic connections with classical literature. I will return to this issue in §8.2-3.

At this stage of my work, I will make the simple but not obvious point that it is legitimate to think in terms of a thematic intertextuality, since scholars might not be keen on accepting this assumption *prima specie*. In the study of intertextuality within ancient literature 'one can observe that for a long time both the theoretical inquiry and the concrete textual analysis based on such inquiry have been practiced almost exclusively by Latinists'.⁸⁷ Moreover, in 2000 Fowler remarked that 'there is a tendency at times for intertextual criticism to concentrate on poetic literary texts to the neglect first of prose, subliterary and non-literary texts, and second of other types of cultural production',⁸⁸ and in 2013 Baraz and van den Berg acknowledged that 'his [viz. Fowler's] insight still holds, as critical attention tends to be limited in both genre and era'.⁸⁹ As a result of this prevalent focus on Latin literature, especially Latin poetry, scholars of ancient literature interested in intertextuality tend to consider pointed textual allusions as the most important marker of this phenomenon and to include in their analysis thematic references only if combined with pointed markers.

On closer examination, however, some exceptional interest in a purely thematic intertextuality has also been offered. Following Genette's study of thematic transposition,⁹⁰ purely thematic connections have been used as markers of intertextuality within both Greek historiography and the ancient novels themselves.⁹¹ As a result, the fact that the *Ephesiaca*'s intertextuality is notably thematic can be accepted as a not unlikely possibility, even before interpreting this phenomenon in relation to the editorial status of the text we have (on which, see §8.1-5).

⁸⁷ Citroni 2011, 584.

⁸⁸ Fowler 2000, 128.

⁸⁹ Baraz and van den Berg 2013, 3.

⁹⁰ Genette 1997, 294-303.

⁹¹ See e.g. Beneker 2005 and Doulamis 2011b, XII: '... there are also thematic connections residing in the preoccupation of the authors of narratives with the same ideas as antecedent authors ...'.

§IN.4 *The readers of the Ephesiaca*

As with thematic intertextuality, a complete study of the readers of the *Ephesiaca* can be offered only after having discussed its editorial status (§8.2-3). Before doing this, in my analysis in Chapters 1-7 with ‘readers’ I will refer to the ancient people reading the text of the *Ephesiaca* that we have. Only in two sections of Chapter 7 (§7.2-3), when I will impute to the *Ephesiaca* the notion of immersion and paraliterature, will I refer to a universal kind of reader.

Scholarship has long attempted to reconstruct the real audience of the Greek novels, and based on their apparent low stylistic quality, the earliest scholars proposed a young, uneducated and even female kind of readership.⁹² Nowadays, however, after the ancient novels altogether have been reassessed, scholars think that the ancient novelists were read by the same sort of people who were reading classical texts in the Imperial era.⁹³ This new view is supported by the fact that the papyri which preserve parts of the ancient novels are identical with those preserving classical literature.⁹⁴

Overall, this shift in the scholarly view of the readership of the ancient novels does not fully apply to the *Ephesiaca*: since, as I have said above, most scholars think that this novel is a badly written text, the *Ephesiaca* is still meant to have young or uneducated people in its readership.⁹⁵ However, there is no material proof of the existence in the Imperial era of such uneducated readers. As recently argued by Kurke in his study of the *Life of Aesop*, this scholarly argument exemplifies ‘the fallacy of correlating a low-style text ... with a specific class or status of author/readers’⁹⁶ without material justification. Accepting such a fallacy would lead to the wrong conclusion that for example nowadays comic books and cheap

⁹² See Hunter 2008, 262 summarizing this early trend of scholarship, and mentioning the readership reconstructed by Perry 1967, 5, 56: ‘children and the poor-in-spirit’ and ‘young or naïve people of little education’. See also Hunter 2008, 266, discussing the scholarly suggestion of a female audience for the novel and arguing: ‘it must be admitted that there is little positive evidence in favour of the “female readership” hypothesis’.

⁹³ See e.g. Bowie 1994, 441.

⁹⁴ See Stephens and Winkler 1995, who comment on the novelistic papyri and, as summarized by Bowie 1996, 93, highlight that ‘the format of the book and the type of writing do not mark off these papyri from those of high literary texts’. Cf. also Trzaskoma 2010, XVIII.

⁹⁵ See Hansen 1998, 6: ‘Presumably *An Ephesian Tale* appealed to unsophisticated readers as well as to some sophisticated readers who enjoyed losing themselves in exciting literature that made little demand upon them’. Cf. also Hägg 1994 and Doulamis 2002, who also associate with both the *Ephesiaca* and *Callirhoe* a kind of double audience – the highly educated addressee commonly attributed to the genre as a whole and readers of a lower level as well.

⁹⁶ Kurke 2011, 7, n. 16.

novels are not read by writers and academic people. As a result, I see no problem in arguing that the readers of the *Ephesiaca*, like those of the other ancient novels, were legitimately educated people who were thus well aware of the models exploited by this text. It is with this hypothesis that the detailed analysis of this work will be undertaken.

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