Plato's *Symposium*: the Other Half

A study of Phaedrus', Pausanias', and Eryximachus' Speeches

(*Symposium*, 178a6-188e4)



Christian Keime, PhD Candidate in Classics,

Hughes Hall

Faculty of Classics

University of Cambridge

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DECLARATION

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee (80,000 words).

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SUMMARY

Title: Plato's *Symposium*: the Other Half. A study of Phaedrus', Pausanias', and Eryximachus' Speeches (*Symposium*, 178a6-188e4).

Author: Christian Keime

This thesis is primarily a study of the first three speeches uttered in praise of *Erôs* in Plato's *Symposium* (178a6-188e4). Less studied than the following speeches, these encomia are often dismissed as lacking in argumentative consistency, cultural originality, and philosophical insights. I disprove these three criticisms by showing that, in each discourse, the line of argumentation is stronger than appears at first sight, the views of *erôs* are far from conventional, and genuine philosophical questions are raised: can *erôs* be viewed as leading to courage (Phaedrus), wisdom (Pausanias), or harmony (Eryximachus) without being denied some of its essential features — inconstancy, desire and pleasure?

The thesis is also centrally concerned with two more general questions about the way the Platonic dialogue works as a whole. (1) What is the nature of the contest over wisdom in which all the speakers are involved? I argue that the challenge issued by Eryximachus at the start of the dialogue (177a2-d5) is not to just praise *erôs* but to reveal how the emotion is conducive to the highest kind of benefits for human beings: virtue and happiness, each speaker being led as a result to advocate, beyond a vision of *erôs*, a particular ideal of human excellence. (2) How does Diotima's speech relate to the previous ones? I argue that the priestess does not just dismiss the first speeches (Rowe), nor further develops some insights roughly presented in the first speeches (Sheffield): rather, she solves questions raised by them. The final purpose of the study is to better understand why Plato chose to express his views through various voices in his dialogue.

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INTRODUCTION

Plato's *Symposium* consists largely of a series of six speeches in praise of *erôs*, and a eulogy of Socrates delivered by an unexpected guest, Alcibiades. Alcibiades' flamboyant speech has long fascinated Plato's readers,[1] and in the series of encomia of *erôs*, which constitute the core feature of the dialogue, scholars have in fact mainly paid attention to the last three speeches, for reasons obvious enough. Socrates' discourse, the longest speech, is generally viewed as the pinnacle of the dialogue.[2] Uttered by a character commonly regarded as Plato's mouthpiece, it conveys characteristic Platonic insights, especially the notion of the intelligible Form (210e-212a, cf. *Phaedo* and *Republic*), and it closes a rhetorical competition where each *epideixis* is expected to cap the previous one (cf. 177e3-5, 194a2-4): Socrates famously dismisses all the previous speakers by claiming to be the first to tell the truth (198d3-e4).[3] Among the 'pre-Socratic' speeches, Aristophanes' mythical account of *erôs* is usually recognized as the most appealing contribution, both from a poetic and a philosophical standpoint, and the poet's interpersonal conception of *erôs*, which finds resonance in our post-romantic conception of love, is sometimes considered as a serious challenge to Diotima's more impersonal and disembodied *erôs*.[4] Agathon's speech, although often regarded as a

[1] See esp. Stallbaum (1852) xxv-xxxi, North (1966) 168-9, Gagarin (1977), Nussbaum (1986) 165-99, Wohl (1999), Scott (2000), Sheffield (2001b), Reeve (2006), Destrée (2012), Cornelli (2016), Halper (2016).

[2] See already Stallbaum (1852) xvii.

[3] On the competitive nature of sympotic talks, see Bowie (1993) 365, 369. On the capping function of each speech, see Rowe (1998) 8. For a defence of the 'dialectical ascent' of the speeches, see Rötscher (1832) 5-20, Isenberg (1940), Blanckenhagen (1992) 63-4, Ferrari (1992) 250-2, Sedley (2006) and (2017); against this view, see Bury (1932) liii, Guthrie (1975) 382, n. 2, Dorter (1992) 253f, Waterfield (1994) xxiii. Allen (1991) 11 argues for a ring structure of the first five speeches. Monographs have been dedicated to Diotima's speech, e.g. Ménissier (1996), Sier (1997), Lamascus (2016), while Socrates and Diotima are usually given the lion's share in the general studies of the *Symposium*, see esp. Wilamowitz (1920) vol. 1: 379-92 and vol. 2: 169-78, Guthrie (1975) 365-96, Sheffield (2006a), Havlíček and Cajthalm (2007), Tulli and Erler (2016), as also in books on Platonic love, cf. Gould (1963), Robin (1964), Buchner (1965), Krüger (1992), Price (1997). A notable exception is Hunter (2004a), to which this study is highly indebted.

[4] Nussbaum (1986) 173-4. For the view that the speech is a high point, see e.g. Rötscher (1832) 10-1 and Rowe (1998) 12. Dover (1966) offers a detailed study of the imagery and structure of

brilliant but superficial rhetorical performance,[5] has also been given serious consideration, especially by those who argue for an ascending order of importance in the speeches;[6] and, regardless of the philosophical value of Agathon's claims, no one doubts that his speech plays a key function in the dialogue: it is a necessary element in the contest of wisdom opened at the outset between the poet and the philosopher (175e7-9), and it provides a springboard for Diotima's theory of *erôs*, which Socrates introduces through an elenchus of the poet's views (199c3-201c9).[7] The definition of *erôs* on which Diotima bases her entire encomium (a strong desire for the good and the fine), is a combination of the insights brought forward by Aristophanes (desire) and Agathon (the good and the fine).[8]

Three neglected speeches

To be sure, none of the first three encomia shows the poetic inventiveness of Aristophanes, nor the rhetorical brilliance of Agathon, nor the philosophical insights of Diotima; and their function in the economy of the whole dialogue, particularly their relationship with Socrates' encomium, does not appear so clearly. This may explain why they are less commented on, and, when they are, that they are usually poorly valued and taken as mere appetizers for what follows.

These speeches have suffered three major kinds of criticism so far. (i) The argument looks flawed: either vain and over-sophisticated (e.g. Phaedrus' characterization of

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the fable, and O'Brien (2007) and Nieddu (2007) of the philosophical and literary background. Saxonhouse (1984) argues for a pessimistic, Hooper (2013) for a more optimistic reading of the passage of the net of Hephaistus. Obdrzalek (2017) proposes a tragic reading of the entire speech, and Sedley (2017) sees the myth as a tragi-comic perversion of the creation myth of the *Timaeus*. Ludwig (2002) 25-118 offers an extensive treatment of the political implications of the speech.

[5] Bury (1932) xxxv-vi, Waterfield (1994) xxiv, Brisson (2006) 245.

[6] The main studies are Stokes (1986) ch. 3, who insists on the opposition between Agathon and Socrates, and Sedley (2006), who points to the continuity between the two speakers; for this view see also Rötscher (1832) 17 and Gonzalez (2017).

[7] Cf. Bury (1932) lvi. On the competition between Agathon and Socrates, see esp. Bacon (1959), Robinson (2004) and Müller (2012). On Socrates' cross-examination of Agathon, see esp. Payne (1999) and Castagnoli (2001).

[8] Already pointed out by Susemihl (1851) 207, and Clay (1983) 189. On Socrates' debt to Aristophanes, see also Jaeger (1945) 189, Nussbaum (1986) 171-4, Halperin (1985) 169, Sheffield (2006a) 209, and Scolnicov (2016); on his debt to Agathon, see Rowe (1998) 9, Sedley (2006).

Achilles as Patroclus' *erômenos*), or dishonest (e.g. Pausanias' support for a lifelong homosexual relationship sounds sophistic and self-serving), or inconsistent (e.g. Eryximachus eventually characterizes *erôs* as a well-balanced state devoid of desire).[9] (ii) The theories of *erôs* look conventional, since each speaker explicitly champions a particular expertise — epic and tragic poetry (Phaedrus), the Athenian legal code (Pausanias), medicine (Eryximachus).[10] Sheffield offers philosophical support for this approach: in her view, the first speeches convey what Aristotle calls *endoxa*: 'the things which are accepted by everyone, or by most people; or by the wise — either by all of them, or by most, or by the most famous and distinguished' (*Top.* 100b21-3).[11] (iii) As a consequence of these two assumptions, the encomia are often viewed as devoid of philosophical value;[12] at best, they are regarded as conveying hazy insights about *erôs*, which are waiting to be fleshed out by Socrates and Diotima.[13]

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[9] See esp. Bury (1932) lviii, Allen (1991) 8 and 12, Nehamas and Woodruff (1989) xv-xvi, and Belfiore (2011) 156, who argues for the five speakers' 'lack of understanding (*amathia*) about *erôs*.' More references will be provided on each individual speech.

[10] For long-standing expressions of this view, see esp. Sydenham (1761) 6-10, 15-6, Schleiermacher (1836) 284-5, Stallbaum (1852) xxxii, and Bury (1932) lvii, Foucault (1984) 253 ('discours témoins'). For the view that each speaker depends on a particular sophist, see Sydenham (1761) 6-9, Rückert (1829) 259, 265, 270-1, 280-2, 284, Brochard (1926) 68-71, Reeve (1992) 90-1, Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2004) 33-4; Notomi (2016) 124, Corradi (2016) 175. On Agathon's house as a prime place for sophistry, see Rosen (1968) 24-5, Strauss and Benardete (2001) 25-27, 39-40. On the speeches' reliance on poetry, see esp. Belfiore (2011) 157, who accuses the first five speakers of 'quoting and citing the works of poets without examining critically the views these 'authorities' express.'

[11] See Sheffield (2006a) 16 and 214, and (2006b). On the use of *endoxa*, see *Eth. Nic.* 1145b1-2, *Eth. Eud.* 1216b26-35. Allen (1991) 8 and Nehamas and Woodruff (1989) xv rightly raise doubts about this widespread assumption, but they do not explain, and Allen attributes the originality of each speech to the 'influence of sophistic culture on upper-class Athenians'. Hunter (2004a) provides a more nuanced account of the relationship between the speeches and the former traditions.

[12] Bury (1932) lvii, Robin (1929) xxxvi, Cornford (1971) 121-2, Rosen (1968) xxxvi, Guthrie (1975) 381.

[13] See Schleiermacher (1836) 283, Hermann (1839) 522, Jahn (1839) 132, Grube (1935) 96-9, Friedländer (1969) 11-23, Markus (1971) 133–4, Reeve (1992) 91, Sheffield (2006b), Sier (2007), Cooksey (2010) 71. See also Brentlinger's Aristotle-style description of the earlier speeches as 'the *data* of [Socrates'] discourse, the concrete material which gives meaning and relevance to its compressed and abstract statement' (Brentlinger 1970: 21). Reid (2017) 29-39 views the first three speeches as highlighting three features of Plato's psychology required for the pre-philosophical *paideia* of the *Republic*: spirited capacities (Phaedrus), lawfulness (Pausanias), and harmony (Eryximachus). For a general dismissal of the first three speeches, see Sedley (2006) 52, for whom Aristophanes, Agathon, and Socrates stand out as conveying Plato's voice.

The project

I would like to challenge those three views. As I see it, the endeavours and achievements of the first speakers can be assessed more fairly if we understand that they intend to meet a particular challenge issued by Eryximachus and Phaedrus at the start of the dialogue (177a2-d5): not just praising *erôs*, but offering it a novel and proper encomium, by demonstrating that, against all common assumptions, *erôs* is conducive to the highest benefits: virtue (ἀρετή) and happiness (εὐδαιμονία). I will argue that, in light of these requirements, (i) some apparently over-sophisticated or inconsistent points prove quite justified: in order to show that *erôs* leads to virtue and happiness, Phaedrus *must* characterize Achilles as Patroclus' *erômenos*, Pausanias *must* claim that the noble form of *paiderastia* lasts throughout life, Eryximachus *must* view *erôs* both as a desire and as a state deprived of desire. The oddity of such claims should be attributed to the special requirements of the rhetorical programme rather than to the vanity or the dishonesty of the speakers. (ii) Although all the speakers clearly draw on traditional strands of *sophia*, they have to argue for links between *erôs* and the good that have not been revealed by any *sophos* so far: as a result, their account of *erôs* cannot be viewed as fully traditional. Instead, I shall show that each speaker provides a traditional view of the kind of virtue and happiness to which he relates *erôs*. For example, Eryximachus' view of *erôs* as a good balance between contradictory properties can be found nowhere in the Hippocratic corpus; for all that, the same medical tradition famously claims that a good balance or *krâsis* is the necessary condition for ensuring health, and that health is the supreme good for humans. Like Eryximachus, Phaedrus and Pausanias will provide an account of *erôs* which, as it were, dialectically improves on the tradition on which they draw: they will rejuvenate the tradition by means of a view of the good directly borrowed from the tradition itself. (iii) Since each speaker intends to relate *erôs* at all costs to his particular view of virtue and happiness, he will eventually desexualise *erôs*, create an ideal picture of *erôs* which in some respects does not any longer resemble *erôs*.[14] For example, it is unclear how erotic the lifelong erotic relationship between Pausanias' noble lovers actually is, and whether this noble *erôs* is different from mere *philia*. It will thus appear that, if each of the first speakers claims that *erôs* is conducive to a particular form of virtue and happiness, they all fail to demonstrate their claims

[14] Already noticed by Halliwell (2016) 5-9.

convincingly. This very failure, I shall argue, is what gives the first speeches some philosophical relevance. The philosophical contribution of these speeches is not just to provide un-argued insights that Diotima will further develop. It is rather to raise questions: is it possible to demonstrate that *erôs*, with all its essential characteristics (fickleness, pleasure, desire, etc.) is truly conducive to military virtue? To wisdom? To a fine state of balance? In other words, is it possible both to offer a high-standard encomium to *erôs* and to say the truth about it? I will finally argue that Socrates, through the voice of Diotima, brings out the importance of these questions and solves them: Diotima recalls the problems initially raised, and demonstrates that it is possible to reveal both what *erôs* is, and how conducive it is to the kinds of virtue and happiness advertised by the previous speakers.

Method and plan of the study

I shall not be able to do justice to the first three speeches without also paying close attention to two passages that frame them: the programme set down by Eryximachus and Phaedrus (177a2-d5), and Socrates', or Diotima's, response to the first speeches (199c3-212c3). The study will follow the textual order of the dialogue.

Chapter 1 will bring out the implicit requirements of the rhetorical challenge issued by Phaedrus through the voice of Eryximachus (177a2-d5): providing a proper encomium of the god *Erôs* which demonstrates how he is most conducive to achieving virtue and happiness.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will study one by one the first three speeches, with a view to disproving the three main criticisms mentioned above: (i) A close study of the argument will describe the elaborate strategy whereby each speaker takes up the challenge. (ii) I will show how this strategy leads the speaker to offer an unconventional view of *erôs*, which is, however, grounded in a conventional view of the good. (iii) I will finally show how, in order to meet the challenge, each speaker is necessarily led to make puzzling claims about *erôs*: each will show that *erôs* is conducive to virtue and happiness through a mechanism which appears, in some respects, un-erotic.

Chapter 5 will investigate how Diotima's theory refers to the first speeches through a striking pattern of word echoes, and manages to solve the problems raised previously:

Diotima also shows that *erôs* can lead to virtue and happiness, but through a mechanism which is actually erotic.

Expected outcomes

My primary purpose is to shed new light on the first speeches themselves, and on their relationship to Diotima's encomium. In so doing I also hope to explain better why Plato propounds his theory of *erôs* through various and quite contradictory voices. Although I will accept the widespread view that Diotima's theory dominates the debate and should be taken as the closest to what Plato thinks about *erôs*, I will also argue that this account could not be presented without the former ones, since, in my view, Diotima aims not just to propound a theory, but to solve problems laid down beforehand. Diotima may need the first speakers as much as Socrates needs his interlocutors when he leads his dialectical conversations: like the dialectician, she intends to examine and account for (λόγον διδόναι) what has been said in the first stages of the conversation; and, in so doing, she solves the problems to which these un-examined claims necessarily lead.

A further purpose of this study will be to understand in what kind of wisdom competition all the speakers are engaged in Plato's dialogue. A first claim will be that the contest between Socrates and the previous speakers cannot be viewed just as a competition between 'philosophy' and 'tradition': all the previous speakers support paradoxical views of *erôs* and Diotima's view will appear in many respects much more traditional than the previous ones. Secondly, I will show that if the various speakers hold different conceptions of *erôs*, it is primarily because they hold different views of the good. In the *Symposium*, the debate may thus bear on the nature of the good as much as on the nature, or the benefits, of *erôs*.[15]

[15] A claim already made by Dorter (1969) and Halliwell (2016): I wish to elaborate on these insights.

Note on the transliteration of the Greek

Greek words will be transliterated, except when particular passages are cited; '*erôs*' will be printed with a capital letter only when the word refers without any possible ambiguity to the god, not to the emotion (e.g. a hymn to *Erôs*).

Editions of fragments used

Alcaeus and Sappho = Voigt (1971)

Attic Comedy = Kassel-Austin (1983-2001) (*PCG*)

Hesiod = Merkelbach-West (1967)

Iambus and Elegy (Archilochus, Hipponax, *Theognidea*, Callinus Mimnermus, Semonides, Solon, Tyrtaeus, Minora Adespota) = West (1989) and (1992a) (*IEG*)

Melic poets (Alcman, Stesichorus, Ibycus, Anacreon, Simonides, Corinna, *Carmina Popularia* et *Convivialia*) = Page (1962) (*PMG*)

Pindar = Maehler (2007/1989)

Tragedy = *TrGF*

Abbreviations for the Hippocratic texts cited

Aff. = On Affections

Aph. = Aphorisms

Art. = The Art

Epid. = Epidemics

Flat. = Breaths

Gen. = On Generation

Hum. = Humours

Int. Aff = Internal Affections

Loc. Hom. = Places in Man

Morb. = Diseases

Mul. = Diseases of Women

Nat. Hom. = Nature of Man,

Nat. Mul. = Nature of Woman

Prorrh. = Prorrhetic

Superf. = Superfetation

Vet. Med. = Ancient Medicine

Vict. = Regimen

All the Hippocratic texts are cited from Littré (1839-1861).

For the text of the *Symposium*, I follow Burnet (1910).

CHAPTER 1. THE PROGRAMME: *ERÔS* AND THE GOOD (177a2-d5)

Introduction

Before studying the first three encomia, we need to understand what kind of intellectual challenge these speeches confront, that is, the project of praising *erôs* proposed by Phaedrus and Eryximachus at the start of the dialogue (177a2-d5). This passage, I will argue, prescribes not just the praise of *Erôs*, but the need to improve on the encomia already composed by poets.

I. Eryximachus' and Phaedrus' proposal

At the start of the dialogue, Eryximachus reports the complaints of his friend Phaedrus (177a5-d5): *Erôs* has been neglected (ἠμέληται) so far; although he is a great god, nobody has dared to praise him properly (ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι): neither the poets who composed hymns and paeans (ὕμνους καὶ παίωνας), or eulogies (ἐγκώμια) to other gods, nor the good sophists (τοὺς χρηστοὺς σοφιστάς), who composed in prose (καταλογάδην) speeches of praise (ἐπαίνους) of men (e.g. Prodicus' praise to Heracles), or of trivial things, like salt, which has already been 'superbly lauded for its usefulness' (ἔπαινον θαυμάσιον ἔχοντες πρὸς ὠφελίαν) by a wise man (ἀνδρὸς σοφοῦ). In response to Phaedrus' complaint, Eryximachus proposes to honour (κοσμῆσαι) the god by composing the most beautiful encomium possible (ἔπαινον Ἔρωτος ... ὡς ἂν δύνηται κάλλιστον, 175c5-d5).[16]

[16] Many terms refer to praise/praising in the passage (κοσμῆσαι, ὕμνος/ὑμνεῖν, παιών, ἐγκώμιον, ἔπαινος, κοσμῆσαι). Only ἐγκώμιον and ἔπαινος are used subsequently in the dialogue to refer to the speeches of praise delivered by the characters; unlike ὕμνος or παιών, both terms can refer to prose compositions, cf. Pernot (1993) 118; although Aristotle and later theorists distinguish their meanings (Arist. *Rh.* 1.1367b28-30, *Eth. Eud.* 2.1219b8-16, *Eth. Nic.* 1.1101b31-34, Alex. Rhet. Περὶ ῥητορικῶν ἀφορμῶν, 2.9-4.15 Spengel, see Buchheit (1960) 64, n. 2, 162-4), Plato uses the terms interchangeably in the *Symposium*; see Pernot (1993) 123. In this study, 'encomium' will translate both ἐγκώμιον and ἔπαινος.

II. No previous encomium of *Erôs*?

It has long been noted that Phaedrus' complaint, echoed later on by Aristophanes (189c5-8; 193c8-d1), is on the surface implausible.[17] Phaedrus himself, at the start of his speech, says that *Erôs* is commonly regarded as a great god (ὁμολογεῖταί γε παρὰ πάντων μέγας θεὸς εἶναι, 202b6-7), and we know that *Erôs* was worshipped in gymnasia, invoked on the battlefield by the Spartans and the Cretans,[18] and that several sanctuaries were dedicated to the god from an early date in Greece, including in Athens.[19] At Thespiae, *Erôs* 'was routinely honoured (τιμᾶται) in public libations' (Athen. 13.561e), and the festival of the Erotidia presumably consisted in athletic *and musical* games in his honour;[20] in Athens a festival (ἑορτή) of *Erôs* is attested by an inscription from the mid-5th cent. BC.[21] In the frame of these celebrations, encomia must have been composed, such as the ritual poems that the historian Pausanias claims to have read (ἔπη ... πεποιημένα ... ἐς Ἔρωτα), allegedly composed by Pamphos and Orpheus, and performed by the religious family of the Lycomidae in Athens.[22]

No potentially cultic encomium has been transmitted, except perhaps a fragment of Alcaeus,[23] but we have substantial literary encomia, especially from 5th century tragic poets: Aristarchus, Sophocles, and most of all Euripides.[24] In *Hippolytus* in particular (428 BC), the chorus seems to foreshadow Phaedrus' and Aristophanes' complaints, and pays tribute to the god through a song which shows all the standard characteristics of a cult hymn.[25] Many other passages, especially from tragedy, may not qualify as formal

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[17] See Hug (1884) 31, Wilamowitz (1920) vol. 1: 363, Bury (1932) 19, Page (1955) 270, Friedländer (1969) 9-10, Fasce (1977) 33, Arcioni (2003) 93, Rowe (1998) 135, Brisson (2007) 187, n. 4.

[18] Athen. 13.561d-e.

[19] In Thespiae, Leuctra and Parion, see Paus. 3.26.5, 9.27.1-4, with Fasce (1977) 15-29. For Athens, see Paus. 1.30.1 and Schol. [Hermias] ad Pl. *Phaedr.* 231e, with Broneer (1932) 32-3, (1933) 329ff, (1935) 109ff, (1937) 162, (1938) 161, and Fasce (1977) 29-40.

[20] Paus. 9.31.3.

[21] See Broneer (1932) 44-5, and Fasce (1977) 33-5, 71.

[22] Paus. 9.27.2, cf. Moggi and Osanna (2010) 37.

[23] Alcaeus, fr. 327 = Plut. *Mor*. 765d-e; cf. Page (1955) 270-1.

[24] Aristarch. fr. 2; Soph. *Ant.* 781-801, fr. 684; Eur. *Hipp.* 449-50, 525-44, and 1268-82, frr. 388, 430, 897.

[25] *Hipp*. 525-44, cf. Kranz (1933) 187 and 191 and Halleran (1995) 195; Kranz also points to the hymnic features of Soph. *Ant.* 781-6.

encomia, but they suggest how the god could have been more formally eulogized in cult hymns which are lost to us.[26]

III. A novel kind of encomium

Phaedrus, a self-proclaimed literary expert,[27] can hardly be unaware of these previous testimonies. His audience, and Plato's readers, are meant to understand why he deliberately ignores them. Is he 'over-egging his pudding',[28] in order to blow up the originality of his plan? I would rather explore an hypothesis already proposed by Allen and Sheffield: Phaedrus may mean that those former encomia are too sub-standard to be even mentioned, and invites his fellow drinkers to offer the god an encomium of a higher standard than those composed so far.[29] Phaedrus complains that no one has dared (τετολμηκέναι) to hymn the god *as he deserves* (ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι, 177c2-3). Aristophanes, similarly, does not blame humans for not revering *Erôs*, but for failing to recognize his real power (τὴν τοῦ ἔρωτος δύναμιν οὐκ ἠσθῆσθαι) and, as a result, for not paying him the *greatest* honours (μέγιστ' ἂν αὐτοῦ ἱερὰ καὶ βωμούς ... θυσίας ἂν ποιεῖν μεγίστας, 189c4-7). What is a proper encomium? What kind of power should the symposiasts recognize in the god?

A. *Erôs* as cause of *aretê* and *eudaimonia*

Phaedrus himself provides important clues by delivering the first encomium of the contest. He concludes his speech as follows:

> Οὕτω δὴ ἔγωγέ φημι Ἔρωτα θεῶν καὶ πρεσβύτατον καὶ τιμιώτατον καὶ κυριώτατον εἶναι εἰς ἀρετῆς καὶ εὐδαιμονίας κτῆσιν ἀνθρώποις καὶ ζῶσι καὶ τελευτήσασιν. (180b6-8)

Three points are worth noting here: (i) Phaedrus has not just shown that *erôs* is admirable or beneficial (πρεσβύτατος, τιμιώτατος, κυριώτατος), but that it is conducive

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[26] See, e.g., Soph. *Trach.* 441-3, 449-50, 488-9, 497; Eur. *Med.* 840-5, fr. 138, 162, 431, 661.24-6, 663; Critias fr. 17; *Carm. popul*. 873; Thgn. 695-6; Pind. *Nem*. 8.4-5.

[27] See esp. 178a6-c1, cf. Hunter (2004a) 38.

[28] Rowe (1998) 135.

[29] Allen (1991) 7 with n. 10; Sheffield (2006a) 15 n. 9. See also Rowe (1998) 135.

to the best possible benefits for human beings: excellence (ἀρετή) and happiness (εὐδαιμονία): he showed that *erôs* leads us to behave well (looking for honours, 178d2; sacrificing our lives, 179a5), and, as a result, to fare well: living in a safe city (179a2), returning from Hades (179c6-d1), or being sent to the Isles of the Blessed (180b6). (ii) On this account, *aretê* and *eudaimonia* are causally linked: it is thanks to the *philotimia* and *andreia* instilled by *erôs* that lovers can reach happiness, that is, the ultimate goal in life.[30] (iii) The superlatives (πρεσβύτατον καὶ τιμιώτατον καὶ κυριώτατον) are also significant: Phaedrus has shown that, among the various incentives for *philotimia* and *andreia*, *erôs* is the most efficient one (cf. 178c5-d1).

All the subsequent speakers will follow the guidance of the 'father of the argument' (πατὴρ τοῦ λόγου, 177d5), showing that *erôs* is the best means to reach a particular form of *aretê* — political wisdom (Pausanias), a just and temperate balance (Eryximachus), industriousness (Aristophanes), all the virtues (Agathon), *true* virtue (Diotima) — and that, as a result, it is the best route into a particular form of *eudaimonia*: democratic citizenship and political success (Pausanias), harmony and health (Eryximachus), recovery of our original perfection (Aristophanes), creation and power (Agathon), contemplation of the truth (Diotima).[31] Since they envisage *erôs* as the best means for achieving *aretê* and *eudaimonia*, each speaker — not only Pausanias — will promote a particular form of *paideia*, or *paiderastia*.[32] The dramatic context naturally points to such an elite programme: the Greek symposion was a prime site for discussing the nature of excellence.[33]

It is thus no surprise that, with such requirements in mind, Phaedrus cannot think of any former encomium of *Erôs* worthy of mention. Judging from the textual evidence that has come down to us,[34] poets used to praise *Erôs* for five main reasons.

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[30] Sheffield (2006a) 209-10. On *eudaimonia* as the final good, see Pl. *Smp.* 205a1-3, Arist., *Eth. Nic*. 1097a28-b5.

[31] Phaedrus, Eryximachus, Pausanias, and Diotima envisage the benefits of *erôs* only for humans; Aristophanes and Agathon, for humans *and gods* (191b5-d3, 197b8-9) — this may support the view, familiar enough in Plato, that poets depict the gods as sharing in human emotions, needs and failings, cf. *Resp.* 2.377c-383c.

[32] Cf. 178e3-179a2 (Phaedrus); 181d7-e3 (Pausanias); 187c8-e6 (Eryximachus); 189d3-4, 192a7-b5, 193c1-5 (Aristophanes); 196d5-197b3 (Agathon).

[33] Cf. Xenophanes 1.19-20, Anon. eleg. 27, Hes. frr. 273 and 274; see Ford (1997) 92-3 and (2002) 28, 33-5, Hunter (2004a) 15.

[34] See above n. 23 to 26.

(1) His **power**: *Erôs* rules over all creatures, including gods.[35] However, while bringing out this feature, poets also routinely show how harmful to lovers the god is: he is a despot (τύραννος, Eur. *Hipp*. 536), who weakens (cf. λυσιμελής)[36] and leads to madness and self-destruction.[37] (2) **Agency.** To be sure, *Erôs* also communicates to us his power: lovers are stronger, bolder, and craftier;[38] but this power is famously ambivalent: it is beneficial only when well used, since it can lead lovers to commit crime, including towards their closest kin.[39] (3) **Pleasure**: the god is also praised for leading to the greatest pleasure of all.[40] A characteristic expression of this view is an elegiac couplet of Theognis:

> Κάλλιστον τὸ δικαιότατον· λῶιστον δ' ὑγιαίνειν·
> πρᾶγμα δὲ τερπνότατον, τοῦ τις ἐρᾶι, τὸ τυχεῖν.
> (Theogn. 255-6)[41]

However, while highlighting the benefit of *erôs* (ἐρᾶι), i.e. τὸ τερπνότατον (or ἥδιστον in Aristotle's and Sophocles' versions), the poet also makes clear that this benefit has nothing to do with the boons to which Plato's characters connect *erôs*: the fine (κάλλιστον), identified here with virtue (δικαιότατον) and the good (λῶιστον), which Aristotle, when quoting the passage, understands as τὸ ἀγαθόν (*Eth. Eud.* 1214a3). Accordingly, encomia of *Erôs* or Aphrodite invariably prescribe enjoying their pleasures in moderation, so as not to thwart these benefits.[42] Moreover, Theognis shows that *erôs* does not relate to pleasure as directly and necessarily as justice relates to the

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[35] Alcaeus fr. 327; Hes. *Theog*. 119-20; Ibyc. fr. 287; Soph. *Ant.* 782-790, *Trach*. 443, 488-9, fr. 684; Eur. *Hipp*. 525–64, 1269-80; Aristarch. fr. 2; etc. cf. Müller (1980) 165-7.

[36] Hes. *Theog*. 121; Sappho fr. 130, cf. fr. 31.

[37] Thgn. 1231-4, Soph. *Ant.*, 790-1, *Trach*. 520-2; Eur. *Hipp.* 543-4, 1274, *Med.* 651-3; Ibyc. fr. 286.6-13; Alcman fr. 58; Thuc. 6.24.3ff; Gorg. *Hel.* 19. See Prodicus' definition of *erôs*: Ἐπιθυμίαν μὲν διπλασιασθεῖσαν ἔρωτα εἶναι, ἔρωτα δὲ διπλασιασθέντα μανίαν γίγνεσθαι, 84 B7 DK. Cf. Dodds (1951) 41, Müller (1980) 163-5, Halperin (1985) 163, Calame (1999) 19-21, Cyrino (1995), Thornton (1997) 33–5, Nussbaum and Sihvola (2002), King (2004) 38–40, Hunter (2004a) 17, Sanders and Thumiger (2013), 1–5, MacNamara (2016) 309.

[38] Soph. *Trach*. 351-5; Eur. fr. 430; Aristarch. fr. 2.

[39] Soph. *Ant*. 793-9, *Trach.* 431-3; Eur. *Hipp*. 541-54, *Med.* 629-40, *Iph. Aul.* 551; cf. Hunter (2004a) 17, Thumiger (2013) 28, MacNamara (2016) 310f, Wright (2016) 221, n. 10.

[40] Alcman fr. 59, Soph. *Aj.* 1199-205, Eur. *Hipp*. 526-7, fr. 138, fr. 897.3-6.

[41] Also quoted in Arist. *Eth*. *Eud*. 1214a5 and *Eth. Nic.* 1099a27, with slight variation; cf. Soph. fr. 356.

[42] Eur. *Hipp.* 525-32, *Med.* 627-44, 840-3, *Iph. Aul.* 543-5, 554-7, fr. 967; cf. Archil. fr. 191. On *sophrôn erôs*, see North (1966) 73-4.

fine, or health to the good: *erôs* brings pleasure only if it achieves (τυχεῖν) its goal; not satisfied, *Erôs* unrequited is most painful (ἀλγεσίδωρος, Sappho fr. 172).[43] This may explain why *erôs* is often viewed as the mere servant of Aphrodite,[44] and why the goddess is more often the recipient of poetical encomia and invocations: she, not *Erôs*, is the one in charge of purveying sexual pleasure (τὰ ἀφροδίσια).[45] (4) **Reproduction.** *Erôs* is also valued for being responsible for the generation of men and gods:[46] contrary to power and pleasure, this benefit surely does not carry any obvious threat for the lover or his entourage; but men and gods share this benefit with the stupidest beasts, as Diotima recalls (207a7-9, cf. Aristotle, *Eth. Eud.* 1217a21-9), and this is incompatible with the kind of benefits on which all the encomia must focus: ethical goods which are only accessible to men and gods. (5) **Virtue**. Poets, for all that, do sometimes relate *erôs* to such benefits: sometimes virtue is viewed as *desiring* and being able to provide fine and good things;[47] *erôs* thus should be directed towards virtuous things or people.[48] But the claim that *Erôs* can lead to things which are fine (καλά), in the sense of noble and good (ἀγαθά), not just beautiful and pleasant (ἡδέα), involves the view that *erôs* is twofold:[49] as soon as it is directed towards the good, it can also be directed towards the

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[43] Cf. Thgn. 1353-6, which explains Sappho's famous characterization of *erôs* as γλυκύπικρος, fr. 130, see Calame (1999) 16. On this ambivalence, see also Eur. fr. 136 and *Iph*. *Aul*. 548-51.

[44] See Hes. *Theog.* 201f; Eur., *Hipp.* 530-2, 539-40, *Med.* 530f, *Iph. Aul.* 548. See also Paus. 1.43.6 about the statue of *Erôs* in a temple of Aphrodite in Megara. Cf. Gould (1963) 24-5, Krüger (1992) 20-1.

[45] See *Hom. Hymn.* 5, 6, 10; Hes. *Erg*. 65-8; Mimn. fr. 1.1-5; Sappho fr. 1.

[46] For gods, see Hes. *Theog*. 120ff with Plut. *Amat*. 756f; Pherec. 7 B3 DK; cf. Wilamowitz (1959) 178 n. 2 and Most (2013). For men, see Pind. *Nem*. 8.4-5, ἀγαπατὰ δὲ καιροῦ μὴ πλαναθέντα πρὸς ἔργον ἕκαστον | τῶν ἀρειόνων ἐρώτων ἐπικρατεῖν δύνασθαι. The 'most noble loves' here are those of Zeus and Aegina, who gave birth to Aeacus, cf. l. 5-7; see also Eur. *Hipp*. 449f, cf. Hunter (2004a) 18.

[47] Thgn. 653-4 (Εὐδαίμων εἴην καὶ θεοῖς φίλος ἀθανάτοισιν | Κύρν'· ἀρετῆς δ' ἄλλης οὐδεμιῆς ἔραμαι), 695-6 (Οὐ δύναμαί σοι, θυμέ, παρασχεῖν ἄρμενα πάντα·| τέτλαθι· τῶν δὲ καλῶν οὔ τι σὺ μοῦνος ἐρᾷις); cf. Pl. *Meno* 77b2-5 (Δοκεῖ τοίνυν μοι, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἀρετὴ εἶναι, καθάπερ ὁ ποιητὴς λέγει, "χαίρειν τε καλοῖσι καὶ δύνασθαι·" καὶ ἐγὼ τοῦτο λέγω ἀρετήν, ἐπιθυμοῦντα τῶν καλῶν δυνατὸν εἶναι πορίζεσθαι. In the passage χαίρειν and ἐπιθυμεῖν can be viewed as standing for ἐρᾶν). On *Erôs* and *aretê*, see Müller (1980) 200-8.

[48] Eur. fr. 138 (ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς ἔρωτα πίπτουσιν βροτῶν, | ἐσθλῶν ὅταν τύχωσι τῶν ἐρωμένων, | οὐκ ἔσθ' ὁποίας λείπεται τόδ' ἡδονῆς); Critias fr. 17 (ἔρωτες ἡμῖν εἰσὶ παντοῖοι βίου·| ... ἐγὼ δὲ τούτων οὐδενὸς χρήζω τυχεῖν, | δόξαν <δὲ> βουλοίμην ἂν εὐκλείας ἔχειν); cf. Aesch. *Eumen*. 865 (δεινὸς εὐκλείας ἔρως) and Eur. fr. 547 (οἳ μὲν κακῶν ἐρῶσιν, οἳ δὲ τῶν καλῶν) and 388 (χρῆν δὲ τοῖς βροτοῖσι τόνδ' εἶναι νόμον | τῶν εὐσεβούντων οἵτινές τε σώφρονες | ἐρᾶν)

[49] On the twofold *erôs*, see Pind. Nem. 8.5-6, Eur. *Iph. Aul.* 548 (δίδυμ' ὁ χρυσοκόμας Ἔρως), frr. 388, 547, 661.22, 929a (δισσὰ πνεύματα πνεῖς, Ἔρως), 967; with North (1966) 74, n. 101 and Müller (1980) 202-6.

bad.[50] Ugly bodies are not likely to arouse *erôs*, whereas morally base things (κακά or αἰσχρά) are: at least according to a conventional, non-Socratic opinion, doing wrong is even more pleasant than being just.[51] Showing that *erôs* can and should be directed towards good (moral) things does not amount to demonstrating that it is the privileged means to acquire these things, as Plato's symposiasts intend to do; it rather leads to an admission that *erôs* can be detrimental to a good moral behaviour.

In sum, the values poets usually ascribe to *erôs* are most of the time not beneficial to the lover (power); when *erôs* is beneficial, its benefits are ambivalent (agency, pleasure), or not specific to humans and gods (reproduction); and when *erôs* is linked to the kind of benefit promoted by Plato's encomiasts (virtue and happiness), it is said to be merely compatible with, not especially conducive to, it.

As a result, none of the speakers can praise *erôs* along these traditional lines. To be sure, their accounts will include the benefits already put forward by the poets, but these boons will always prove instrumental in bringing about the final goods *erôs* is supposed to lead to (virtue and happiness). Eryximachus extols the universal power of *erôs* (*Smp*. 186a3-7), but this power is beneficial only insofar as it brings about health and harmony (188a1-6). Agency is an essential feature of Diotima's *erôs*: the son of Poros is resourceful and ingenious (πλέκων μηχανάς ... καὶ πόριμος, *Smp*. 203d6-7, cf. ἐν τοῖς ἀμηχάνοισιν εὐπορώτατον, Eur. fr. 430), but this agency is praised only inasmuch as it leads to the fine and the good (ἐπίβουλός ἐστι τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς, *Smp*. 203d4-5). On Aristophanes' account, *erôs* could not heal us from our original dismemberment, if we were not looking for sexual pleasure in the first place (191c3-8, 191d5-192a2); but the poet also insists that pleasure is not the final good humans seek when they have sex (192c4-d1). Agathon's encomium gives a crucial role to the reproductive power of *erôs* (τήν γε τῶν ζῴων ποίησιν), but the kind of *poiêsis* he values is intellectual and artistic creativity (πᾶσαν ποίησιν τὴν κατὰ μουσικήν, τὴν τῶν τεχνῶν δημιουργίαν, 196e5-197a1). Pausanias and Eryximachus claim with Euripides (*Iph. Aul.* 548 etc.) that *erôs* is twofold and can tend towards good and noble things (*Smp*. 180d5ff, 186a2ff); but their encomia go far beyond this view: they show that, in its good form, *erôs* is uniquely conducive to virtue and happiness, and that these goods can only be properly achieved through *erôs*.

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[50] Rightly noticed by Müller (1980) 203.

[51] Explicit e.g. in Eur. fr. 547 and Critias fr. 17; cf. Pl. *Resp*. 2.363e-365a.

B. Demonstrating the claim

To be sure, a few surviving testimonies seem to anticipate the views advanced by Plato's characters. A popular song from Chalcis reported by Plutarch claims, like Phaedrus will do, that *erôs* is conducive to bravery:

> ὦ παῖδες <ὅσ>οι Χαρίτων τε καὶ πατέρων λάχετ᾽ ἐσθλῶν
> μὴ φθονεῖθ᾽ ὥρας ἀγαθοῖσιν ὁμιλεῖν·
> σὺν γὰρ ἀνδρείᾳ καὶ ὁ λυσιμελὴς
> Ἔρως ἐνὶ Χαλκιδέων θάλλει πόλεσιν
>
> (*Carm. popul*. 873 = Plut. *Amat*. 761b)[52]

Euripides' fr. 897 claims, with Pausanias, that *Erôs* can teach wisdom when used correctly:

> παίδευμα δ᾽ Ἔρως σοφίας ἐρατῆς[53]
> πλεῖστον ὑπάρχει,
> καὶ προσομιλεῖν οὗτος ὁ δαίμων
> θνητοῖς πάντων ἥδιστος ἔφυ·
> καὶ γὰρ ἄλυπον τέρψιν τιν᾽ ἔχων
> εἰς ἐλπίδ᾽ ἄγει. τοῖς δ᾽ ἀτελέστοις
> τῶν τοῦδε πόνων μήτε συνείην
> χωρίς τ᾽ ἀγρίων ναίοιμι τρόπων.
> τὸ δ᾽ ἐρᾶν προλέγω τοῖσι νέοισιν
> μήποτε φεύγειν,
> χρῆσθαι δ᾽ ὀρθῶς, ὅταν ἔλθῃ.
>
> (Eur. fr. 897 = Athen. 13.561a)[54]

Euripides' fr. 898 praises Aphrodite just as Eryximachus praises *Erôs*; the goddess benefits the whole cosmos (πάντα) by setting up *erôs* and mixture (ἐρᾶν, σύμμιξις) between opposite elements like the dry and the wet:

> ἐρᾷ μὲν ὄμβρου γαῖ', ὅταν ξηρὸν πέδον
> ἄκαρπον αὐχμῷ νοτίδος ἐνδεῶς ἔχῃ·
> ἐρᾷ δ' ὁ σεμνὸς οὐρανὸς πληρούμενος

[52] This song can date as far back as 8th cent. BC, cf. Campbell (1993) 257.

[53] ἀρετῆς ms : ἐρατῆς Housman, Kannicht.

[54] This fragment is rightly recalled by Halliwell (2016) 3. See also Eur. fr. 162 (εἰς ἔρωτα πᾶς ἀνὴρ σοφώτατος) and *Med*. 835-45 (τᾶι Σοφίαι παρέδρους πέμπειν Ἔρωτας ... παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνεργούς).

ὄμβρου πεσεῖν εἰς γαῖαν Ἀφροδίτης ὕπο·
ὅταν δὲ συμμιχθῆτον ἐς ταὐτὸν δύο,
φύουσιν ἡμῖν πάντα καὶ τρέφουσ' ἅμα,
δι' ὧν βρότειον ζῇ τε καὶ θάλλει γένος.
(Eur. fr. 898, 7-13)[55]

These passages claim that *erôs* is the privileged cause for reaching the highest kinds of good promoted by the first three speakers: courage (ἀνδρεία), wisdom (σοφία), and healthy mixture (μίξις). However, it is worth asking how familiar such claims must have sounded at the time. The Chalcidian song pointedly recalls the traditional epithet λυσιμελής often applied to *erôs* by the poets,[56] a qualification which, on the face of it, is at odds with the theory that *erôs* can prompt military courage: this indicates that the view put forward here goes off the beaten track. Plutarch, who reports the verses, insists a few pages later that such serious statements about the god are quite uncommon in the mouth of poets (ὀλίγα δ' εἴρηται μετὰ σπουδῆς αὐτοῖς, *Amat*. 765d11). As to Euripides, we know that the 'stage-philosopher' (τοῦ σκηνικοῦ φιλοσόφου Εὐριπίδου, Athen. 13.561a) can hardly be taken as a faithful mouthpiece of popular wisdom: his characters or his chorus like to float the latest theories of the sophists or the philosophers of the time, often against the views transmitted by the old poets, and fragments 897 and 898 on *erôs* seem to be cases in point.[57]

More importantly, even if these testimonies anticipate what Plato's characters claim, they do not provide any argument in support of these views. The poets merely state that *erôs* is of great benefit for the cultivation of excellence; Plato's characters, as expected in a rhetorical competition between *sophoi* who have a claim to *paideia*, intend to demonstrate these statements through a detailed argumentation: eventually, this might be both their most challenging mission and their most original contribution to the traditional discourse on *erôs*. The genre of *prose* encomium used by Plato's characters to honour *Erôs* (*enkômion* or *epainos*, not *humnos*)[58] may have special significance

[55] See also Eur. fr. 661.20-5, which is very reminiscent of Eryximachus' good and bad *erôtes*. Cf. *Iph. Aul* 543–57.

[56] Cf. Hes. *Theog*. 121, Sappho fr. 130, Archil. fr. 196.

[57] Eryximachus himself may point to this affinity between Euripides' new-fangled (philosophical?) views of *erôs* and Phaedrus' ambition of providing a novel account of the god by quoting Euripides' *Melanippe the Wise* at the start of his address (177a2-4).

[58] See above n. 16.

here: prose discourse allows a rigorous demonstration likely to teach and convince. Praise poems (*humnoi*), such as the *Homeric Hymns* or Pindar's victory odes, sustain their claims through poetical devices, and they resort to narrations — the recording of memorable *erga* — rather than abstract demonstrations.[59] To our knowledge, Plato's *Symposium* provides the first example of prose encomium, not only of *Erôs*, but of any god whatsoever.[60] Such a novelty is unlikely to have escaped Plato's readers' notice, and it may point to a further challenge that the symposiasts are expected to meet: not just making, presumably after a few poets, paradoxical claims about the virtues of *erôs*, but demonstrating these claims in a convincing manner.

IV. Following the sophists

Phaedrus may point to this double challenge in the way he justifies his proposal. He reminds us that two kinds of encomium have already been composed in prose (καταλογάδην συγγράφειν) by 'the worthy sophists' (τοὺς χρηστοὺς σοφιστάς, 177b2-3); on the one hand, educative discourses such as Prodicus' encomium of Heracles (177b2-4), presumably the fable retold by Socrates in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (2.1.21-34),[61] a protreptic argument about the comparative merits of virtue and vice, and the best way to achieve excellence. On the other hand, sophists have composed paradoxical encomia, such as a eulogy of salt:

> τινὶ ἐνέτυχον βιβλίῳ ἀνδρὸς σοφοῦ, ἐν ᾧ ἐνῆσαν ἅλες ἔπαινον θαυμάσιον ἔχοντες πρὸς ὠφελίαν (177b5-6)[62]

The tour de force (cf. σοφοῦ) of such a eulogy surely did not consist in just showing the usefulness (ὠφελίαν) of salt for human beings, something anybody could easily argue for; the encomium must have demonstrated, against all common assumptions (cf.

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[59] On such opposition between prose and verse praise, see Isoc. *Evag*. 8-10, and *Helen* 66: *philosophoi*, not poets, are likely to speak of Helen 'in a manner worthy of (ἄξιον) her merits'.

[60] Pernot (1993) 23. Prose encomia of men had already been composed, e.g. *epitaphioi logoi* or Gorgias' *Helen*. We know of titles of *erôtikoi logoi*, presumably written before 400 BC, by Antisthenes (DL 6.15), Simmias of Thebes (DL 2.108), Euclides of Megara (DL 2.124), and Critias (88 B42 DK), but these texts were probably not encomia, see Lasserre (1944).

[61] Instead, Alieva (2016) 134-5 suggests Antisthenes, cf. DL 6.105.

[62] Phaedrus may be referring here to a piece by Polycrates, as suggested by Blass (1892) 370 and Hug (1884) 32; Polycrates was the most famous exponent of this kind of argument, see Radermacher (1951) 129-32. Alieva (2016) 136, again, suggests Antisthenes.

θαυμάσιον), that the benefits of salt extended to domains more serious than human alimentation, such as education, political success, military glory, etc. (cf. πολλὴν σπουδὴν ποιήσασθαι, 177c2).[63] Isocrates' *Helen* (*c.* 370 BC), for example, demonstrates that the woman who was usually viewed as responsible for the killing of thousands of Greeks was most beneficial to humankind: her beauty caused the deeds of Theseus — a pious man who benefited all Greece (§12-15); by leading the Achaeans to fight at Troy, she prompted military exploits, inspired poets and philosophers, and even secured the freedom of Greece (§65-68)! The *Busiris* (c. 385 BC) shows that the Egyptian king, infamous for sacrificing his guests, left behind him eternal monuments of his virtue (τῆς ἀρετῆς τῆς αὑτοῦ μνημεῖον εἰς ἅπαντα τὸν χρόνον καταλιπεῖν, §10) in a way very similar to Diotima's lovers: setting down good laws, and fostering arts and philosophy (§11-23, 28, 30, cf. *Smp.* 209b5-e4); and, like Plato's symposiasts, Isocrates insists on the educative value of his rhetorical performance (42, 47).[64] Phaedrus' indignation that the sophists bothered to compose such encomia but failed to praise *Erôs* seems to indicate that, in his view, they should have paid to *Erôs* (at least) the same attention that they paid to Heracles and salt. (1) He implicitly invites them to claim, as Polycrates did with salt, that the god, who does not enjoy a fair reputation among moral censors and educators, leads to benefits higher than those usually advanced by the poets: the kind of ethical goods offered by Virtue to Heracles in Prodicus' parable. (2) He bids them to argue for this claim with the elaborate kind of argumentation through which sophists intend to convince, not just charm, their audience in their prose encomia.

[63] Such high-flown arguments might have been provided by Alcidamas' *Praise of Death* (cf. Cic. *Tusc*. 1.116), or by Polycrates' *Praise of Mice* (e.g. their military achievements at Troy, cf. Arist. *Rh.* 1401b15). On the paradoxical praise, a genre well recognized in Antiquity, see Pease (1926); ancient sources are Arist. *Rh.* 1.1366a28-32, Menander Rhet. Διαίρεσις τῶν ἐπιδεικτικῶν, ii, 346.9-23 Sp., Alex. Rhet. Περὶ ῥητορικῶν ἀφορμῶν 3.10 Sp., and Aul. Gell. *Noct. Att.* 17.12.1.

[64] On *Helen* and *Busiris* as paradoxical encomia, see Pease (1926) 29.

Conclusion

To summarize, if we choose to take seriously Phaedrus' claim about the novelty of his programme, we must surmise that this novelty consists not merely in praising *erôs*, since poets have already explored such avenues, but in improving on the previous encomia. The elite encomium Phaedrus is inviting his fellows to compose will not just consist, as Allen assumes, in ignoring the 'dark side' that poets usually recognize in *erôs*, nor, as Sheffield puts it, in just showing that *erôs* is 'beneficial' to us:[65] the symposiasts will have (i) to claim that *erôs* is the cause of a superior kind of benefit for human beings, leading to virtue and happiness; and (ii) to argue convincingly for this claim.

Having this in mind may help us first to understand that Phaedrus invites his companions to follow the rules of a literary and rhetorical genre (τὸ ἐγκωμιαστικόν) which was being defined at the time of the composition of Plato's *Symposium*.[66] The earliest reflections on the rules of the encomium, especially Isocrates' *Busiris* (*c.* 385 BC) and *Evagoras* (*c.* 370 BC), as well as the so-called *Rhetoric to Alexander* (mid-4th cent. BC?), prescribe not only to 'amplify' (αὔξειν) the qualities of the subject, but to adorn it with qualities it is not usually recognized to possess, and to place special emphasis on virtues.[67]

Secondly, and more importantly, understanding the double requirement of Eryximachus' programme sheds light on the literary and philosophical value of all the encomia presented in the *Symposium*. Plato depicts here a contest of wisdom that bears on the nature of excellence as much as on *erôs*. The picture of *erôs* provided by each speaker will be shaped according to the view of *aretê* that *erôs* is said to be conducive to; and, eventually, it will be determined by the kind of *eudaimonia* that *aretê* is supposed to lead to. As a result, the divergences between the views of *erôs*, I will argue, should be put down to what each speaker deems good, as much as — and maybe more than — to

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[65] Allen (1991) 8, Sheffield (2006a) 15, n. 19.

[66] On these early theories, see Russell and Wilson (1981) 13-6, Nightingale (1995) 94-105, Hunter (2003) 8-19.

[67] Cf. the 'appropriation of properties that are not present' (μὴ προσόντων συνοικείωσις) in *Rhet. Alex.* 1425b36-38, on which see Pernot (1993) 144, 525; cf. Isoc. *Bus.* 4, Pl. *Menex.* 235a1-2. For virtues, see Isoc. *Bus.* 10.5-8, 38-43, *Evag.* 8.; *Rhet. Alex.* 1440b16-23, 1441b1-12, with Hunter (2003) 13-17 and (2004a) 35. For early examples of encomia insisting on virtues, see Aesch. *Septem* 610 (Amphiaraus), Eur. *Suppl.* 857-871 (Adrastus' funeral oration), Dem. 18.215; cf. Russell and Wilson (1981) xiv and Nightingale (1995) 103, n. 34 and 35.

what (s)he knows of *erôs*.[68] An implicit but fundamental question debated in the *Symposium* is the familiar sympotic question: 'what is best?'[69]

Moreover, if we are aware that the speeches intend to meet the particular challenge presented to them at the start of the dialogue, we will be in a better position to address, in the following chapters (ch. 2, 3, 4) the criticisms often levelled at the first speeches. (1) Some claims that appeared over-sophisticated, disingenuous, or inconsistent, will prove quite justified if we understand that the speakers are actually inventing from scratch a new causal link between *erôs* and a superior form of goodness. (2) The speeches cannot be taken just as pompous displays of traditional knowledge: although each speaker indulges in a characteristic sympotic practice by lavishly quoting previous authorities,[70] they all put forward a novel view of *erôs* and its value. (3) The necessity of demonstrating through a logical argument the link between *erôs* and the particular view of the good leads the speakers to make problematic or puzzling claims, i.e. to provide a picture of *erôs* which is, in some way, implausible, at odds with the very nature of *erôs*. Thus each encomium will bring out a puzzle: how can one say both what *erôs* is, and what it is good at?

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[68] Dorter (1969) 216 rightly insists on this.

[69] On the discussion of the good at symposia, see Pl. *Hipp. Min*. 364c4–7, *Gorg*. 451e1-5, and Thgn. 255-6 cited above, with Bowie (2002) 191-8 and Hunter (2016) 89. On the various views about the good at the time, see e.g. Xenophanes, fr. 2.13 (ἀλλ' εἰκῆι μάλα τοῦτο νομίζεται) with Pernot (1993) 145.

[70] On quoting poets at symposia see Vetta (1983), Lissarrague (1990) 135, Lukinovich (1990) 264, Pellizer (1990) 179-80, Rösler (1990). On quotations in Plato, see Halliwell (2000).

CHAPTER 2. PHAEDRUS' SPEECH (178a6-180b8)

Introduction

Phaedrus' encomium of *Erôs*, the shortest of all the discourses in the *Symposium*, is often dismissed as incoherent, banal, and non-philosophical.[71] I will resist this view and argue first that, provided one keeps in mind that the speaker intends to meet the particular challenge Eryximachus issued at the start of the dialogue on his behalf (offering an elite encomium, see Chap. 1), the argument is more elaborate and consistent than appears at first sight, including in the final part, where Phaedrus' claims about the heroes (179b4-180b5) may look bizarre (I). Moreover, Phaedrus does not slavishly rely on the poetical tradition he adduces in support of his argument: by claiming that *erôs* is most conducive to courage and immortal glory, he assigns to the emotion a value it does not have in Homer or in tragedy (II). Finally, Phaedrus is led by his encomiastic strategy to draw a puzzling picture of *erôs*, particularly when he talks of the heroes: this final passage raises questions, and in these puzzles resides, to my eyes, Phaedrus' genuine philosophical contribution to the dialogue (III).

I. Phaedrus' argument

A. *Erôs* is old (πρεσβύτατος, 178a8-c2)

Phaedrus values *erôs* for two reasons: he is ancient (178a8-c2) and most beneficial (178c2-179b3). These two features are causally related: because he is ancient, the god must be cause of the greatest goods (Πρεσβύτατος δὲ ὢν μεγίστων ἀγαθῶν ἡμῖν αἴτιός ἐστιν, 178c2-3). The inference hinges on the double meaning of the word πρέσβυς: 'old' and 'important'. Commentators often suspect a sophistic move here, since what is

[71] For the incoherence, see Bury (1932) xxv and further references below. For the banality, see Rötscher (1832) 5; Bury (1932) xxv; Taylor (1936) 214; Dover (1980) 91; Pietsch (2012) 41; Reale (2001) xxxv-vi. For the idiocy, Rückert (1829) 35 is the harshest: 'oratione ... quae tota tam inepta est, ut si tollere velis omnia quae displiceant, haud scio an nullum versiculum sis incolumem habiturus.' See also Schwegler (1843) 20: 'lehre Wortmacherei'; Rowe (1998) 137: 'Phaedrus' contribution (...) tries to be clever, without quite pulling it off; (...) it lacks a precise argument'.

ancient is not necessarily good.[72] However, the semantic ambivalence of the Greek word indicates that what may appear to modern readers as a fallacy was probably viewed as commonsense by most of Phaedrus' contemporaries: what is ancient — like the first gods, or the ancestors — was commonly taken as respectable, thus likely to be beneficial.[73] What Plato shows here is less Phaedrus' sophistry than his reliance on this traditional view of the good.

B. *Erôs* is beneficial (μεγίστων ἀγαθῶν ἡμῖν αἴτιός, 178c2-179b3)

1. *Aretê* and *eudaimonia*

Unsurprisingly, the benefits that Phaedrus ascribes to the god (virtue and happiness) are also most traditional — even archaising:[74] to be virtuous is to feel shame about what is base, and have an ambition to perform the fine (τὴν ἐπὶ μὲν τοῖς αἰσχροῖς αἰσχύνην, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς καλοῖς φιλοτιμίαν, 178d1-2). All the examples of 'fine' behaviours (καλὰ ἔργα, 178d4) provided by Phaedrus afterward are daring deeds which consist in facing the highest danger for the sake of some *philoi* (fellow citizens, comrades-in-arms, relatives, lover and beloved), most characteristically on the battlefield (cf. μαχόμενοι, 179a1). Whereas subsequent speakers will show a more sophisticated understanding of *aretê* (e.g. Pausanias, 184c5-6), Phaedrus' view is confined to the heroic sense: military courage (ἀνδρεία).[75] Accordingly, *to aiskhron* consists in shying away from the danger — 'softening' (μαλθακίζεσθαι), like Orpheus and all the *sophoi* (ἅτε ὢν κιθαρῳδός, 179d5). The benefit, or happiness (εὐδαιμονία), that the virtue of courage is likely to bring about, is, for the living, a safe political community: the best administration, for a city or an army (οὐκ ἔστιν ὅπως ἂν ἄμεινον οἰκήσειαν, 178e5), is the one that makes them invincible (cf. οἱ τοιοῦτοι νικῷεν ἂν ὀλίγοι ὄντες ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν πάντας

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[72] Well discussed by Bast (1794) 15-7 who concludes that the passage (Πρεσβύτατος δὲ ὤν, 178c2) is corrupt. The inconsequentiality is also noted by Ast (1817) 277, Hommel (1834) 58, Schwegler (1843) 20, Hug (1884) xlv, 37, Bury (1932) 24, Rowe (1998a) 147, Sheffield (2006a) 17 n. 14.

[73] On the dignity traditionally attached to the primitive gods, see Aristot. *Metaph*. 983b32f, about Ocean, Thetys and Styx (τιμιώτατον μὲν γὰρ τὸ πρεσβύτατον). See also Eur. fr. 959.1-2, and Soph. *Oed. Rex* 1364-5, cf. Classen (1965) 177 with n. 2 Brisson (2007) 188 n. 100.

[74] Hunter (2004a) 42.

[75] See Reid (2017) 31. Although the very word ἀνδρεία does not appear in Phaedrus' speech, ἀνανδρία (178d6) is taken as the opposite of the virtuous behaviour.

ἀνθρώπους, 179a1-2).[76] For the individual, happiness also consists in receiving honours (cf. ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς καλοῖς φιλοτιμίαν, 178d2): the warrior principally seeks to acquire *timê* in the eyes of his/her lover or beloved.[77] The dead heroes who performed outstanding exempla of virtue (e.g. Alcestis or Achilles) were honoured by the gods (ἔδοσαν τοῦτο γέρας, 179c6; μάλιστα τιμῶσιν, 179d2) who called them back to life (Alcestis, 179c6-7) or sent them to the Isles of the Blessed (Achilles, 179e2): those divine rewards are the expanded form of the happiness awarded to the living by humans; both for heroes and for ordinary people, to be happy is to be honoured and to live as long as possible. *Courage* and *long life of honours* are thus the implicit meanings of virtue and happiness in Phaedrus' final summary of the benefits of *erôs* (κυριώτατον εἶναι εἰς ἀρετῆς καὶ εὐδαιμονίας κτῆσιν ἀνθρώποις καὶ ζῶσι καὶ τελευτήσασιν, 180b7-8).

2. How *erôs* prompts *aretê*

Courage is also the implicit meaning of *aretê* in Phaedrus' central claim that *erôs* makes lovers emulate the best:

> οὐδεὶς οὕτω κακὸς ὄντινα οὐκ ἂν αὐτὸς ὁ Ἔρως ἔνθεον ποιήσειε πρὸς ἀρετήν, ὥστε ὅμοιον εἶναι τῷ ἀρίστῳ φύσει, καὶ ἀτεχνῶς, ὃ ἔφη Ὅμηρος, "μένος ἐμπνεῦσαι" ἐνίοις τῶν ἡρώων τὸν θεόν, τοῦτο ὁ Ἔρως τοῖς ἐρῶσι παρέχει γιγνόμενον παρ᾽ αὑτοῦ. (179a7-b3)

Here resides the gist of Phaedrus' demonstration about the scale of the benefits of *erôs*. As *erôs* is an emotion shared by all human beings, it can endow anybody with the martial spirit (μένος) which, in Homer, the gods inspire in only a few heroes (ἐνίοις τῶν ἡρώων) who are excellent by nature (τῷ ἀρίστῳ φύσει). Through *erôs* everybody has a share in what, in the epic, is the privilege of the happy few: the courage to face death rather than to abandon a comrade. The benefit of *Erôs* is thus to provide the common run of people with a substitute for true virtue through a mechanism well described by Phaedrus (178d4-179a6): the *erastês* and the *erômenos* seek to look brave in the eyes of each other — they do not want to be seen doing something shameful (ὀφθῇ 178e3, ὀφθῆναι 179a3).[78]

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[76] See Hunter (2004a) 42.

[77] See Reid (2017) 31.

[78] See Hunter (2004a) 41-2.

3. *Erastês* vs *erômenos*

Although this incentive works both for the *erastês* and the *erômenos*, the impulse is stronger in the former: the *erastês* is the one who actually experiences *erôs* (ἐρῶν, 179a3) and is inspired by the god (ἂν ἔνθεον ποιήσειε, 179a7-8); he is not only, like the *erômenos*, motivated by the shame of being seen by his partner doing base things (179a3-5); he would also never wish to abandon the other when he is in danger (ἐγκαταλιπεῖν γε τὰ παιδικὰ ἢ μὴ βοηθῆσαι κινδυνεύοντι, 179a6). As a result, he is the one who is ready to die instead of the other (πρὸ τούτου τεθνάναι ἂν πολλάκις ἕλοιτο, 179a5): the *erastês* wants to keep his *paidika* alive at all costs, presumably because he reveres more than anything else the source of the greatest pleasures one can enjoy in life. By contrast, the *erômenos*, who is not *entheos*, feels mere affection for his lover (cf. ὁ ἐρώμενος τὸν ἐραστὴν ἀγαπᾷ, 180b2) as expected from a chaste youth;[79] he fears only going down in the esteem of his tutor when seen doing something shameful (ὅταν ὀφθῇ ἐν αἰσχρῷ τινι ὤν, 178e3), but he would presumably not run so much of a risk when his lover cannot see him, or when the fear of death trumps his sense of shame. This is why Phaedrus insists that only lovers — not beloveds — are ready to die for the other (ὑπεραποθνήσκειν γε μόνοι ἐθέλουσιν οἱ ἐρῶντες, 179b4), that is, to act like 'the best by nature' (ὅμοιον εἶναι τῷ ἀρίστῳ φύσει, 179a8).

4. The good qua lover vs the good by nature (ἄριστος φύσει)

Nevertheless, the key to understanding Phaedrus' account is that those who become brave when inspired by *erôs* (the good *erastai*) are only *like* (ὅμοιοι) the best by nature.

First, the brave *qua* lovers are not always brave, since they are not always in love; whereas Hector, Ajax, or Achilles do not need to be in love in order to be brave — they are born brave (φύσει). To be sure, in the heat of the moment, the best heroes are inspired with extra spirit (μένος ἐμπνεῦσαι, 179b1) by their guardian divinity; but this divine inspiration, contrary to the one supplied by *erôs*, is only a bonus added to the exceptional valour the heroes already have. Athena 'breathes might' into Diomedes (*Il.* 10.482), or Apollo into Hector (15.262), in order to ensure that their attack will succeed, not to prevent the heroes from shying away from the danger; and the gods favour these

[79] Cf. Xen. *Smp.* 8.21-2 and Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 8.1157a6-8, with Dover (1978) 44-9. On this asymmetry between *erastês* and *erômenos*, see below n. 184.

warriors precisely because they are already brave (ἄριστοι φύσει) — it is to their natural excellence that the Homeric heroes owe the privilege of being attended by the god.

Second, and more importantly, the brave *qua* lovers do not have the same ambition for the fine (ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς καλοῖς φιλοτιμίαν, 178d2). *Erôs* surely inspires *philotimia* in the lover, but the lover does not do the fine just because it is fine, as the *aristos phusei* would do, but in order to secure the esteem and the life of his beloved, who is the actual object of his concern. Those who need *erôs* to feel *aiskhunê* and *philotimia* are arguably not spontaneously (φύσει) ashamed of ugly things and striving for the fine.[80] From the point of view of the inspired lover, doing the fine is only instrumental in achieving a purpose (sexual gratification) which is not particularly fine in itself: it is in this sense that the good lover is only similar (ὅμοιος) to the best by nature. Similar motives will inspire the *erômenos* to do the fine: not because the deed is fine, but because he does not want to come down in the lover's esteem, and lose the various benefits of their relationship. This distinction between the virtuous by nature and the virtuous qua lover or beloved sheds light on the last section of Phaedrus' account (179b4-180b5), where three heroic exempla are adduced to illustrate the theory propounded so far.

C. The heroic exempla (179b4-180b5)

1. Alcestis: the good *erastês* (179b4-d2)

Alcestis is the perfect paradigm of the virtuous *qua* lover, who is ready to die for his/her beloved. Since Phaedrus insists that Alcestis acted through *erôs*, he suggests that she would not necessarily have sacrificed herself if she had not been in love, just because dying for her kindred is fine. Therefore, Alcestis should not be viewed as one of the 'best by nature'. Phaedrus will soon reveal what he thinks of the 'nature' of women, when dismissing Orpheus' *katabasis*: the gods punished him to die 'at the hands of women' (ὑπὸ γυναικῶν, 179d4) as a retribution for his cowardice and weakness (μαλθακίζεσθαι, 179d4). Since the speaker ascribes his own prejudices to the gods, it is no surprise that these gods were amazed (ἀγασθέντες, 179c7) by the manly courage showed by a woman. Alcestis was surely not the first lover to be ready to die for a beloved — the former section showed that *any* male lover would face such a sacrifice

[80] See Ludwig (2002) 36.

on the battlefield as long as he is in love (cf. ἄνδρα ὅστις ἐρᾷ, 178d4-5; Ἐρῶν γὰρ ἀνήρ, 179a3). Thus, the gods awarded Alcestis with a privilege bestowed on so few heroes, not just because she dared to 'die for' someone (ὑπεραποθνήσκειν, 179b4), but because she did so despite being a woman, that is, a creature who is by nature (φύσει) weaker than non-heroic males. As Phaedrus insists when he introduces the heroic exempla, Alcestis is an exception from a gender perspective (οὐ μόνον ὅτι ἄνδρες, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες, 179b5). She is, unsurprisingly, the only female among all the daring lovers mentioned in the speech (soldiers, Orpheus, Achilles). As a consequence, it is from a male perspective that her action is depicted and valued:

> Θειότερον γὰρ ἐραστὴς παιδικῶν· ἔνθεος γάρ ἐστι. Διὰ ταῦτα καὶ τὸν Ἀχιλλέα τῆς Ἀλκήστιδος μᾶλλον ἐτίμησαν, εἰς μακάρων νήσους ἀποπέμψαντες. (*Smp.* 180b3-5)

Alcestis is equated here with Patroclus, Achilles' alleged *erastês*, and therefore indirectly characterized as an *erastês* herself. Plato brings out a paradox: not only is the term *erastês* commonly used for male lovers, but, in their sexual relationships with men, women were traditionally viewed as passive, hence socially dominated, partners.[81] In Phaedrus' erotic system of honour, where *erastês* and *erômenos* emulate each other to perform brave deeds, women are expected to perform the role of the *erômenos* or *paidika*, that is, to face danger for their partner, but not to the point of sacrificing their lives. Such self-sacrifice constitutes a transgression in terms of gender roles: Alcestis' *erôs* was so strong that it led her to do what only virtuous male lovers do, and this is what prompted divine admiration and recompense. If this interpretation makes sense, there is no point in criticizing Phaedrus for characterizing Alcestis as an *erastês* despite the fact that she was younger than Admetus.[82] Phaedrus may deliberately point to a paradox: although being younger, Alcestis did not behave as expected from a younger partner in a love relationship, i.e. as an *erômenos*; just as, although being a woman, she did not behave as a woman is meant to behave. Alcestis is thus the best example of the might and spirit that *erôs* can inspire in those who are not 'best by nature': she proved better than any other (male) lover that *erôs* can prompt us to transcend our natural weaknesses.

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[81] On the assimilation of the *erômenos* to a woman, see Halperin (1986) 37, Cohen (1991) 193-4, although we can doubt the simple analogy. For the association between cowardice and women see, e.g., Pl. *Tim*. 90e6-91a1; see also Ogden (1997) 133-5 on the identification of military defeat with sexual passivity.

[82] See e.g. Hug (1884) xlv and Bury (1932) xxv.

2. Orpheus: the bad *erastês* (179b2-e1)

Conversely, this gender perspective sheds light on the exceptional punishment inflicted on Orpheus, the counterexample to the virtuous agent *qua* lover.[83] We might wonder why the gods punished someone who dared to go down to Hades alive, an enterprise that few mortals would dare to undertake. A reasonable answer is that, although brave, Orpheus did not perform the *aristeia* that suits a *male* lover: putting one's life at risk, as lover-soldiers are expected to do, or as Alcestis unexpectedly did. Instead of facing death straightforwardly, he managed to avoid it through crafty devices (διαμηχανᾶσθαι, 179d6). Had Orpheus been a woman, or an *erômenos*, the gods might have let him succeed in his enterprise, and they would surely not have condemned him to a shameful death. By having him die at the hands of women, the gods showed that what was at stake in Orpheus' failed adventure was an infamous transgression of the gender roles, which symmetrically opposed Alcestis' glorious transgression. Whereas Alcestis, the woman, acted as a male *erastês*, Orpheus, the male *erastês*, acted as a woman or as an *erômenos*. The gods thus inflicted an exemplary punishment on Orpheus because, although in love, he did not even do what *erôs* prompts any non-heroic male to do. According to Phaedrus' understanding of *to kalon* and *to aiskhron* (see above), using cunning intelligence (διαμηχανᾶσθαι) to avoid death is as shameful as breaking ranks or throwing one's arms away (λιπὼν τάξιν ἢ ὅπλα ἀποβαλών, 179a3-4): it is a form of cowardice (cf. κακός, 179a7) only suitable to a soft — or feminine nature (cf. μαλθακίζεσθαι, 179d4).[84] The specific kind of death (ὑπὸ γυναικῶν, 179d8) inflicted as a δίκη (179d7) to Orpheus, is a just retribution for someone who, during his life, used to approach danger as a woman. It is at the same time a warning for all the living (common) males that such behaviour is not appropriate to their sex.

Alcestis and Orpheus (179b4-e1) can thus be viewed as two extreme cases defining the boundaries of the theory just propounded about the effects *erôs* is supposed to have on those who, although not 'best by nature', are expected to act 'like the best' when they are in love (178c2-179b3). Whereas Orpheus fell short of the expectations (he did not dare

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[83] Cf. Hug (1884) 43: 'παράδειγμα des Gegenteils.'

[84] On Phaedrus' disparagement of διαμηχανᾶσθαι, see Hourcade Sciou (2016). The spiteful characterization of Orpheus as a κιθαρῳδός also points to the hero's effeminacy and to the passive role held by the *erômenos*; cf. Dover (1978) 73-4, who refers to Phaedrus' speech along with Alexis fr. 3, Antiphanes fr. 26.12-18, Eur. *Antiope*, fr. 185.3-6, and Aeschin. 1.41 (Misgolas' predilection for musicians).

to die despite being a male lover), Alcestis exceeded them (she dared to die despite being a woman). The paradigmatic behaviours of the mythological figures and the divine response to them set the norm for the common moral behaviour that average humans are expected to perform through *erôs* — i.e. the hoplite soldier who must defend his city. Alcestis and Orpheus, although being heroes, are not to be viewed as 'the *few* of the heroes' (ἐνίοις τῶν ἡρώων, 179b1-2) Phaedrus has just referred to, who represent the natural excellence (τῷ ἀρίστῳ φύσει, 179a7). They exemplify the worst and the best kinds of brave behaviours to which *erôs* can inspire ordinary natures.

3. Achilles: the good *erômenos* (179e1-180b5)

Achilles, who is not a woman and is famous for being ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν,[85] cannot be characterized as an *erastês*, like Alcestis and Orpheus. Within Phaedrus' explanatory framework, such a characterization would imply that the hero did not perform his *aristeia* just because he was *aristos phusei*, i.e. through mere bravery, but under the compulsion of *erôs*. This is why Phaedrus insists that the hero should be viewed as Patroclus' *erômenos*, contrary to what Aeschylus, and presumably all those who imagined an erotic relationship between the two heroes, have assumed so far.

For all that, Achilles' deeds outclass the bravery that a normal *erômenos* is expected to show, just as Alcestis outclassed the bravery of average women. (1) Average *erômenoi*, are not expected to have the courage to 'die for' someone (ὑπεραποθανεῖν, cf. 179b4-5); (2) Achilles not only died for, but died *after* his beloved (ἐπαποθανεῖν τετελευτηκότι, 180a1-2), which means that his *aristeia* cannot be put down to the usual emotions that incite *erômenoi* to face danger, i.e. the shame felt at being seen by the *erastês*, and the hope of drawing some benefit from the ongoing relationship (178e2-3).

Phaedrus however insists that *erôs* still plays a key role in Achilles' prowess:

> Ἀλλὰ γὰρ τῷ ὄντι μάλιστα μὲν ταύτην τὴν ἀρετὴν οἱ θεοὶ τιμῶσιν τὴν περὶ τὸν ἔρωτα, μᾶλλον μέντοι θαυμάζουσιν καὶ ἄγανται καὶ εὖ ποιοῦσιν ὅταν ὁ ἐρώμενος τὸν ἐραστὴν ἀγαπᾷ, ἢ ὅταν ὁ ἐραστὴς τὰ παιδικά. Θειότερον γὰρ ἐραστὴς παιδικῶν· ἔνθεος γάρ ἐστι. Διὰ ταῦτα καὶ τὸν Ἀχιλλέα τῆς Ἀλκήστιδος μᾶλλον ἐτίμησαν, εἰς μακάρων νήσους ἀποπέμψαντες. (*Smp*. 180a7-b5)

[85] *Il*. 1.244, 412, etc.

Although the hero did not feel *erôs* but only affection, or reverence (ἀγαπᾷ) for his partner, this emotion was directed towards someone who was inspired by *erôs* (τὸν ἐραστήν), and this is what prompted the hero to perform his deeds.[86] Had Patroclus not been inspired by *erôs*, Achilles would not have had an *erastês* to revere and to die for. Although the emotion that drives Achilles to perform his *aristeia* was not *erôs*, but the *agapê* felt for a divinely inspired *erastês*, *erôs* is what is actually valued by the *erastês*, it is what arouses *agapê*: Achilles' *aristeia* is thus a direct response to Patroclus *erôs*, it turns out to be a manifestation of the affection that one can bear to the erotic enthusiasm that animates the lover. Even in the case of the best of the Achaeans, who cannot be viewed as acting through *erôs*, *erôs* remains the cause, although indirectly, of the heroic behaviour.

Furthermore Phaedrus suggests that the affection Achilles showed for his *erastês* extended to the divine itself, that is, the god *Erôs* who inspired the *erastês* (cf. θειότερον, ἔνθεος). By revering his divinely inspired *erastês*, Achilles paid homage to the divine (θεῖον): his self-sacrifice turned out to be an act of piety. Whether or not the hero was conscious of it, this was at least well recognized by the gods who 'over-admired' him (ὑπεραγασθέντες), and 'honoured' him 'surpassingly' (διαφερόντως αὐτὸν ἐτίμησαν, 180a2-3), whereas they only 'admired' (ἀγασθέντες, 179c7) and 'honoured' (τιμῶσιν, 179d2) Alcestis, who also sacrificed her life, but not for the sake of the divine: her *paidika* — Admetus — was surely not *entheos*.

This further explains why Achilles should be viewed as *aristos phusei*. Doubtless, what is divine (θεῖον) is more fine (καλόν) than anything else: by dying through his reverence for a divinely inspired person, Achilles also showed a spontaneous 'ambition for the fine' (ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς καλοῖς φιλοτιμίαν) which, contrary to the surrogate *philotimia* that *erôs* implants (ἐμποιεῖν, 178c7-d2) in the army of lovers, did not arise from the desire to appear brave to the eyes of the lover or the beloved, but through a genuine, or inborn (φύσει) affection for what is fine and divine.

With hindsight, the whole of Phaedrus' speech appears as a moral lesson which first shows how *erôs* can prompt moral behaviour (178c2-179b3) and second, provides the

[86] ἀγαπᾷ can mean ἐρᾷ (see in the passage: ἢ ὅταν ὁ ἐραστὴς τὰ παιδικά, and *Smp.* 181c6, 210d2) or just φιλεῖ, cf. Arist. *Rh*. 1371a21, cf. Eur. *Suppl*.764; Pl. *Resp*. 330c1; etc. For Achilles, Phaedrus uses the verb in the latter (non passionate) sense, since he insists that the hero is not an *erastês*; on the alleged lack of passion in the *erômenos*, see Xen. *Smp.* 8.21-2.

standards for the good moral behaviour through three heroic exempla (179b4-180b5). Orpheus and Alcestis define the bottom and the top of Phaedrus' own ladder of love: they show how various intensities of *erôs* can more or less lead us to perform virtue. Achilles provides the very definition of virtue: the true courage of the best by nature according to which all other brave acts must be assessed, and which brave lovers emulate more or less successfully. Achilles' deeds are naturally mentioned at the end of the speech, since they stand both at the top of Phaedrus' erotic moral system and beyond it: Achilles is the hero who does not need to feel *erôs* in order to dare what lovers dare to do. For all that, *erôs* remains the indirect cause of his actions. Phaedrus' final lesson is that the best of the heroes, the most virtuous man, is certainly not prompted to virtue by a fleeting erotic whim; but his innate virtue cannot manifest itself better than within an erotic relationship, when, as a beloved, he is led to revere the fine in the form of the divine inspiration that animates his lover.

D. A consistent argument

The most common criticism addressed to Phaedrus' argument is that the final claim that Achilles was Patroclus' beloved (ἐρώμενος, 180a4-b3) contradicts his previous thesis that 'only lovers are willing to die in behalf of others' (ὑπεραποθνήσκειν γε μόνοι ἐθέλουσιν οἱ ἐρῶντες, 179b4).[87] Is not Plato's character 'inconsequential' here?[88] Or 'deliberately perverse'?[89] Or does not he intend at all cost to stick to the canonical rules of Greek pederasty, indicating that Achilles, who is younger than Patroclus in Homer, must necessarily be viewed as an *erômenos*?[90] I argued instead that Phaedrus intends to stick to the rules of the elite encomium he propounded himself through the voice of Eryximachus: in light of this project, his final claim is not only consistent with the entire argument (a), but it constitutes its keystone (b).

(a) Since Achilles is not meant to illustrate the view that *erôs* makes lovers act *like* the best by nature (179a8-b3), μόνοι, at 179b4, should be understood in a quite restricted

[87] See, e.g. Hug (1884) xlv-vi. To my knowledge, only Pietsch (2012) defends the consistency of the account.

[88] Bury (1932) xxv.

[89] Rowe (1998) 140.

[90] Fantuzzi (2012) 230.

sense. Phaedrus has spoken so far about the average humanity: not the *aristoi phusei* but those who need *erôs* or other kinds of incentive (kinship, honours, money, 178c6-7) to perform the fine. It is within this community (the common run of humankind) that, in Phaedrus' view, only (μόνοι) the *erastai* are ready to die for someone. The final mention of Achilles, a hero who died for his partner despite not being in love, surely comes up as a surprise, and the coup de théâtre is presumably intended by the speaker: there appears someone who does not belong to the common run of humankind. The claim, however, is not inconsistent with the rest of the argument, since it has already been pointed out that there exist such exceptional natures, some *aristoi phusei* who do not need to be in love in order to behave like heroes (179a8).

(b) Furthermore, characterizing Achilles as an *erômenos* is necessary for Phaedrus' argument: this is what eventually allows him to offer a high-standard encomium to *erôs*. Phaedrus can thus show that the hero acted through affection (ἀγάπη) both for *erôs* and for the divine; and this double affection is essential, since it allows him to accommodate two claims which are required by his argument, but which are apparently incompatible with each other: (i) *Achilles is aristos phusei*: since Achilles acted for the sake of the divine (not for obtaining erotic benefits), Phaedrus can claim that he was motivated by a genuine *philotimia*, and therefore exemplified the heroic type which *erôs* can prompt us to emulate; (ii) *he acted through erôs*: since the divine for the sake of which Achilles acted was the god *Erôs*, Phaedrus can still claim that *erôs* was responsible for his *aristeia*. The first claim comes from Phaedrus' ethical and erotic system, according to which the highest manifestation of virtue ('true' virtue) cannot be prompted by *erôs*; the second claim comes from the requirement of the elite encomium: *erôs* must appear as the most efficient incentive to become virtuous and happy, the best means to achieve the *highest* forms of virtue and happiness, including the *aristeia* and the post-mortem divinization of the best of the Achaeans. The apparent oddity of the argument makes good sense in light of the particular strategy that the speaker must follow: providing an elite encomium.

This strategy has a further consequence: it leads Phaedrus to rejuvenate the traditional image epic and tragic poets have provided of *erôs* thus far.

II. Phaedrus' manipulation of the tradition

Although Phaedrus keeps referring to previous authors, he does not slavishly and unreflexively rely on them, as is sometimes assumed.[91] The manipulation of the poetic tradition is blatant from the outset, when Phaedrus claims that all the previous authors agree that the god has no parent (178b2-3).[92] The way Phaedrus proceeds to quote Hesiod and Parmenides to support the view that the god is *presbutatos* (178b2-c2) is also quite specious, and represents, to my mind, one of the most interesting cases of deliberate misquotation in Plato.[93] But the passage is fraught with textual problems which cannot be properly dealt with in the limits of this study. Moreover, my primary aim is to understand how Phaedrus' manipulation of the tradition serves an encomiastic strategy which, as I claim, mainly consists in demonstrating the *benefits* of *erôs* for us, not his seniority (*presbeia*). I will thus focus on the central and final passages of the speech, where it is demonstrated that *erôs* is conducive to virtue and happiness. I will show that, in these sections, in order to deliver a high standard encomium, Phaedrus heavily transforms what the poets said about *erôs* and his advantages; but he directly borrows from the tradition his view of virtue (courage) and happiness (a long life of honour): the speaker thus improves on what the tradition reports on *erôs* by using what the same tradition says on the good.

This strategy already appears in the central part (178c2-179b3). While demonstrating the benefits of *erôs* for the common run of people, Phaedrus improves on the Homeric tradition. For all that, this 'novel' account was presumably not unheard of at the time (A). The rejuvenation of the tradition is more obvious in the last part of the speech, the highlight of the elite encomium (179b4-180b5), where it is shown that *erôs* offers the same kinds of benefits to the heroes (B).

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[91] See, e.g., Bury (1932) xxv and Pietsch (2012) 36-7.

[92] For *Erôs*' parents, see Simonid. fr. 70 (Ares and Aphrodite); Alc. fr. 327 (Zephyrus and Iris), Sappho fr. 198 (Ouranos and Gaia or Aphrodite); Eur. *Hipp*. 534 (Zeus); etc. Cf. Martinez (2005) and Breitenberger (2007) 165. Commentators often point to Phaedrus' rash statement, cf. Heyne (1781) 377, Hug (1884) 35, Bury (1932) 22, Dover (1980) 90, Vicaire (1989) 11, Rowe (1998) 137, Reale (2001) 171, Brisson (2007) 188. They are less suspicious of Phaedrus' reliance on tradition in the remainder of the speech, except Hunter (2004a) 39-40, 42.

[93] See Notomi (2013).

A. *Erôs* inspiring courage to everybody (178c2-179b3)

In the central part of his speech, Phaedrus claims that *erôs* can inspire even a coward to heroic feats; the only tradition the speaker explicitly appeals to is Homer (179b1-3), but through this reference he also points to the differences between his account and the epic tradition.

1. Homer adapted

Although Phaedrus' view of excellence seems directly borrowed from Homer, Homer never claimed, as Phaedrus does, that *erôs* is conducive to *andreia* and *eudaimonia.*

a. A Homeric view of the good

Agathon and his guests are unlikely to be surprised when Phaedrus eventually refers to Homer in order to characterize the military virtue that *erôs* is supposed to inspire in his army of lovers:

> καὶ ἀτεχνῶς, ὃ ἔφη Ὅμηρος, "μένος ἐμπνεῦσαι" ἐνίοις τῶν ἡρώων τὸν θεόν, τοῦτο ὁ Ἔρως τοῖς ἐρῶσι παρέχει γιγνόμενον παρ' αὐτοῦ. (*Smp.* 179b-3)

In the classical period proclamations of Homer's authority in military matters must have been often half-serious when it came to the poet's alleged expertise on obsolete military techniques.[94] But Father Homer was still seriously used for ethical guidance, as Diotima will soon recall:[95] the prowess of the heroes in the *Iliad*, their *philotimia* and their *andreia* were still viewed as models to be followed by the hoplite soldiers.[96] In Plato, the Homeric view that Achilles' supremacy in battle constitutes the essence of *aretê* (cf. *Il*. 2.768-9) is still supported by the sophist Hippias, a typical mouthpiece of the elite

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[94] See Xen. *Symp* 4.6.11-15 with Ford (2002) 205-6. On Homer as a military expert, Pl. *Resp*. 599c, Xen. *Mem*. 3.2.1-2, *Smp.* 4.6.6-7, Isoc. *Panat.* 81–2, with Ford (2002) 201-8 and Hunter (2004b) 246-7.

[95] *Smp.* 221c-d. See also. *Resp.* 10.598e, 599c-d; DL 2.11; cf. Marrou (1965) 40-5 and Verdenius (1970) 7-10.

[96] Shapiro (1991) 236ff, van Wees (1996) 59, Scanlon (2002) 304, Hunter (2004a) 42, Lendon (2005) 60-65, Guggisberg (2008), Fantuzzi (2012) 223 (on *IG* I^3 1399 quoted above n. 111); Franchi and Proietti (2015) 231 and 236 (on Paus. 1.32.4).

culture of the time.[97] Phaedrus also directly borrows from Homer the notion of happiness to which *aretê* is supposed to lead: a long life of honours and, if possible, access to a divine status. In the *Iliad*, Sarpedon prompts Glaucus to storm the Achaean camp (*Iliad* 12.310-21), by reminding him that princes must fight on the front line (315-6, 321) in order to win *timê* and *kleos* (310, 318), so that, back home, they would still enjoy their privileges (flocks, estate, shares of honour in banquets, etc., 311, 314-5, 319-20) and be regarded as gods by their fellow countrymen (θεοὺς ὣς εἰσορόωσι, 312). Even if a virtuous behaviour requires disregarding the danger of death, the final good to which the *aristeia* is supposed to lead is, like in Phaedrus' account, a further enjoyment of the best pleasures in life and the achievement of a godlike status.[98]

b. A non-Homeric view of *erôs*

Although the benefits of Phaedrus' *erôs* seem directly borrowed from Homer's heroic code of conduct, in Homer such benefits are not acquired through *erôs*. Phaedrus himself makes it clear when using Homer to illustrate his theory (179b1-3, see above): his formulation clearly distinguishes what he personally thinks — *Erôs* can inspire a similar might in anyone — from what Homer says: some god (τὸν θεόν), but not *Erôs*, inspires might in a few heroes (ἐνίοις τῶν ἡρώων). More generally, Phaedrus' audience cannot fail to notice how different his and Homer's conceptions of *erôs* are. In Homer, *erôs* (spelled ἔρως or ἔρος) never appears as a god: the god who yields the powers of love is Aphrodite;[99] moreover, the term does not have the specific sexual meaning it will take later on, including in Plato: it can refer to any kind of desire.[100] Most

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[97] φημὶ γὰρ Ὅμηρον πεποιηκέναι ἄριστον μὲν ἄνδρα Ἀχιλλέα τῶν εἰς Τροίαν ἀφικομένων, Pl. *Hipp. Min*. 364c4-6. See also *Apol.* (28b5-d5) and *Crit.* (44a5–b2); cf. Jaeger (1945) 47, Hunter (2004b) 247-8 and (2016) 89-90. Indeed, an accomplished hero must be good 'in war and in counsel' (*Il*. 9.53-4 etc.), see Schofield (1999) 6-10 on *euboulia* in Homer; but prowess in fighting clearly predominates in Homer's definition of 'the best': compare. *Il.* 1.244 etc. (Achilles is the best) with 18.105-6 etc. (he is better in battle than in counsel); see Nagy (1999) ch. 2 and Finley (2002) 115-6. For other ancient views of *aretê* as military courage, see Tyrt. fr. 12.13–16, Thgn. 1003–6, with Ford (2002) 34 n. 32.

[98] For life and its solid pleasures as having a primary value in the eyes of the hero, see also *Il*. 2.400-1, 9.398-9, *Od*.11.488-91, with Finley (2002) 112 and van Wees (1996) 13. For being honoured 'like gods', see also *Il*. 9.302-3; *Od*. 5.36; etc.

[99] Cf. *Il*. 3.380-3 and *Il*. 14.214-5, see. Fasce (1977) 9.

[100] Cf. the formulaic phrase αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἕντο, *Il*. 9.92; *Od*. 4.68; etc., see Wilamowitz (1959) 178; Fischer (1973) 47; Fasce (1977) 10 with n. 8; Dover (1978) 43. Σ

importantly for us, when, in Homer, ἔρως/ἔρος refers to sexual desire, the passion is never the source of noble deeds, like in Phaedrus' army of lovers: the only positive quality Homer ascribes to *erôs* is to be charming or pleasant, never to be conducive to martial prowess.[101] In the only two passages where *erôs* is connected to warfare, it appears as detrimental to military engagement: at *Iliad* 3.442, Paris is subdued by his *erôs* for Helen after being withdrawn by Aphrodite from his botched duel with Menelaus;[102] in Book 14, Hera subdues Zeus to the charms of *erôs* in order to divert his attention from the battlefield.[103]

In Homer, military prowess is prompted by two main incentives, which have nothing to do with *erôs*: divine inspiration, and *philotimia*; Phaedrus takes over these two primary motivations in his account, but claims that *erôs* plays a key role in them.

1. **Divine inspiration.** In Homer, the god who 'breathes might' (μένος ἐμπνεῦσαι / ἐμβάλλειν / τιθέναι) is never *Erôs* but an Olympian god — Zeus (*Il*. 17.451, 456), Athena (*Od*. 1.321, 24.520), Apollo (*Il*. 15.262, 16.529), Hermes (*Il*. 24.442) — or just 'a divinity' (δαίμων, *Od*. 9.381, clearly not *Erôs* in this case). These divine interventions never involve any kind of sexual incentive: either the god directly inspires might (*Il*. 17.456, *Od*. 9.381), or physically pushes heroes or animals (e.g. Hermes whipping horses, *Il*. 24.442). More often, the divine intervention is accompanied with — or consists in? — words designed to stimulate the hero, either by shaming him (*Il*. 10.482, 17.585-92) or, more frequently, by promising support (*Il*. 15.262, 17.456, *Od*. 24.520), glory (κῦδος, *Il*. 17.453) or material goods (*Il*. 10.482) — never sexual gratification.

2. ***Philotimia*.** When brave deeds are not supported by any divine intervention, they are motivated by the kind of human incentive mentioned in Sarpedon's lesson to Glaucus (*Il.* 12.310-21):[104] the prospect of acquiring *timê* and the many goods that will follow it (a pleasant life). In that case, *philotimia* is the driving emotion, and it extends to the whole society: the hero seeks to acquire *timê* in the eyes of all his fellow-countrymen,

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bT *Il*. 1.469 argues that Homer uses more specifically the form ἔρως (not ἔρος) for the amorous passion; but the view is convincingly refuted by Kloss (1994) 24-43.

[101] See, e.g., *Od*. 18.212-14, *HH Herm*. 449.

[102] οὐ γάρ πώ ποτέ μ' ὧδέ γ' ἔρως φρένας ἀμφεκάλυψεν, *Il*. 3.442.

[103] See esp. 294, 314-5, 328. Line 294 (ἔρως πυκινὰς φρένας ἀμφεκάλυψεν) sounds as an echo to the Paris episode (cf. 3.442), and led ancient readers to relate the two passages with each other, see Hunter (2018) 75 and 155-7.

[104] See above p. 42

particularly those who fight at his side (*Il*. 12.312, 317); it is from them that he expects to acquire the benefits of an enjoyable life (*Il*. 12.311-14, 319-20); whereas Phaedrus' soldier seeks to acquire *timê* in the eyes of his lover or his beloved (178e2-3, 179a3), and it is arguably from this specific person that he expects to draw various pleasures and benefits in recognition of his bravery.

c. Two heroic mechanisms

In sum, in Homer two kinds of mechanisms seem to account for the motivation of the heroes on the battlefield:

(1) A god (e.g. Athena) inspires courage or might → the hero performs fine deeds (καλὰ ἔργα) → he achieves a happy life (εὐδαιμονία).

(2) *philotimia* inspires courage or might → the hero performs fine deeds (καλὰ ἔργα) → he achieves a happy life (εὐδαιμονία).

Of course, these two models can overlap: the gods can prompt the hero by appealing to his sense of *philotimia* (cf. *Il*. 10.482, 17.585-92).

Phaedrus borrows from Homer the view of virtue and happiness, as well as the notion that the primary motivations for achieving these goods are divine inspiration and *philotimia*. But he modifies those two primary movers, and, as a result, the account of how humans can achieve virtue and happiness:

(1) The god who 'breathes might' is no longer the Olympian gods nor an anonymous *daimôn*, but *Erôs*;

(2) *philotimia* is not directed towards the whole society and the various goods it can provide, but towards the amorous gratification that lover and beloved can offer to each other.

2. A familiar adaptation

However novel Phaedrus' thesis may appear when compared with Homer's text, it may have sounded quite familiar to the ears of Plato's readers. The claim that *erôs* can strengthen the bonds between soldiers and urge them to emulate the prowess of Homer's heroes is not unheard of at the time of the *Symposium*. Although Phaedrus presents his

army of lovers as hypothetical (εἰ οὖν μηχανή τις γένοιτο, 178e2), commentators have long pointed out that Plato may refer here to the Sacred Band, the elite corps of the Theban army founded around 378 BC, which presumably consisted of 150 male couples of soldiers.[105] Whether or not Plato actually refers to this fact, and whether or not the Sacred Band itself is a historical reality,[106] the roots of such a project are to be found in the classical period: there is good evidence that *Erôs* was revered from an early date as conducive to military virtue and civic unity, particularly in Boeotia, Sparta, and Crete.[107] We have also evidence for military homosexuality in Chalcis, Thessaly, Elis, and maybe in Macedon: the Chalcidian song mentioned above (*Carm. popul*. 873, cf. p. 22) testifies that, although the claim that homosexuality is conducive to military courage was at variance with what the old poets said (cf. λυσιμελής), this view may have circulated from an early date, and become a commonplace at the time of Plato's *Symposium*, at least outside of Athens.[108]

One could argue though that in Athens homosexual relationships were regarded with more suspicion than in Boeotia and Sparta, particularly between adults.[109] Against this view, Ogden suggests that homosexuality was *institutionally* established in the Athenian hoplite army, but this statement, in my opinion, is based on too scanty evidence.[110] We

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[105] Cf. Rückert (1829) 260; Bury (1932) 25. Some momentous victories were ascribed to this military corps between 375 (Tegyrae) and 338 BC (Chaeronea), including Leuctra (371), cf. Plut. *Pelop.* 18-9, Max. Tyr. *Or*. 18.2, Athen. 13.561-2, 602a. In Xenophon's *Symposium* (8.32), Phaedrus' thesis is ascribed to Pausanias who explicitly refers to the Theban Sacred Band.

[106] Leitao (2002) 162 argues for a late idealizing legend, but most scholars investigate the Sacred Band as a historical reality: see Dover (1978) 190–4, 200; Buffière (1980) 95–101; Cartledge (1981); Ludwig (2002) 341-5.

[107] Xen. *Lac*. 2.12-14; *Hell.* 4.8, 25, 30; Arist. *Pol.* 1272a25; Plut. *Amat*. 761d, *Lyc.* 18.4, 25.1; Diod. 12.70.1; Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F149 l. 96-125 = Strabo 10.4.21. The main study of military pederasty is Ogden (1996); see also Bethe (1907) 444, Patzer (1982) 70–90; Sergent (1987) 5–39; Percy (1996) 69–89. Burg (2002) 5-9 provides a sketchy survey. On Sparta, Cartledge (1981) 34 offers a more prudent account than Ogden.

[108] Plut. *Amat*. 761b-c, Xen. *Lac. Pol.* 2.12, *Symp* 8.34; Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F225a = Polybius 8.9.9-12; Diodorus 16.93-4; Arrian. hist. *Anab.* 3.13.3-7, with Hammond and Griffith (1979) 154, 505 and Ogden (1996) 115-6, 120-3.

[109] See Xen. *Smp.* 8.32-35. As Pausanias will claim soon, in response to Phaedrus' army of lovers, the sexual code of conduct was more complex in Athens than in Boeotia (182a8-b1); cf. Halperin (1990) 30-6, Cohen (1991) 200-1, esp. n. 100; Ogden (1996) 108-9, Ludwig (2002) 48.

[110] Cf. Ogden (1996) 125-31, who refers to Xen. *Anab.* 7.4.7, Eubulus, fr. 118, Soph. fr. 44. I rather follow Buffière (1980) 197 who distinguishes Athenian from, e.g., Spartan homosexuality as *not* being militarily based.

have, however, enough evidence for assuming that Athenians did not regard as bizarre or immoral the notion that love between *erastês* and *erômenos* can inspire courage (ἀνδρεία) on the battlefield: the view is conveyed by two early Attic inscriptions,[111] and it seems that the Athenian culture of the gymnasium promoted a natural association between warfare and homoeroticism:[112] gymnasia were both a prime site for the courting of boys and a training ground for military *aretê*.[113]

Conclusion

When Phaedrus argues for the benefits that *erôs* can provide to everybody (178c2-179b3), he aims to reconfigure the Homeric tradition but he certainly does not mean to throw a bombshell. Not only does this central account not provide a novel eulogy to the god, but the eulogy does not even match the standards set by Phaedrus himself: it only reveals the benefits of *erôs* in the common run of people, who need some incentive to emulate the best. In order to praise the god as he deserves (ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι, 177c3), Phaedrus still needs to show that this mechanism works for the best of us, the heroes. This is the purpose of the final part of the speech, and it is in this section that Phaedrus will provide a fully paradoxical account of the benefits of *erôs*.

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[111] *IG* I^3 1399, Attica, c. 525-500 BC (ἐνθαδ' ἀνὴρ ὄμοσεν κατὰ ὀρκία παιδὸς ἐρα[σ]θεὶς | νείκεα συμμείξει[ν] πόλεμόν θ' ἅμα δακρυόεντα | Γναθίου, τοῦ ψυχὴ ὄλετ' ἐν [δαί] ἱερός εἰμι |τοῦ Ἐροιάδου), and *IG* I^3 1401, Athens, Acropolis, c. 475-450 BC (Λυσίθεος : Μικίωνα φιλεῖν φησὶ μάλιστα τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει· ἀνδρεῖος γάρ ἐστι). On the two inscriptions, see Themos (2014) 15-7 and 86-7; see also Dover (1978) 123-4 and Fantuzzi (2012) 223-4.

[112] Ogden (1996) 128-9.

[113] For homoeroticism in the gymnasium, cf. Thgn. 1335-6; Ar. *Nu*. 973-80, etc.; Pl. *Euthd*. 273a, *Smp*. 217c, *Charm*.154d; etc.; Aeschin. 1.135 etc.; Cic. *Tusc*. 4.70; Plut. *Amat.* 751f-752c. For military training in the gymnasium, cf. Ar., *Pax* 355-6; Pl. *Prot.* 236b; Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.33, 2.2.8, etc. For athletics and military *aretê*, cf. Pind. *Ol*. 7.89, *Il*. 22.156-66 and Tyrt. fr. 12. See esp. Scanlon (2002), 87, 211-73, 300, 304, 322; see also Dover (1978) 154-7, Buffière (1980) 199, 561-72, and Miller (2004) 189-95.

B. The heroic exempla (179b4-180b5)

Since Phaedrus directly borrows his view of virtue and happiness from the epic tradition, he needs to show that epic heroes (Alcestis and Achilles), who had the courage to die for others, were subject to the beneficial influence that he previously ascribed to *erôs*. He also needs to show that the heroes who have performed daring actions through *erôs* but did not actually 'die for' someone (Orpheus) were failing lovers. As far as we can know from our textual evidence, Phaedrus provides here a fully paradoxical recount of the epic tradition, and presumably Plato means his reader to notice it.

1. Alcestis

Phaedrus starts by displaying Alcestis as the paradigm of the virtuous lovers, who are ready to 'die for' another (ὑπεραποθνῄσκειν).

Euripides is almost our sole source for the myth before Plato:[114] two brief mentions in Homer and Hesiod are irrelevant to the episode mentioned by Phaedrus;[115] and our only pre-Platonic testimony about Alcestis' self-sacrifice is one line of Phrynichus which probably refers to the final combat between Heracles and Death.[116] Several post-classical testimonies came down to us, the most extended ones being two late Latin poems: the *Alcestis Barcinonensis* (4th cent. AD)[117] and the *Alcesta*, from the *Latin Anthology* (6th cent. AD).[118] These late testimonies may be used as indirect evidence: when they mainly or exclusively follow Euripides, not Phaedrus, they are a further indication that Euripides' interpretation of the myth is more traditional.

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[114] See Conacher (1988) 33. We have almost no evidence in painting and sculpture either, see Paton (1900) 151.

[115] Hom. *Il*. 2.713-5 (mother of Eumelos, wife of Admetus, daughter of Pelias; her beauty). Hes. *Cat.* fr. 37. 20 (daughter of Pelias).

[116] σῶμα δ' ἀθαμβὲς γυιοδόνητον | τείρει, 'He constrains the fearless, limb-driven (limb-mastered?) body', Phryn. Trag. fr. 2. Cf. Conacher (1988) 31. On Phrynichus' tragedy and its relationship to Euripides' *Alcestis*, see also Serv. *Aen*. 4.694.

[117] See Marcovich (1988).

[118] See *Lat. Ant.* I, No. 15 Riese. Other late testimonies are mentioned below.

Phaedrus' account of the myth shows many common points with the other versions, especially Euripides':[119] Admetus' parents did refuse to die for their son, Alcestis alone agreed to die for her husband, and in so doing she demonstrated the weakness of the link of kinship (cf. ὥστε ἀποδεῖξαι αὐτοὺς ἀλλοτρίους ὄντας τῷ ὑεῖ καὶ ὀνόματι μόνον προσήκοντας, *Smp.* 179c2-3);[120] the gods did send her back to life (ἔδοσαν τοῦτο γέρας οἱ θεοί, ἐξ Ἅιδου ἀνεῖναι πάλιν τὴν ψυχήν, *Smp.* 177c6-7);[121] the happy ending of the traditional story is also in line with Phaedrus' thesis that by daring to face death bravely, we eventually fare well (καλῶς βιώσεσθαι, *Smp.*178c6): in all the versions of the myth, whereas either Alcestis or Admetus are initially doomed to die, both eventually survive.

a. Differences from the traditional accounts

Phaedrus seems to depart from the traditional account on two points: Alcestis' motives for sacrificing herself, and the gods' motives for sending her back to the living world.

i. The motives of Alcestis' self-sacrifice

In Phaedrus' view, Alcestis agreed to die for Admetus because of 'the friendship *created by her erôs*' (τῇ φιλίᾳ διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα, 179c1-2). In most of the transmitted versions of the myth Alcestis' motives are left unexplained;[122] and when they are mentioned, especially in Euripides, they are obviously *not* erotic.

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[119] According to Pietsch (2012) 45 n. 20, Phaedrus depends mainly on Euripides.

[120] Cf. Eur. *Alc*. 339 (see below); Apollod. 1.106.5-6; Zenob. Soph. *Epit*. in *Paroem.* 1.18.21-3 Leutsch-Schneidewin; etc. This also illustrates Phaedrus' general thesis about *erôs*: οὔτε συγγένεια οἵα τε ἐμποιεῖν οὕτω (...) ὡς ἔρως, *Smp*. 178c6-d1.

[121] Phaedrus' indefinite expression (οἱ θεοί) may refer to Thanatos, defeated by Heracles in Euripides, or to Hades and Persephone, charmed or convinced by Orpheus in many versions of the myth; it may also refer to Apollo's indirect intervention in Euripides, see below p. 53.

[122] [Dion. Halic.] *Ars rhet.* 2.5.19-20; Hyg. *Fab.* 51.3; Apollod 1.106.6; Zenob. Soph. *Epit*., in *Paroem.* 1.18.23-4 Leutsch-Schneidewin.

- ***Erôs ?***

Euripides' *Alcestis* is almost devoid of any mention of *erôs*: ἔρως or ἐρᾶν appear only three times, and with metaphorical senses.[123] Sexuality is only mentioned by Heracles who, unaware that Admetus' household is in mourning, tactlessly invites the servant to 'honour Aphrodite' (790). Neither ἔρως/ἐρᾶν nor sexuality characterize the affection that Alcestis feels for Admetus. Alcestis is always said to die 'instead of' her husband — not through love for him.[124] She does not use her final hours to enjoy the last possible moments of intimacy with Admetus, as would any passionate lover; she instead performs her religious duties and complains about losing life (152-195). Her final desire is not to embrace her husband but 'to look upon the light of the sun' (βλέψαι πρὸς αὐγὰς βούλεται τὰς ἡλίου, 206), and she appears primarily worried about being deprived of 'earth, palace roofs and *the maiden bed of [her] ancestral Iolcus'* (νυμφίδιοί κοῖται πατρίας Ἰωλκοῦ 248-9), not of her marriage bed at Pherae. When she envisages the benefits of avoiding death (295ff), she does not mention her pleasure in staying with Admetus, but rather Admetus' benefit of keeping his spouse and her own pleasure of enjoying life (κἀγώ τ' ἂν ἔζων, 295-6). Life, not love, is the supreme good in Alcestis' eyes (ψυχῆς γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστι τιμιώτερον, 301). To be sure, Alcestis is not happy to leave her marriage bed, but she describes her attachment to it as moral, not erotic. At l. 177-82, this bed (λέκτρον) does not stand for the pleasures of *erôs*, but rather for the conjugal ties and duties: by avoiding death she would betray (προδοῦναι) her bed and her husband, and she finds comfort in the idea that the woman who may take her place will not be wiser (σώφρων) than she is.[125] Alcestis' moral sense (σωφροσύνη) surpasses her erotic desire.

Admetus is the only character who demonstrates an emotion close to *erôs* (1067, cf. 201-3; 341-68).[126] Of course, we can doubt the sincerity of such demonstrations of love, particularly when the character proclaims his desire to join Alcestis in Hades (382); but he, not Alcestis, is the one who identifies himself with Orpheus, the hero who most

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[123] Referring to Pheres' desire for a long life (μακροῦ βίου γὰρ ἠισθόμην ἐρῶντά σε, 715); Admetus' desire for death (ζηλῶ φθιμένους, κείνων ἔραμαι, | κεῖν' ἐπιθυμῶ δώματα ναίειν, 866-7); Admetus' desire for lament (Ἔγνωκα καὐτός, ἀλλ΄ ἔρως τις ἐξάγει, 1080), see Thumiger (2013) 36.

[124] τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, οὗ θνήισκω πάρος, 178; Αὕτα ποτὲ προύθαν' ἀνδρός, 1002.

[125] Cf. ἥτις κακίων οὖσ' ἐμοῦ γυνή, 306.

[126] See Thumiger (2013) p. 39, n. 34 on the whole scene at l. 1040-79.

famously went down to Hades through *erôs* (εἰ δ' Ὀρφέως μοι γλῶσσα καὶ μέλος παρῆν κ.τ.λ., 357 ff).

- ***Philia?***

Alcestis feels *philia*, not *erôs* for Admetus, as is expected from a woman involved in a marital and long-standing relationship (σὴν γὰρ φιλίαν σεβόμεσθα, 279).[127] She includes in this feeling both Admetus and her children,[128] but she gives the children precedence over the husband: they, not Admetus, are the recipients of her last thoughts and prayers (163-9, 270-1). She does ask Admetus not to remarry (305-10), but not through jealousy nor erotic possessiveness: she seeks to protect her children from the curse of a wicked stepmother (309).

Admetus also compares Alcestis' *philia* with the *philia* between him and his parents, and concludes:

> λόγωι γὰρ ἦσαν οὐκ ἔργωι φίλοι. (*Alc.* 339)

Plato may have remembered this verse in composing Phaedrus' interpretation of the story:

> ὄντων αὐτῷ πατρός τε καὶ μητρός, οὓς ἐκείνη τοσοῦτον ὑπερεβάλετο τῇ φιλίᾳ διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα, ὥστε ἀποδεῖξαι αὐτοὺς ἀλλοτρίους ὄντας τῷ ὑεῖ καὶ ὀνόματι μόνον προσήκοντας. (*Smp.* 179b8-c3)

However, Euripides never suggests, even implicitly, that Alcestis' *philia* for Admetus surpasses the *philia* of his parents *because of its erotic nature* (διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα, 179c1-2): this erotic causality is obviously Phaedrus' personal contribution to the myth. In Euripides, there is no difference of nature (erotic vs non-erotic), but only a difference of degree between the various forms of *philia* which are at play in the story. Alcestis' *philia* for Admetus does not only surpass Pheres' and Periclymene's *philia* for their son; it is also weaker than Alcestis' *philia* for her children. As a result, Alcestis' *philia* for Admetus cannot play a prominent role in her decision-making: her affection for her children will always have the edge. The chorus explicitly says that, by sacrificing her

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[127] The words, uttered by Admetus, should be translated as 'the affection you bear us' (Parker 2007) or 'the tie between us' (Dale 1974); not 'ton amour' (Méridier 1925) nor 'your love' (Conacher 1988). See also 472, 876, 917 (φιλίας ἀλόχου), 930 (ἔθανε δάμαρ, ἔλιπε φιλίαν).

[128] Cf. l. 279 above: by σεβόμεσθα, Admetus refers to himself and the children.

life, Alcestis deliberately sacrificed her *philia* for Admetus (ἔθανε δάμαρ, ἔλιπε φιλίαν, 930).

For all that, Alcestis' *philia* for her children cannot determine her decision to die either: her sacrifice, as she admits herself, puts her children's future in jeopardy (305-10, see above). Since Alcestis loves her children more than anybody else, how could her maternal love be the cause of leaving her children?

In sum, in Euripides, (1) Alcestis feels *philia*, not *erôs*, for Admetus, and this *philia* is not caused by *erôs* (διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα): this feeling is not essentially different from the affection that parents feel for their children (Admetus' parents for their son; Alcestis for her children). (2) If *philia* had to play a role in Alcestis' self-sacrifice, it should be the one she feels for her children, which is stronger than her affection for her husband. She may die *in Admetus' stead*, but not necessarily *for Admetus' sake*. (3) She cannot die for her children's sake either — such a motivation would make no sense. Therefore, the primary motive for Alcestis' death cannot be the *philia* she feels for any of her kin.

- ***Performing virtue***

By sacrificing her *philia* for Admetus (930), Alcestis salvaged her reputation as a virtuous wife. Throughout the play, Alcestis is described as a noble and virtuous spouse:[129] she is faithful to her husband (πιστή, 368, 880), wise (σώφρων, 182, 615), and most of all brave (442-4, 461 etc.).[130] It is obviously this virtuous character that prompts her to save her husband; by dying on his behalf, she does not display her *erôs*, nor her *philia*; she *honours* him, as the servant says:

> {Θε.} πῶς δ' ἂν μᾶλλον ἐνδείξαιτό τις
> πόσιν προτιμῶσ' ἢ θέλουσ' ὑπερθανεῖν;
> καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ πᾶσ' ἐπίσταται πόλις
> (*Alc*. 154-6)[131]

[129] ἀρίστη, 81; ἐσθλή, 418, 615, 899; γενναιοτάτα, 993. See also l. 96-7, 109, 241-2, 323-5.

[130] Those who do not dare to behave like her are also regularly accused of cowardice (ἀψυχία, 642, 696, 717).

[131] See also Eur. *Alc*. (ἐγώ σε πρεσβεύουσα κἀντὶ τῆς ἐμῆς | ψυχῆς καταστήσασα φῶς τόδ' εἰσορᾶν | θνήισκω, 282-4), *Alces. Barcin*. (vinco pietate parentem, 75; Dum cinceres servabo tuos, 80; Disce mori, de m<e> disce exemplu<m> pietatis, 102).

The last line shows that what is at stake in Alcestis' self-sacrifice is not only Admetus' *timê*, but also her own honour: she seeks to maintain the reputation for virtue she has already gained in the city.[132] Alcestis also insists that Admetus should not re-marry after her death not only on behalf of the children (see *above*), but also on behalf of her own honour:

> {Αλ.} ὦ παῖδες, αὐτοὶ δὴ τάδ' εἰσηκούσατε
> πατρὸς λέγοντος μὴ γαμεῖν ἄλλην ποτὲ
> γυναῖκ' ἐφ' ὑμῖν μηδ' ἀτιμάσειν ἐμέ.
> (*Alc*. 371-3)

Many passages refer to the fame that Alcestis achieves through her self-sacrifice (938); or to the fame that Admetus' parents (291-2; 648-9), or Admetus himself (959-61) fail to gain by refusing to imitate her courage.[133] Therefore, *timê* plays a double function in Alcestis' self-sacrifice: Alcestis serves her husband's *timê* (155), but also, and most importantly, the *timê* that she has already secured for herself in the *polis* (156, 373). In Euripides, *philotimia* plays a crucial role in the heroine's motivation, just as it plays a crucial role in Phaedrus' ethical model: Alcestis does not want to incur the shame of appearing to be a bad wife. For all that, there is no indication that, like in the army of lovers, Alcestis' *philotimia* is itself motivated by *erôs*: it is in the eyes of the whole city (πᾶσ' ἐπίσταται πόλις, 154-6) that Alcestis will secure her honour, not in the eyes of her beloved. Euripides' moral code of conduct is thus in line with Homer, not Plato: Alcestis' heroic motivations follow Sarpedon's lesson in the *Iliad*,[134] not the ethics of Phaedrus' army of lovers.

ii. The reasons of Alcestis' return from Hades

Phaedrus' second major departure from the myth bears on the reasons why Alcestis was granted the privilege of coming back from Hades. Phaedrus claims that the gods admired and honoured the virtue she performed through *erôs*:

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[132] See also the point of view of the chorus, who represents the civic community (Ἄλκηστις, ἐμοὶ πᾶσί τ' ἀρίστη | δόξασα γυνὴ | πόσιν εἰς αὐτῆς γεγενῆσθαι, 81-5).

[133] See also *Alces. Barcin*. 76.

[134] See above p. 42.

> τὴν ἐκείνης [ψυχήν] ἀνεῖσαν ἀγασθέντες τῷ ἔργῳ· οὕτω καὶ θεοὶ τὴν περὶ τὸν ἔρωτα σπουδήν τε καὶ ἀρετὴν μάλιστα τιμῶσιν. (*Smp.* 179c7-d2)

Two competing versions of Alcestis' return from Hades have been transmitted: (a) either she was sent back by the gods, as Phaedrus claims,[135] or (b) she was wrenched away from Death's hands by Heracles.[136]

(a) When the gods are the cause of her resurrection, they never act, as Phaedrus wants it, through admiration for her deeds: either no motive is given,[137] or, in a version maybe inspired by Orpheus' myth, Persephone is swayed by the songs of those who mourned her and pitied Admetus.[138] In Euripides, although Thanatos is the main divine player, Apollo briefly intervenes at the start of the play: he wants to save Alcestis (52) and prophesies Heracles' intervention (72-6). This may suggest that Heracles' deed is ultimately caused by Apollo; yet, even under that scenario, the god does not help Alcestis through admiration for her self-sacrifice, but through gratitude for Admetus' former proofs of hospitality (1-12) and piety (10: ὁσίου γὰρ ἀνδρός).

(b) In the most popular version, followed by Euripides, Heracles saves Alcestis by the strength of his arms. The episode still involves a god: Thanatos 'sets free' Alcestis (cf. ἀνεῖναι πάλιν τὴν ψυχήν, *Smp.* 179c7), but he surely does not do so willingly.[139] Neither can we assume that Phaedrus ascribed to the gods a feeling Heracles already has in the myth: the hero never saves Alcestis in order to honour her courage. In most versions, his motives are not mentioned, and when they are, he is always, like Apollo, grateful to Admetus' proverbial hospitality and piety.[140] Alcestis' delivery from Hades must thus be

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[135] The *Symposium* passage is the first attestation of this 'peaceful' version. Robert (1879) 29-30 suggests that Plato invented it.

[136] This version is first attested in Phrynichus and Euripides, cf. Conacher (1988) 34-5, pace Ebeling (1898) 74-7, and Bergk (1889) 498, who believe that, in Phrynichus, Alcestis' return was the gift of the gods of the Underworld. For the two versions of the myth, see, e.g., Apollod. 1.106; Zenob. Soph. *Epit*. in *Paroem.* 1.18.25-7 Leutsch-Schneidewin.

[137] Apollod. 1.106.6-7 etc.

[138] Zenob**.** Soph. *Epit*. in *Paroem.* 1.18.24-6 Leutsch-Schneidewin.

[139] Phryn. Trag. fr. 2; Eur. *Alc*. 69; Zenob. Soph. *Epit*. in *Paroem.* 1.18.26-7 Leutsch-Schneidewin; Apollod. 1.106.7-8; Hyg. *Fab.* 51.3; Agatharchides also insists that, by contrast with Orpheus, *erôs* has nothing to do in this episode (τὴν μὲν ὑφ' Ἡρακλέους ἀναχθεῖσαν, τὸν δὲ διὰ τὸν τῆς γυναικὸς ἔρωτα, 7.68 Müller).

[140] Apollod. 2.129.5-6; Eur. *Alc*. 840-2, 854-60, 1148. Admetus welcomed Heracles although he was mourning his wife (539-67); on Admetus' hospitality see also 568-9, 809, 822-3, 830, 1039-40, with Méridier (1925) 48. On Admetus' piety, see l. 605 (θεοσεβῆ).

put down to her husband's, not her own, virtue, and the feeling that Alcestis and Admetus may have felt for each other (either *erôs* or *philia*) has no influence on the event whatsoever.[141]

b. Phaedrus' manipulation and its motives

Although Phaedrus keeps the basic facts of the traditional story, he eroticizes the causes of Alcestis' self-sacrifice and of her return to life. This revision of the tradition allows him both to praise *erôs* as he deserves (ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι, 177c3) and to defuse a threat: in the standard version of the myth, Alcestis 'dies for' Admetus (ὑπεραποθνῄσκει), but not through love (διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα): the Alcestis myth thus represents an implicit refutation of Phaedrus' thesis that *only* lovers are ready to die for (ὑπεραποθνῄσκειν γε μόνοι ἐθέλουσιν οἱ ἐρῶντες, 179b4). Phaedrus might incorporate the Alcestis myth into his account not primarily because he finds in it a good illustration for his thesis, but rather because he needs to neutralize the potential objection that this story represents to his argument.

2. Orpheus

Phaedrus subjects Orpheus' myth to an opposite kind of distortion.[142] Orpheus represents the lowest level of Phaedrus' heroic scale: he is the lover who, although

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[141] In Plutarch (*Amat*. 761e-f), both Heracles and Apollo intervene for the sake of their *paidika*, that is, Admetus! (ἐρωμένου δ' αὐτοῦ γενομένου ... τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα ἐραστήν). To be sure, Alcestis is also said to act through *erôs* (ἡ δ' ἐξ Ἔρωτος κατοχὴ προάγεταί τι τολμᾶν παρὰ φύσιν καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν), and Hades lets her free for this reason (μόνῳ θεῶν ὁ Ἅιδης Ἔρωτι ποιεῖ τὸ προσταττόμενον); but, as Rist (2001) 559 convincingly argues, Plutarch is probably drawing on the *Symposium* passage here, as in the rest of the *Amatorius*. Clement of Alexandria mentions Alcestis' φιλανδρία (*Strom.* 4.19.121.1.1), but the term refers less usually to erotic passion than to conjugal *philia*, that is, Alcestis' feelings for Admetus as described in Euripides, not in Plato, cf. Philo Alex., *De Abrahamo* 245.22 Cohn; Luc. *Halc*. 2.6; Lib. *Or*. 29.14; App. *Bell. Civ*. 4.36.

[142] Some commentators have maintained that Plato's version is based on tradition, see Heurgon (1932) 33, Linforth (1941) 19, and Sansone (1985) 53ff., who is the most specific about it. I follow and provide evidence for the more widely accepted view, namely, that Phaedrus' treatment of the Orpheus myth is a typical example of Plato's myth-making, cf. Hug (1884) 43-4, Gruppe (1902) 1158, Kern (1920) 13, Bury (1932) 28, Guthrie (1935) 31, Ziegler (1939) 1274, Dronke (1962) 202, Lee (1964) 401, Robbins (1982) 17, Scalera MacClintock (1988) 140 n.3, Sorel (1995) 28, Bernabé (1998) 41ff., Rowe (1998) 139, Hunter (2004a) 39. See also Bowra (1952) 120-1, Segal (1989) 16, Di Fabio (1993) 202-3. The most thorough study on the issue is Heath (1994) 178ff.

performing heroic deeds of some sorts, failed to show the good form of virtue that *erôs* is likely to foster: being ready to die for someone else (see above p. 35).

a. Differences from the traditional accounts

This leads Phaedrus to claim that the hero was soft (μαλθακίζεσθαι, 179d4), i.e., both not enough in love, and not brave enough to face death. In Phaedrus' view, four elements bear witness to Orpheus' *malakia*: (i) the hero chose to descend to Hades alive, instead of dying for his beloved; (ii) he was a musician; (iii) he failed to recover Eurydice for good; (iv) he died at the hands of women. These four facts can be found in the various versions of the myth transmitted; but none of them is presented as an indication of Orpheus' *malakia*, as Phaedrus wants it.

i. The motives for the *katabasis*.

Phaedrus views Orpheus' descent to Hades as an act of cowardice whereby the lover would have sought to shun danger through lack of passion:

> οὐ τολμᾶν ἕνεκα τοῦ ἔρωτος ἀποθνήσκειν ὥσπερ Ἄλκηστις, ἀλλὰ διαμηχανᾶσθαι ζῶν εἰσιέναι εἰς Ἅιδου. (*Smp.* 179d5-7)

We have little pre-Platonic testimony of Orpheus' *katabasis* and death,[143] but in none of them, nor in the later accounts, is the event described along these lines: it is always viewed as an act of great courage,[144] and a direct manifestation of the hero's outstanding

[143] For the *katabasis*, the only two pre-Platonic testimonies are Eur. *Alc*. 357-62 (see above: Admetus wishes he could, like Orpheus, bring his wife back from Hades), and Isoc. *Bus*. 8.2 (ὁ μὲν ἐξ Ἅιδου τοὺς τεθνεῶτας ἀνῆγεν). For both events, the most comprehensive accounts are late: Paus. 9.30, Verg. *Georg* 4.454, Ov. *Met*. 10.1ff. On Orpheus' death, the only classical mention is Isoc. *Bus*. 10.39 (Ὀρφεὺς δ' ὁ μάλιστα τούτων τῶν λόγων ἁψάμενος διασπασθεὶς τὸν βίον ἐτελεύτησεν); according to late authors, Aeschylus invented the death at the hand of the Maenads: [Eratosth.] *Catast*. 24 (140 Rob.); Schol. German. *Arat*. BP (140 Rob.); Schol. German. *Arat*. SV (152.A Breysig); Arat. Lat. p. 232a.5 Maass. For a review of the sources, see Bernabé (2005) 443-57 (on the *katabasis*) and 480-89 (on the death) = Orph. frr. 978-999 and 1032-1051 Bernabé.

[144] Hermesian. *Leont*. fr. 7, 1-14 Powell; Verg. *Georg*. 4.467-10; App. Verg. *Culex* 270-7; Ov. *Met*. 10.13, 29.

love.[145] Although the traditions vary, they all show that the hero chose to go down to Hades alive not because he feared death, but in order to get his spouse back *alive*.[146]

ii. The cithara player

In no text either is Orpheus' famous musical skill viewed as a sign of his alleged lack of manliness (μαλθακίζεσθαι ἐδόκει, ἅτε ὢν κιθαρῳδός, 179d4-5). When mentioned, these skills are always characterized positively.[147] First, they appear as his specific virtue:[148] Orpheus can charm beasts, trees, and rocks,[149] and by winning over Hades and Persephone, he performed a unique form of heroism, achieved by none of the other heroes who dared to descend to Hades (Heracles, Odysseus etc.).[150] Second, Orpheus' musical performance in Hades is depicted as the direct manifestation of his *erôs* for Eurydice.[151] In his interpretation of the myth, Phaedrus ignores both the specific (artistic) nature of Orpheus' heroism, and its essential erotic motivation.

iii. The failure to recover Eurydice

By describing Orpheus' musical skill as an indication of *malakia*, Phaedrus makes it the fundamental cause of his failure to recover Eurydice fully; the gods, on the assumption that he was a soft cithara player, wrecked his plans by giving him a phantom of Eurydice:

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[145] Cf. Hermesian. *Leont*. fr. 7, 1-14 Powell; Ov. *Met*. 10.25-9; Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl*. 186, 140a25 (III 34 Henry = *FGrH* 26 F1.45).

[146] Diod. 4.25.4; Paus. 9.30.4; etc.

[147] Simonid. frr. 567 and 595; Bacchyl. *Dithyr*. fr. 5 Irigoin; Aesch. *Ag*. 1629s; Eur. *Bacch*. 560-4; Eur. *Iphig. Aul*. 1211-14; Pl. *Prot*. 315a; Diod. 4.25.4; Schol. Pind. *Py*. 4.313a.

[148] Eur. *Alc*. 358-9; Hermesian. *Leont*. fr. 7.13; Ps.-Mosch. 3, 115-25; Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl*. 186, 140a25-30.

[149] Simonid. fr. 567 and 595; Bacchyl. *Dithyr*. fr. 5 Irigoin; Eur. *Bacch*. 561-4, *Iphig. Aul*. 1211-14; etc.

[150] App. Verg. *Culex* 286-8; Sen. *Herc. fur*. 575-82 ('non solitis uocibus', 575); Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl*. 186, 140a22; Lucian. *adv. Ind*. 12.

[151] Verg. *Georg*. 4.464-6; Servius *In Aen*. 6.119 (II 26, 2 Thilo-Hagen); Mythogr. Vatic. 1.75.3 (p. 47 Zorzetti). Similarly, Orpheus' ability to charm beasts and trees is ascribed to his love, Ov. *Trist*. 4.1.17-8.

> Ὀρφέα δὲ τὸν Οἰάγρου ἀτελῆ ἀπέπεμψαν [οἱ θεοὶ] ἐξ Ἅιδου, φάσμα δείξαντες τῆς γυναικὸς ἐφ' ἣν ἦκεν, αὐτὴν δὲ οὐ δόντες, ὅτι μαλθακίζεσθαι ἐδόκει, ἅτε ὢν κιθαρῳδός. (*Smp.* 179d2-5)

On this point, Phaedrus probably distorts the myth in at least two respects. First, poets and mythographers always view Orpheus' musical performance in Hades as allowing, not preventing, Eurydice's release.[152] Second, the hero's failure to recover Eurydice fully never consists in the fact that the gods gave him a phantom (φάσμα) instead of the real person. Eurydice is always taken back to Hades because her lover ignored the instruction not to look at her too early.[153] Phaedrus may have borrowed the idea of the *phasma* from Stesichorus' treatment of the Helen-legend, which Euripides followed in his *Helen*.[154] Two motives may explain this original treatment of the myth: (i) Phaedrus can point to the alleged weak nature of Orpheus' love (cf. μαλθακίζεσθαι): the sham lover was awarded a sham beloved, as deserved; (ii) Phaedrus can also avoid the familiar account of Orpheus' failure, which rather bears witness to the strength of his passion: Orpheus looked back too early because he could not control his erotic desire; he failed because of the intensity, not the weakness, of his *erôs*.[155] Phaedrus obviously attempts to belittle the power of *erôs* in the myth, including when this power proved detrimental to the hero's enterprise.

iv. The death

He finally claims that the gods punished Orpheus for his *malakia* by having him die at the hands of women:

> τοιγάρτοι διὰ ταῦτα δίκην αὐτῷ ἐπέθεσαν, καὶ ἐποίησαν τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ γυναικῶν γενέσθαι (*Smp.* 179d7-e1).

The account of the death (τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ γυναικῶν γενέσθαι) looks traditional;[156] but Phaedrus invents the cause of the event: the divine punishment against

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[152] Ps.-Mosch. 3, 124-5; Diod. 4.25.4; Mythogr. Vatic. 1.75.3; etc.

[153] Verg. Georg. 4.488; App. Verg. *Culex* 293; Sen. *Herc. Oet*. 1085-89; Apollod. 1.15.4; Fronto *Ep. ad M. Caes. et inv*. 2.3.3; Mythogr. Vatic. 1.75.3.

[154] Suggested by Bury (1932) 28; cf. Pl. *Phaedr.* 243b.

[155] Verg. *Georg*. 4.488; Ov. *Metam*. 10.56-7; App. Verg. *Culex* 293; Sen. *Herc. fur*. 588f.

[156] Verg. *Georg*. 4.420-2; Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl*. 186, 140a31-b2; Apollod. 1.15; Paus. 9.30.7; etc.

the hero's weakness (διὰ ταῦτα δίκην αὐτῷ ἐπέθεσαν). In the myth, when the gods cause the hero's death, they never intend to stigmatize his *malakia*; they instead take revenge on Orpheus: Dionysus punishes him for neglecting his cult,[157] or disclosing his mysteries;[158] Apollo, for disregarding his oracle;[159] Aphrodite, for ignoring her,[160] or because of the role played by her mother Calliope in the Adonis trial.[161] In most testimonies however the gods do not intervene: Orpheus is just killed by the women through jealousy, because he neglected them, or introduced male homosexual love, or forbade them from participating in his rites.[162] The cause of his indifference to women is often said to be the inconsolable grief he felt after the second loss of Eurydice:[163] far from being an indication of the hero's apathy or cowardice, the event, again, is caused by the strength of his *erôs*. In a tradition reported by Pausanias, the second loss of Eurydice even leads Orpheus to commit suicide;[164] this version seems to expand on Ovid (*Met*. 38-9), where the hero says that he would rather die if he failed to recover Eurydice, and it directly contradicts Phaedrus' claim that the hero was not enough in love to die for his beloved. Furthermore, Orpheus' death at the hand of Thracian women is never described as an act of moral justice (δίκη): both humans and gods regard it as a horrendous crime.[165] Finally, Orpheus is sometimes, like in Phaedrus' speech, mentioned along with Alcestis as a case study of the favours Hades may grant to lovers; but in none of these texts is Orpheus' *erôs* or courage viewed as inferior to Alcestis'.[166]

Heath (1994) 180-1 however argues from a scholion to Apollonius' *Argonautica* that Plato is not the first to challenge Orpheus' 'manliness':

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[157] [Eratosth.] *Catast*. 24, who ascribes the tale to Aeschylus.

[158] Paus. 9.30.5-6; Hyg. *Astr*. 2.7.1.

[159] Philostr. *Vit. Apoll*. 4.14.

[160] P. Berol. 13426, 1469ff.

[161] Hyg. *Astr*. 2.7.3.

[162] Phanocl. fr. 1.7-10 Powell, cf. Verg. *Georg*. 4.420-22; Ovid. *Met*. 10.83-5; Paus. 9.30.5; Servium *in Georg*. 4.519 (III 357.24 Thilo-Hagen); Hyg. *Astr*. 2.7.3; Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl*. 186, 140a33-7.

[163] Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl*. 186, 140a34-7; Phanocl. fr. 1.3-4; Ov. *Met*. 10.79-81.

[164] Paus. 9.30.6.

[165] Humans: Phanocl. fr. 1.7, 23-8. Gods: Paus: 9.30.8, Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl*. 186, 140b2-15; Schol. Pind. *Py*. 4.313a (II 140.3 Drachm.)

[166] Eur. *Alc*. 357-62, Plut. *Amat*. 761e9-f1 (see above note 141); Lucian. *Dial. mort*. 28.3.

> <πρῶτά νυν Ὀρφῆος>: Ἡρόδωρος (31 fg 42 J.) δύο εἶναι Ὀρφεῖς φησιν, ὧν τὸν ἕτερον συμπλεῦσαι τοῖς Ἀργοναύταις. Φερεκύδης ἐν τῇ ς′ (3 fg 26 J.) Φιλάμμωνά φησι καὶ οὐκ Ὀρφέα συμπεπλευκέναι. ἔστι δέ, ὡς Ἀσκληπιάδης (12 fg 6c J.), Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ Καλλιόπης· ἔνιοι δὲ ἀπὸ Οἰάγρου καὶ Πολυμνίας. ζητεῖται δέ, διὰ τί Ὀρφεὺς ἀσθενὴς ὢν συνέπλει τοῖς ἥρωσιν: ὅτι μάντις ὢν ὁ Χείρων ἔχρησε δύνασθαι καὶ τὰς Σειρῆνας παρελθεῖν αὐτοὺς Ὀρφέως συμπλέοντος. (Schol. Ap. Rhod. *Arg.* 1.23, pp. 8-9 Wendel)

The scholiast recalls that previous mythographers were apparently puzzled as to why Orpheus, who lacked the strength required for the enterprise (ἀσθενὴς ὤν), embarked on the Argô nonetheless; Herodorus solved the problem by saying that there were two different Orpheuses, and Pherecydes just denied Orpheus' participation in the adventure. Yet this ancient debate, *pace* Heath, can hardly be viewed as an antecedent to Phaedrus' claim: it only casts doubt on Orpheus' natural *physical* strength (ἀσθενής), not on his lack of courage, or spirit (μαλακία), which is the focus of Phaedrus' argument. Phaedrus does not blame Orpheus for not having Heracles' strength, and he never argues that *erôs* inspires physical strength as such; he rather blames Orpheus for not having the *character* trait showed by a heroine like Alcestis, who would certainly not have qualified for rowing on the Argô either.

In sum, poets or mythographers usually represent Orpheus as a highly respected figure,[167] an outstanding musician[168] who, through his outstanding love[169] performed outstanding deeds.[170] They never cast doubt on his *erôs* for Eurydice, nor on his virtue, i.e. his courage and his musical skills.

b. Phaedrus' manipulation and its motives

Phaedrus departs from the Orpheus myth in three different ways: he invents new elements of the story (the *phasma*, cf. iii); he gives traditional facts a new significance

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[167] Pind. *Pyth*. 4.177 (εὐαίνητος Ὀρφεύς); Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl.* 186, 140b13f (θυσίαις τε γὰρ καὶ ὅσοις ἄλλοις θεοὶ τιμῶνται γεραίρεται); Lucian. *adv. Ind*. 11-12; Paus. 9.30.12.

[168] Aesch. *Ag*. 1629-32.

[169] Verg. *Georg*. 4.423-7.

[170] See above. He is compared to other heroes (Heracles, Odysseus) or gods (Dionysus) who dared to go down to Hades and succeeded in bringing dead people back to the living: Ps.-Mosch. 3.115-25, Diod. 4.25.4.

(Orpheus' musical skill, viewed as pointing to the hero's *malakia*, cf. ii); or he assigns a new cause to them (the *katabasis* (i), the failure (iii), and the death (iv), viewed as divine sanctions against the hero's *malakia*). These various manipulations of the myth target both the *erôs* and the virtue of the hero: they belittle the erotic motivation of Orpheus' performance and introduce a moral condemnation of his lack of manliness. Both transformations are required by Phaedrus' project: offering a proper encomium to the god.

i. *Erôs*

An implicit claim of Phaedrus' theory, as presented in the central part of the speech (178c2-179b3), is that the efficiency of *erôs* depends on its intensity: the more one is in love, the more one is likely to perform daring and virtuous actions, that is, to 'die for' someone (ὑπεραποθνῄσκειν). Since Orpheus, in the most familiar versions of the myth, performed impressive deeds but did not choose to die for his beloved, Phaedrus needs to show first that the hero cannot have been the passionate lover he is usually taken to be — his love cannot be as strong as Alcestis'. For Alcestis, who is an outstanding example of a hero willing to die for, Phaedrus had to play up, and even to invent, the role of *erôs* in the story; for Orpheus, who displayed a kind of heroism not conducive to his view of virtue (dying for someone) Phaedrus deliberately plays down the function of *erôs*.

ii. *Aretê*

Phaedrus also needs to modify the way Orpheus' virtue is represented in the myth. He must show that Orpheus' deeds, which did not consist in 'dying for' someone, are not as heroic as they are believed to be. This leads the speaker to lie by omission. First he erases everything that points to the hero's courage: he passes over the dangerous and frightening nature of the adventure, on which so many ancient authors agree,[171] since the courage showed by the hero in these cases does not match Phaedrus' particular conception of courage (dying for another). Second he omits to mention Orpheus' most characteristic virtue, which is not courage — a virtue shared with many other heroes — but his musical skill, his power to charm and persuade rocks, beasts and infernal gods

[171] See above n. 144.

who are supposedly insensible to persuasion.[172] Instead of recognizing Orpheus' value as an artist, Phaedrus debases it as being irrelevant, and even detrimental, to what he views as the most excellent performance of virtue — dying for someone: in his view, Orpheus' *kitharôdia* is a cowardly *mêkhanê* that allowed the hero to dodge death. Phaedrus also keeps silent on other qualities usually acknowledged in Orpheus: his wisdom,[173] the invention of initiation and purification rites,[174] or the foundation of an oracle.[175] All these features are obviously more conducive to Diotima's view of virtue and happiness than to Phaedrus'.

3. Achilles

Phaedrus' distortion of the Achilles myth is more complex, as it bears both on the Homeric and the Aeschylean versions of it.

a. Differences from the traditional accounts

Phaedrus explicitly opposes Aeschylus' account of the erotic relationship between Achilles and Patroclus:

> Αἰσχύλος δὲ φλυαρεῖ φάσκων Ἀχιλλέα Πατρόκλου ἐρᾶν, ὃς ἦν καλλίων οὐ μόνον Πατρόκλου ἀλλ' ἅμα καὶ τῶν ἡρώων ἁπάντων, καὶ ἔτι ἀγένειος, ἔπειτα νεώτερος πολύ, ὥς φησιν Ὅμηρος. (*Smp.* 180a4-7)

Plato may refer here to Aeschylus' first play, the *Myrmidons* (c. 490 BC).[176] In two fragments of this lost work, Achilles expresses his nostalgia for Patroclus' thighs:

> σέβας δὲ μηρῶν ἁγνὸν οὐ κατηδέσω,
> ὦ δυσχάριστε τῶν πυκνῶν φιλημάτων
> (Aesch. fr. 135 = Plut., *Mor.* 751c).[177]

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[172] See above nn. 148 to 150.

[173] Pl. *Leg*. 677d; *Prot*. 316d; Eur. *Alc*. 966-9; Clem. Alex. *Strom*. 5.4.24.1; Plut. *De Pyth. orac*. 18.402e; Diog. Laert. 1.5; Cono *ap. Phot. Bibl*. 186, 140a30.

[174] [Eur.] *Rhes*. 943-7, Aristoph. *Ran*. 1030-32; [Dem.] 25.11; Diod. 4.25.2-3; Apollod. 1.15.5-6.

[175] Philostr. *Heroic*. 28.8, *Vit. Apoll*. 4.14.

[176] For the date of Aeschylus' *Achilleis*, his first trilogy, see Michelakis (2002) 22 n. 1.

> μηρῶν τε τῶν σῶν εὐσεβὴς ὁμιλία
> κλαίων
>
> (Aesch. fr. 136 = [Lucian], *Erotes* 54)[178]

Aeschylus' view, which might have found resonance in Pindar's *Olympian* 10 (16-19),[179] seems to have been widely accepted three or four decades after Plato's *Symposium*. In *Against Timarchus* (346/5 BC), Aeschines presents Achilles' and Patroclus' erotic relationship as a common and agreeable interpretation of the text, without even arguing for it:

> Ἐκεῖνος γὰρ [i.e. Ὅμηρος] πολλαχοῦ μεμνημένος περὶ Πατρόκλου καὶ Ἀχιλλέως, τὸν μὲν ἔρωτα καὶ τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν αὐτῶν τῆς φιλίας ἀποκρύπτεται, ἡγούμενος τὰς τῆς εὐνοίας ὑπερβολὰς καταφανεῖς εἶναι τοῖς πεπαιδευμένοις τῶν ἀκροατῶν. (Aeschin. 1.142)

Aeschines also views Achilles as Patroclus' *erastês* on the basis of *Il*. 11.765-85, where Menoitius entrusts his son to Achilles' care:

> Ὃ καταφανής ἐστιν ὡς δι' ἔρωτα τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτοῦ παρέλαβεν. (Aeschin 1.143) [180]

It is unclear how widespread this view was in Plato's time, since Socrates opposes it in Xenophon's *Symposium*:

> Ἀχιλλεὺς Ὁμήρῳ πεποίηται οὐχ ὡς παιδικοῖς Πατρόκλῳ ἀλλ' ὡς ἑταίρῳ ἀποθανόντι ἐκπρεπέστατα τιμωρῆσαι. (Xen. *Smp.* 8.31)

There is no doubt, however, that this eroticization of the epic tradition was already in circulation, at least since Aeschylus, and that it was viewed as a debatable interpretation, a reading 'for the learned' (τοῖς πεπαιδευμένοις), by Aeschines' own admission.

Did Aeschylus, in the *Myrmidons*, just make explicit what Homer already implied, as Aeschines wants to claim (cf. ἀποκρύπτεται)? Are Achilles and Patroclus already

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[177] = also *Athen.* 13.602e (var. l. 1: οὐκ ἐπηδέσω). Harrison (2018) 148 reads here a reference to intercrural sex; but on our lack of evidence for this alleged sexual practice, see Osborne (2018) 318-28.

[178] On the μηροί as objects of homosexual attraction, see Solon fr. 25 and Soph. fr. 346.

[179] *Ol*. 10 celebrates a victory in 476 BC, see Fantuzzi (2012) 227.

[180] On this passage, see Fantuzzi (2012) 232. For a later defence of this interpretation, see Max. Tyr. *Or*. 18, §8, with Fantuzzi (2012) 1-3; Plut., *Amat.* 751c; Martial, 11.43.9-10; Lucian. *Am.* 54.

engaged in a pederastic relationship in the *Iliad*? The view has been defended by modern scholars, most emphatically by Clarke,[181] but it is also widely contested, and rightly so to my mind.[182] Not only do the passages usually targeted in Homer to support this view not provide clear evidence,[183] but the 'couple' formed by Achilles and Patroclus, as Homer depicts it, does not fit in the hierarchical pattern between the *erastês*, who is older, more active and behaves as a teacher, and the younger, passive, and beautiful, *erômenos*.[184] On the one hand, Patroclus appears as the typical *erastês*, as Phaedrus wants it: he is older than Achilles (*Il*. 11.787), and Achilles is the more handsome of the two (καλός, *Il*. 2.673-4, 17.279-80; *Od*. 11.550-1). But Homer also depicts Achilles as the dominant partner: his prowess is unmatched on the battlefield (*Il*. 1.165-6), he is stronger (16.140-4), he taught Patroclus some medicine learnt from Cheiron (11.830-2),[185] he gives him orders (11.648-54, 23.90, 17.271, 18.152) and, as Aeschines recalls, he was asked to exercise a sort of mentorship over Patroclus (11.786-9). Both Phaedrus' and Aeschylus' eroticizing depictions of the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus rather appear as late adaptations of the contemporary ideology of pederastic love to an epic narrative which is a priori ill-suited to this model.[186]

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[181] Clarke (1978); see also von Scheliha (1943) 314-7, Cantarella (1988) 25-8, Ogden (1996) 123-5, Davidson (2007) 255–67. According to Konstan (1997) 42, 'The bond between Achilles and Patroclus occupies an extreme position on the spectrum of friendships'.

[182] See Dover (1978) 194, 196; Buffière (1980) 369, 372, Sergent (1986), Bremmer (1980), Skinner (2005) 42-3. The most thorough refutations of the alleged evidence are Patzer (1982) 93-100 and Fantuzzi (2012) 190-215. Alexandrian scholars marked *Il*. 16.97-100 as an interpolation motivated by a homoerotic reading of Achilles' relation with Patroclus (Scholia on *Il*.16-97-100).

[183] *Il*. 16.97-100, 24.6-9, 24.128-32. For homosexuality in Homer, scholars also refer to *Il*. 20.231–5 (Ganymede 'snatched away to be Zeus' wine pourer because of his beauty (κάλλεος)', and *Od*. 3.397–403; 4.302–5; also 15.4–5; cf. Nardelli (2004).

[184] On this asymmetrical model, see Dover (1978) 16, 85, 100-9, and Konstan (1997) 38-9. For Ogden (1996) 124, the unsuitability of the Homeric narrative to the pederastic model is not an objection: early practices of homosexuality may have not obeyed this classical canon; but, as often, Ogden does not provide sufficient evidence for this assumption.

[185] This passage may have inspired Pind. *Ol*. 10. 16-9 (476 BC), where Achilles appears as Patroclus' teacher; on which see Hubbard (2003b) 1-2.

[186] See Dover (1978) 197-8, Fantuzzi (2012) 216. Another characteristic 'homosexualisation' of the myth is Pind. *Ol*. 1. 36ff, where Pelops' story is recast in a pederastic context, see Dover (1978) 198. What is at stake in this debate is, more fundamentally, the question of the 'date of birth' of pederasty in Greece: Sergent (1987), (1986), (1993), and Bremmer (1980) and (1990) view pederasty as an institution that evolved from Indo-European initiation rituals in the prehistoric period; against this view Dover (1988) 116-9 convincingly argued that there is no literary evidence for overt homosexuality prior to the 7th century BC; from this date, the custom

b. Phaedrus' manipulation and its motives

Therefore, Phaedrus' characterization of Achilles as Patroclus' *erômenos* is heterodox in two respects: it subverts Homer's account (where there is no evidence for an erotic relationship between the two heroes), as well as the most common interpretation proposed by those who, like Aeschylus, had already eroticized Achilles' and Patroclus' relationship. This double revision of Achilles' myth may have at least two functions.

i. Offering a high-standard encomium

First, as we saw, characterizing Achilles as an *erômenos* allows the speaker to praise the god 'as he deserves': it provides good support for the thesis that *erôs* is indirectly responsible for the most heroic self-sacrifice of all, without casting doubt on the heroic nature of Achilles' character. In so doing Phaedrus can defuse a threat that the myth, both in its traditional and in its revised (Aeschylean) versions, represented for his thesis. On the one hand, the Homeric version showed that a hero can die on behalf of someone else without acting through *erôs*. In the *Iliad*, it is Achilles' irascible character, particularly irritable when it comes to the hero's *timê*, that prompts him to seek revenge for the major offence Hector inflicted on him: the loss of his dearest companion and of his divine armour. Achilles' *philotimia* and the strong *philia* that unites him with Patroclus suffice to account for his *aristeia*. Phaedrus must oppose this scenario, and show that *erôs* — no other emotion — is at the origin of Achilles' deeds.

On the other hand, the modern (Aeschylean) remodelling of the myth in light of pederastic habits deprived the hero of his *natural* virtue by depicting his *aristeia* as motivated by erotic passion. Phaedrus thus needs to show that Achilles was the *erômenos*, not the *erastês*. It is for this second motive that Phaedrus invents a new version of the story; not, as Fantuzzi argues, 'in order to stick to the parameters of role-distinctions in classical pederasty and the data provided by Homer':[187] as we saw, Homer provides as much evidence for Aeschylus' pederastic scenario (Achilles is the *erastês*) as for Phaedrus' (Achilles is the *erômenos*). This points to a further function of Phaedrus' discussion of Homer and Aeschylus: in addition to offering a proper

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presumably spread rapidly among Greek states, and myths and initiation rituals were subsequently invested with homosexual content to validate contemporary tastes and customs.

[187] Fantuzzi (2012) 230, see above p. 38.

encomium, Phaedrus' revision of the myth may be a contribution to an ongoing Homeric debate.

ii. Solving a Homeric problem

As we saw, once the relation between Achilles and Patroclus was sexualized, the repartition of the roles became a genuine Homeric problem for the interpreters,[188] and the issue might have been discussed in antiquity: Phaedrus' polemic against Aeschylus may mirror the debate and provide an original contribution to it.[189] Such critical practices were after all part of the entertainment of the elite symposia.[190] In the prologue of Plato's dialogue, Socrates already discussed with Aristodemus a similar problem (174b5-c4):[191] Homer describes Menelaus coming uninvited to Agamemnon's feast (*Il.* 2.408), thereby suggesting that Menelaus is one of the *agathoi*; but in another passage, Homer calls the hero a 'soft spearman' (μαλθακὸς αἰχμητής, *Il.* 17.588). Did the poet ignore the sympotic etiquette? Is Menelaus one of the best heroes, or a coward? The end of Phaedrus' speech raises another Homeric question: should Achilles be viewed as the *erastês* or the *erômenos*? And just as with Menelaus, the question can be decided in either way, since Homer himself did not address the problem.

In both cases the problem discussed in the epic is based on modern ethical principles that arguably did not prevail in Homer's times: the sympotic etiquette (for Menelaus), the classical rules of *paiderastia* (for Achilles and Patroclus). In the wake of the scholarly interpretations of the *Iliad* by Theagenes, Metrodorus, and all those who intended to put Homer in line with contemporary ethics and sciences,[192] Aeschylus and Phaedrus discuss the way Homeric heroism can be adapted to the morals of classical

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[188] See Fantuzzi (2012) 226-7 and 228, n. 105: 'for the ancients of classical and post-classical Greece the hierarchical schemes of the pederastic etiquette canonized between the 6th and 5th cent. appear to have been inescapable.'

[189] A late indication of this debate, as suggested by Konstan (1997) 38, may be Sen. *Ad Lucil.* 88.6, where the relative ages of Achilles and Patroclus are mentioned as a popular conundrum: 'Quid, inquam, annos Patrocli et Achillis inquirere ad rem existimas pertinere?'.

[190] See Rösler (1990) and Ford (2002) 24-44.

[191] On this passage, see Hunter (2004a) 31-2. For echoes of ancient debates on Homer in the 5th cent. BC, see Hunter (2004b) 237ff.

[192] On the allegorical and apologetic interpretations of Homer, see Richardson (1975) 65-77 and Hunter (2018) 44-91. For the pre-Platonic sources, see Lanata (1963) 106-11, 240-7 and 278-81.

Athens; and in so doing they discuss the nature of heroism itself. Behind the particular problem of textual exegesis — what did Homer mean? — Aeschylus and Phaedrus discuss a general question of morals: how should a hero like Achilles be viewed in order to serve as a valid model of virtue in the modern context of *paiderastia*?[193]

Aeschylus' answer to the question, presumably the most common one, is that Achilles was the lover.[194] Such an interpretation preserves, in some way, the heroic nature of Achilles: his characterization in Homer as an active and dominant soldier required the identification of him as an *erastês*, since the active role in the erotic relationship was supposed to mirror the active political and military role of the adult male.[195] Characterizing him as an *erômenos* would have threatened his heroic status and possibly exposed him to the ridicule of effeminacy attached to the *erômenos*, when this role was assumed by an adult citizen. Such a characterization was presumably a principal narrative resource of Sophocles' satyr-play, *The Lovers of Achilles* (Ἀχιλλέως ἐρασταί: *TrGF* iv: 149-56), where the best of the Achaeans was depicted as the object of the sexual desires of the chorus of Satyrs; Sophocles, against Aeschylus' 'tragic' version, ridiculed Achilles by turning him into an *erômenos*.[196]

Phaedrus offers an opposite answer to the Homeric problem, which is no less legitimate from a merely textual point of view, since in Homer, as we saw, Achilles is more handsome (καλλίων) and younger (νεώτερος, *Smp.* 180a5-7) than Patroclus. The state of Achilles' beard however (ἔτι ἀγένειος, 180a6) is not recorded in Homer: Phaedrus adds what was the most predictable feature of Achilles' role as an *erômenos* according to the etiquette of *paiderastia*.[197] From a moral point of view, Phaedrus' interpretation is unconventional as it casts the hero in the potentially un-heroic role displayed in Sophocles' satyr-drama. But it also supports a more plausible view of what a true and outstanding hero is: the best of the Achaeans, who is *aristos phusei*, cannot perform his exploits through a fleeting passion which is likely to inspire courage in anybody, even a coward (κακός, 179a7), and a woman (Alcestis). Phaedrus' encomium thus implicitly

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[193] For literary criticism as a pretext for talking about contemporary ethics, see Ford (2002) 25.

[194] See Konstan (1997) 38, cf. Aeschin. 1.142 and Zenodotus scholia to *Il*. 16.97-100;

[195] Cf. Halperin (1990) 30-6, Ogden (1996) 133-5, and Ludwig (2002) 48.

[196] See Fantuzzi (2012) 16-7 who suggests that Sophocles sharpened the un-heroic feature of Achilles' sexuality conveyed in the episode of the hero's cross-dressing and feminization at Scyros, on which see also Fantuzzi (2012) 21-98.

[197] Cf. Pl. *Prt*. 309a1-5, with Dover (1978) 86. See Fantuzzi (2012) 229.

raises a general question of ethics: can one belong to the *aristoi phusei* and perform an *aristeia* through a passion (*erôs*) that inspires courage in anyone? His emphatic answer is 'no': if a hero is truly virtuous, his action ('dying for' someone) cannot be at the same time directly prompted by *erôs*, since this would mean that he did not act for the sake of *to kalon*.

The benefit of Phaedrus' interpretation — just like Theagenes' or Metrodorus' allegorical readings of Homer — is to align the virtue of Homeric heroes with a more modern view of *aretê*. In a time where battles were fought not in the form of Homeric duels, but within organized and disciplined military corps like the hoplite phalanx, military efficacy could not be based merely on the rash passion (μένος) that is key to success in Homeric combat: it also required a fair amount of discipline, *sôphrosunê*, and *phronêsis*, as the 5th Athenian general Laches readily admits in Plato.[198] Self-restraint and level-headedness were surely not the hallmarks of Achilles in Homer: according to the scholiast to the *Iliad*, Aristotle viewed Achilles' character as 'unstable' (ἀνώμαλον);[199] Eustathius (*Hom*. 1365.55-8) recalls Aristotle's view and also describes the hero as 'fickle' (παλίμβολον) and 'unsteady' (ἄστατον).[200] These views, as Hunter argues, probably had an ancient origin, as they are strongly reminiscent of the charge of inconsistency brought against Achilles in Plato's *Hippias Minor* (370a-371e).[201] By remodelling the Homeric hero into an *erastês*, Aeschylus could only reinforce the discomfort that moral teachers of the classical period presumably felt with Achilles' emotional fragility. Phaedrus' heterodox interpretation brings an antidote to this discomfort: by refusing to view *erôs* as the stimulus of Achilles' *aristeia*, by endowing the hero with the more moderate sense of reverence and respect (ἀγαπᾷ, 180b2) that the ideal *erômenos* is supposed to feel towards his *erastês*, by suggesting that this feeling amounts to a reverence for the divine (θειότερον, 180b3), Phaedrus indicates that the hero acted for the sake of the fine (τὸ καλόν), not in order to satisfy his self-interest. By

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[198] *La.* 190e-192b: *phronêsis* is essential to *andreia*. On the adaptation of Homeric ethics to the modern ideology of warfare and citizenship, see also Georgoulaki (1996), Welwei (1991), Parker (1996) 135-7, Prandi (2003), and Franchi and Proietti (2015) 236.

[199] Σ T 24.569, with Arist. fr. 391 Gigon; cf. *Poet.* 1454b14–15 (παράδειγμα σκληρότητος): the passage is corrupt, but the other manuscript reading yields the same thought, cf. Halliwell (1987) 48 and 67. On this passage, see also Else (1957) 462-3; Richardson (1980) 273, Fantuzzi (2012) 226, Hunter (2016) 103. On Achilles' fickleness in the *Iliad*, see Scodel (1989).

[200] *Eust*. *Hom*. 783.17–19 (παλιμβολία, or παλιμβουλία, cf. Van der Valk ad loc.), 1359.17-22 (παλίμβολον ἦθος); 1366.1 (τὸ τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως ἄστατον). See Hunter (2016) 104-5.

[201] Hunter (2016) 88, 99, and 103, with n. 55.

insisting that Achilles died not only 'for' (ὑπεραποθανεῖν) but 'after' someone (ἐπαποθανεῖν τετελευτηκότι, 180a1-2), and that he was fully aware of the ultimate consequence of his decision (πεπυσμένος, 179e2), he can clear the hero of the selfishness and the emotional inconsistency he shows in Homer, and even more in Aeschylus. Phaedrus puts the heroic behaviour more in line with the virtues of the Platonic or Aristotelian rational agent who makes informed choices and who is fully aware of the risks he runs when choosing to honour the divine and the fine.

Conclusion

After arguing that *erôs* inspires virtue, and that virtue requires being ready to die for another (178c2-179b3), Phaedrus intends to show how his theory applies to some heroic deeds which are traditionally depicted either as not inspired by *erôs* (Alcestis and Achilles), or as inspired by *erôs* but not consisting in 'dying for' (Orpheus). By improving on the old accounts, he manages to deliver the novel and 'worthy' encomium to *erôs* which, as he himself complained to Eryximachus, no sophist or poet has provided thus far.

III. Problems of Phaedrus' encomium

I started by discussing some criticisms levelled against the alleged inconsistency of Phaedrus' argument, in particular the claim that Achilles was Patroclus' *erômenos*: I showed that this claim, as well as the other unconventional views Phaedrus holds on Alcestis and Orpheus, made perfect sense in light of the project: offering a high standard encomium to *erôs*. This is not to say that these claims about the heroes are not puzzling in some way. Plato also means his reader to notice that, however necessary to the consistency of the argument, these innovative pieces of mythology do not make full sense in terms of what we usually think about *erôs*. What is problematic in the encomium is not its consistency, but rather the erotic nature of the motivations Phaedrus ascribes to the heroes: on the one hand, he ascribes erotic motivations to two heroes (Alcestis and Achilles), but it is unclear how erotic is the emotional mechanism that prompted them to perform their *aristeia* (A and C). On the other hand, he downplays the role of *erôs* in one case (Orpheus) where *erôs* is most obviously at the root of the

heroic deeds (B). In sum, the more heroic the actions are, the less clear it is how *erôs* motivates them (D).

A. Alcestis

Alcestis as we saw exemplifies the positive effect *erôs* can have in the *erastês*, which has already been described and explained in the central part (178e-179b). In the case of the army of lovers, the account made quite good sense: on the battlefield, the *erastês* arguably faces the most deadly dangers to protect the life of his *erômenos*, from whom he hopes, until the last second of his life, to enjoy company and sexual gratifications. The final purpose of the brave lover is to prolong his erotic relationship with the beloved: this looks consistent with the very nature of *erôs*, a violent emotion which pushes to the most daring actions in order to reach satisfaction.

It is not so obvious how such a mechanism can apply to the case of Alcestis.[202] When the heroine decided to die for Admetus, she did not just put her life in jeopardy, like the soldier jumping to the front lines to protect his *erômenos*: she coolly decided to put an end to her life and, as a result, to her erotic relationship with her husband. There was no hope for Alcestis that, by saving Admetus, she might continue to enjoy his company. Alcestis' *erôs* seems to be paradoxically directed towards its own dissatisfaction: in Phaedrus' version of the myth, the final purpose of the *erastês* consists in putting out of reach the very object of *erôs*. In a more plausible scenario, if Alcestis had acted through *erôs* for Admetus, she would have done anything to save both his and her own life in order to prolong, as much as possible, her relationship with Admetus: she would have managed to convince someone else to die in Admetus' stead; or, failing that, would have enjoyed her last moments of intimacy with her husband. She would certainly not have brought forward her own death.

B. Orpheus

In other words, Alcestis would have behaved like Orpheus, who did everything possible to save the life of his beloved as well as his own, so that, back in the living world, he

[202] Noted by Hunter (2004a) 39.

and Eurydice could enjoy the pleasures of *erôs* again. By committing suicide, Orpheus would surely have joined his beloved, but this romantic gesture would have ruled out for ever the possibility for him and Eurydice to enjoy the sensual pleasures of what the Greek called *erôs*, i.e. not just romantic love, but desire for sexual intercourse. As Achilles reminds Odysseus in the *Nekyia*, the Underworld may not be deprived of honours and glory, but it does not offer much delight: how could *erôs* find its satisfaction in the realm of the 'decaying corpses' (νεκύεσσι καταφθιμένοισιν)?[203] Orpheus' decision to bring Eurydice back to life instead of joining her in Hades forever may be at odds with the ethical behaviours that Phaedrus prescribes for a lover (to 'die for' another); but it is much more in line with the requirements of *erôs* as such. What Phaedrus thus derides as softness (μαλθακίζεσθαι) in Orpheus' erotic behaviour (his refusal to die and his attempt to bring back his beloved to life) may actually be the best indication that his behaviour was motivated by *erôs*. Although depicted as the exemplar of the bad *erastês*, Orpheus seems to be more obviously motivated by *erôs* than Alcestis.

C. Achilles

By contrast, understanding Phaedrus' account of the erotic motivations of Achilles' *aristeia* is even more difficult than in Alcestis' case. Phaedrus argued that Achilles' deeds, although not directly inspired by *erôs* (the hero was not in love), were indirectly prompted by the affection (ἀγάπη) that the hero felt for his *erastês* and the divine enthusiasm (*Erôs*) that he perceived in him. The implicit lesson was that the spontaneous ambition to perform the fine (ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς καλοῖς φιλοτιμία, 178d2) animating the best hero (ἄριστος φύσει, 179a8), although not fuelled by a fleeting erotic whim, cannot manifest itself better than within an erotic relationship, when the fine thing (τὸ καλόν) that the beloved is led to revere is the divine inspiration that animates his lover. To be sure, this lesson is implied, but it necessarily follows from Phaedrus' initial plan to offer an excellent encomium, and from his final claim that he demonstrated that *erôs* is the *best* means to achieve virtue and happiness (cf. κυριώτατον εἶναι εἰς ἀρετῆς καὶ εὐδαιμονίας κτῆσιν, 180b7-8).

Two problems arise from this claim.

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[203] *Od*. 11.489-91.

(1) Phaedrus envisages *erôs* no longer as a desire, but as the object of desire: *erôs* is what, at least from the point of view of the gods, Achilles cherishes (ἀγαπᾷ, 180b2). Phaedrus' ultimate view of *erôs* is un-erotic.

(2) Even if we admit the view that *erôs* was the object of Achilles' desire, it is unclear how the implied (or required) general lesson on *erôs* follows from the particular case of Achilles. Why should erotic inspiration be a better candidate for arousing a genuine *philotimia* for *ta kala*, or a reverence for the divine, than any other fine and divine object? If the virtuous man is naturally led to perform what is best, if he does not need the particular motives that animate the ordinary *erastai* and *erômenoi*, he might be prompted to sacrifice his life through respect for the martial valour inspired by the gods (cf. μένος ἐμπνεῦσαι, 179b1) in his parents, or his companions in arms, like Diomedes, who is also divinely inspired by Athena?[204] It is unclear why Achilles' true virtue should manifest itself better in Achilles *qua* lover than just *qua* soldier admiring the divine courage of Diomedes, or looking for fine honours, or *qua* companion honouring the divine bonds of friendship, or *qua* son piously avenging his parents. Since Achilles' action is characterized as a pure act of piety, and awarded for it, it becomes irrelevant whether this act is performed in the frame of an erotic context or not, whether the divine inspiration that the hero cherishes (ἀγαπᾷ) is *Erôs* or any other god or fine thing. In other words, even if we follow the very implausible view that *erôs* can be the object of desire and therefore prompt the best of us to achieve virtue and happiness, this does not show why *erôs* is *most* conducive (κυριώτατον) to the acquisition of these goods.

In sum, if there is any oddity in Phaedrus' argument, it is because the heroic model, along with Alcestis' story, looks incompatible with the particular nature of *erôs*. Just as it was unclear why *erôs* more than moral duty or desire to achieve immortal glory should have prompted Alcestis' action, it is unclear why the fine and the divine that Achilles is naturally prone to revere should be specifically instantiated in erotic enthusiasm. Phaedrus' encomium eventually fails to demonstrate anything about the *specific* power of love, compared to other motivations.

[204] cf. *Il*. 5.1-2.

D. The paradox

Therefore, among the three heroic exempla given by Phaedrus, Orpheus is the one who is denied true heroism, but his *aristeia* is the only case where the role played by *erôs* is obvious. By contrast, it is not clear how Alcestis achieved any erotic purpose, even less clear in the case of Achilles: the hero is not in love, and there is no better reason for his virtue to manifest itself in response to *erôs* rather than to any other divine element. With regard to virtue, Phaedrus' ranking is:

Orpheus < Alcestis < Achilles.

With regard to *erôs*, the ranking is symmetrically opposed:

Orpheus > Alcestis > Achilles.

In Phaedrus' heroic ranking, the more virtuous the lover or the beloved is, the less motivated by *erôs* their behaviours prove to be. This opposition between the two rankings is, to my eyes, what constitutes the key problem of Phaedrus' speech. As long as Phaedrus was talking of the virtuous effect of *erôs* in common citizens (the army of lovers), his argument made quite good sense: the more the hoplite is in love with the companion fighting at his side, the more he will dare to face danger. However, in the world of the heroes, i.e. those who provide the norms for what is good and what is bad, it seems that the less you are in love the more virtuous you are. In other words, Phaedrus' lesson ('love leads to courage') works quite well when it applies to ordinary people, the average men who cannot face the utmost danger without being elated by a powerful sensual passion and by the prospect of enjoying more pleasure in the course of their life — the ordinary man who can only become similar (ὅμοιος) to the best by nature. It does not work anymore when it comes to explaining heroic deeds. By postulating or dismissing erotic motivations in the bravest of all, Phaedrus' argument is obviously artificial — he labels as '*erôs*' some motivations which are not obviously erotic (Alcestis, Achilles), and he fails to recognize that *erôs* can be conducive to some deeds which, although not consisting in 'dying for' another, are nonetheless admirable (Orpheus' *katabasis*).

Conclusion

(I) We started by analyzing the way Phaedrus manages to argue that *erôs* is not just beneficial, but should be viewed as the best means to achieve the highest goods: virtue (the courage to face death without trembling), and happiness (enjoying a long life of honours). This encomiastic strategy leads Phaedrus to show that *erôs* can inspire virtue not only in the common run of mankind, but also, and most importantly for his demonstration, in the best of us; either because it is the internal motivation of the subject, the lover (Alcestis), or because it is the object of the beloved's affection (*agapê*) for his lover (Achilles); Phaedrus is also necessarily led to downplay the inspirational force that *erôs* may have in famous lovers who did not dare to die for their beloved (Orpheus).

(II) These final claims about the heroes are arguably at odds with the other versions of the stories current at the time: poets or mythographers never accuse Orpheus of being a 'soft' lover; and they never ascribe to Alcestis' and Achilles' deeds the erotic motivation imagined by Phaedrus. This distortion of the tradition is the hallmark of Phaedrus' *epideixis* — this is where the speaker most conspicuously displays his *sophia*: by rejuvenating the tradition, he not only shows the familiar sympotic ability to summon, re-perform, and criticize the sayings of ancient authorities;[205] he also manages to meet the challenge he issued himself at the start of the dialogue through the voice of Eryximachus: providing a proper encomium.

(III) This novelty also plays the role of a tell-tale sign about what is wrong or puzzling in the argument: in front of such a new account, the reader is prompted to wonder how this version of the myths actually works, to check whether the new role that Phaedrus ascribes to *erôs* in ancient stories makes any sense. Although the claim that *erôs* can prompt courage proved quite convincing in the case of the army of lovers, his non-conventional view that this mechanism also applies to the realm of the 'best' proves problematic: the traditional characterization of Orpheus as a passionate lover and a brave hero, and the non-erotic explanations provided by the poets to account for Achilles' and Alcestis' deeds eventually prove more convincing than Phaedrus' novel interpretation of these myths.

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[205] On this sympotic ingenuity, see Rösler (1990) 233; Ford (2002) 25-35, 41-3; Hunter (2004a) 39 and (2012) 104.

Let us insist, again, that these problems are the direct consequence of the strict requirement imposed at the start of the dialogue: showing that *erôs* is directly conducive to the highest form of goodness for human beings, virtue and happiness. Had Phaedrus only set to himself the banal task of simply praising *erôs*, he could have stopped at the end of the central part (179b3), after showing quite convincingly that *erôs* can lead all of us to emulate the best heroes. What Plato may thus reveal through Phaedrus' forced demonstration at the end of the speech (179b4-180b5) is the impossibility of convincingly ascribing the powers and virtues of *erôs* (as Phaedrus understand them) to the *best* expressions of human goodness (as Phaedrus understands them). It appears that, in Phaedrus' erotic and ethical system, when it comes to explaining the motivations of the best deeds, and the primary cause of the highest bliss, there is no need for *erôs*.

CHAPTER 3. PAUSANIAS' SPEECH (180c4-185c3)

Introduction

Commentators have long recognized that Pausanias' claim to legal expertise and 'the tricks and ornaments' of his literary style[206] are characteristic features of the orators and sophists of the time. On this account, one may commend the rhetorical ability of the speaker, or applaud Plato's literary pastiche; but the speech is rarely valued for its consistency, its originality, or its philosophical interest.[207] I will argue that Pausanias' encomium can be recognized to have those three qualities for reasons similar to those already advanced about Phaedrus. First the argument aims to be a consistent response to the particular challenge issued by Phaedrus and Eryximachus: Pausanias shows that *erôs* is more conducive than anything else to a superior form of excellence, in this case, the wide range of civic virtues that a male citizen should acquire in order to flourish in fifth-century BC Athens (I). Then I will show that this account is far from banal or traditional: Pausanias adorns his noble *erôs* and the Athenian *paiderastia* which is supposed to foster it with a power which was not traditionally ascribed to *erôs*. For all that, the virtues of citizenship and the happy life to which this noble *erôs* is supposed to lead (in a word, civic excellence) are strictly in line with what many Athenians of the time viewed as supremely virtuous and good (II). Then, I will show why this account eventually fails to convince: Pausanias does not actually demonstrate why one should give *erôs* such a predominant role when it comes to achieving civic excellence (III).

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[206] Bury (1932) xxvii.

[207] 'Illa oratione vanissimum illud Sophistarum genus depictum est', Rückert (1829) 265; 'A composition of considerable ability (....) the cleverness of a first-rate pleader', Bury (1932) xxvi; 'It is at once hyperlogical in form and also extremely confused and pedantic. Plato is attacking the logical feebleness of the sophists and rhetoricians', Jowett (1953) 492; 'l'articolazione del discorso mostra, sul piano argomentativo, una serie di più o meno gravi forzature, incoerenze, distorsioni; (...) un riuscito pastiche, che permette ancora una volta a Platone di dare un saggio della propria straordinaria abilità letteraria', Nieddu (2012) 665, 667-8; a text 'fallaciously reasoned' (...) 'Pausanias' argument is circular', Alieva (2016) 134, with n. 15.

I. The argument

Pausanias' argument is primarily a vindication of a noble form of *erôs* and of the kind of legal and moral prescriptions (*nomoi*) that lead people to practise it (A). It is also an implicit vindication of a particular conception of virtue and happiness — the civic excellence to which this noble *erôs* is supposed to lead (B).

A. *Erôs* and its legal implementation

Pausanias retains from Phaedrus' account the thesis that *erôs* can lead to virtue and happiness:

> Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τῆς οὐρανίας θεοῦ ἔρως καὶ οὐράνιος καὶ πολλοῦ ἄξιος καὶ πόλει καὶ ἰδιώταις (i.e. happiness), πολλὴν ἐπιμέλειαν ἀναγκάζων ποιεῖσθαι πρὸς ἀρετὴν τόν τε ἐρῶντα αὐτὸν αὑτοῦ καὶ τὸν ἐρώμενον (i.e. virtue). (*Smp*. 185b5-c1)[208]

However he opposes Phaedrus' assumption that one should praise the god as a whole: since *erôs* is twofold (νῦν δὲ οὐ γάρ ἐστιν εἷς, 180c6-7), a proper encomium should first distinguish the base *erôs* from the noble one, and only then proceed to praise the latter:

> πρῶτον μὲν ἔρωτα φράσαι ὃν δεῖ ἐπαινεῖν, ἔπειτα ἐπαινέσαι ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ. (*Smp.* 180d2-3)

Pausanias will follow this plan, although this might not be obvious at first sight. He starts by defining the two forms — base and noble — that *erôs* can take (180d3-181d7). He moves on to show that, among the various legal approaches to *paiderastia* current in Greece, only the complex legal system at Athens, which combines two seemingly contradictory prescriptions, is likely to foster the noble *erôs* (182d5-185c1). Although this second part appears more as a vindication of a political system than a encomium of *erôs*, it is by describing the virtues of the Athenian legal code that Pausanias fully reveals the benefits of *erôs* (i.e. fostering democratic *aretê* and *eudaimonia*), and manages to achieve his elite encomium.

I will roughly follow this plan, although my first part (on the two *erôtes*) will include some elements provided in the second part of the speech.

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[208] Compare with Phaedrus: ἔρωτα θεῶν καὶ πρεσβύτατον καὶ τιμιώτατον καὶ κυριώτατον εἶναι εἰς ἀρετῆς καὶ εὐδαιμονίας κτῆσιν, 180b6-8.

1. The twofold *erôs*

Pausanias first opposes a base or vulgar *erôs* (πάνδημος, 181a7-b1), and a fine or celestial one (οὐράνιος, 185b6). He gives two types of argument for this distinction: religious (there are two Aphrodites, hence there must be two *Erôtes*, 180d3-e3); and logical: any activity (πρᾶξις), including love (τὸ ἐρᾶν), can be done rightly (καλῶς ... καὶ ὀρθῶς) or not (μὴ ὀρθῶς, 180e4-181a6). The logical distinction nuances the religious view, which suggests a sharp divide between two independent entities: actually *erôs* should be conceived as a single activity which can be performed in two opposite ways (ὡς ἂν πραχθῇ, 181a2-3).

The two *erôtes* are opposed according to four criteria: (1) their object, (2) their goal, (3) the genders and (4) the ages of the *erastês* and the *erômenos*.

The vulgar *erôs*, which belongs to base people (φαῦλοι 181b2) (1) is aroused by bodies rather than souls (ἐρῶσι τῶν σωμάτων μᾶλλον ἢ τῶν ψυχῶν, 181b4). (2) Its final goal is to achieve sexual fulfilment (διαπράξασθαι, 181b5) rather than to proceed in a fine way (καλῶς 181b6); this fine way, as will become clear later on, is to look for moral improvement (ἐπιμέλειαν ... πρὸς ἀρετήν, 185b7).[209] (3) As a result it is directed towards males and females indifferently, according to the common assumption that, although women are naturally less strong and clever (cf. 181c5-6), they are on an equal footing with boys when it comes to providing bodily pleasures.[210] (4) The *erastês* prefers younger males, who are still naive (ἀνοητοτάτων, 181b5; ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ λαβόντες ὡς νέον, 181d5-6), and will only commit to short-term relationships: once the bodily charms of the youth fade away, the lover breaks his oaths (καταγελάσαντες οἰχήσεσθαι ἐπ᾽ ἄλλον ἀποτρέχοντες, 181d6-7).

The noble (οὐράνιος) way of loving (1) turns to what is stronger and has more intelligence (τὸ φύσει ἐρρωμενέστερον καὶ νοῦν μᾶλλον ἔχον ἀγαπῶντες, 181c6): as a result, the lover is more attached to the fine character of the beloved (τοῦ ἤθους χρηστοῦ ὄντος, 183e5) than to his bodily charms (τῷ τοῦ σώματος ἄνθει, 183e3). (2)

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[209] διαπράξασθαι (181b5, 183a1) unambiguously refers to sexual intercourse (Dover 1980: 97), just as χαρίζεσθαι (183d7-8, 184b6, 184d4, 185a5, b5), θεραπεύειν (184c4), ὑπουργεῖν (184d6-7), ὑπηρετεῖν (185a4), refer to sexual gratification from the *erômenos*, cf. Xen. *Hiero* 1.37 with Dover (1978) 44-5 and Foucault (1984) 245-6.

[210] On the assumption that women have less strength and intelligence, see, e.g., Xen. *Smp.* 2.9: ἡ γυναικεία φύσις οὐδὲν χείρων τῆς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς οὖσα τυγχάνει, γνώμης δὲ καὶ ἰσχύος δεῖται.

The final purpose is to bring virtue to human beings and cities (πρὸς ἀρετήν, ἀρετῆς γ' ἕνεκα, 185b5-7), this virtue being viewed mainly as an intellectual capacity (σοφία, 184c5; φιλοσοφίαν, 184d1; φρόνησις, 184d7, see below): this is why it is fine (καλῶς, 181b6) to love in such a way. (3) As a consequence, this *erôs* is directed towards males (ἄρρενος μόνον, 181c3) — it is the love for boys (ὁ τῶν παίδων ἔρως), usually called *paiderastia* (181c7), since males are allegedly more likely to show physical, moral, and intellectual strength than women.[211] (4) Among the youths, the noble lover will turn rather to those who are mature enough to show strength and intelligence (ἐπειδὰν ἤδη ἄρχωνται νοῦν ἴσχειν), that is, when a youth is about to grow a beard (γενειάσκειν, 181d2-3). Pausanias here presumably refers to the period of the *ephebeia*, between the ages 18 and 20, when the youth reaches adulthood and turns into a *neaniskos* or a *meirakion*: he is no longer a *pais* properly speaking, but he is not an *anêr* yet, i.e. a full-fledged adult male citizen.[212] In this transitional period, the youth could become an *erastês*, but could remain the *erômenos* of an older male or a coeval, and as a result, be called *paidika* or even *pais* by reference to his sexual role, not his age.[213] Hence there is an apparent contradiction in Pausanias' argument: he advocates a noble form of *paiderastia* (ὁ τῶν παίδων ἔρως, 181c3-4) but claims that noble lovers do not love *paides* (οὐ γὰρ ἐρῶσι παίδων, 181d1). This has raised suspicions and led to textual emendations,[214] but the trouble disappears if we assume that Pausanias uses *pais* in two different senses in these passages: 'beloveds', including mature youths (ὁ τῶν παίδων ἔρως) *vs* 'boys' (οὐ γὰρ ἐρῶσι παίδων).[215] In Pausanias' account, the good lover must wait for this late, transitional stage, where the *pais*-beloved is no more a *pais*-boy, as it is only then that the youth reveals his character and his soul, and shows whether he can be fruitfully educated (ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἄδηλον πολλὴ σπουδὴ ἀνηλίσκετο, 181e1). By

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[211] See above note 210.

[212] This scheme seems to be indicated by [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 42.1-2; but the ancient Greek system of age-classes was notoriously confusing; see Davidson (2006) 38-51, (2007) 71-82, and Robson (2013) 40-1.

[213] For a *neaniskos* or *meirakion* (young man) called *paidika* or *pais* (beloved), see Pl. *Euthd* 274c2-3 (cf. 271b1, 273a7, b7, 275a5, d5, e7), *Lys*. 205b1 (εἰς τὸν νεανίσκον) and b8 (τῷ παιδί), with Dover (1978) 85-6 and Hindley (1991) 178. On mature youths being both *erastai* and *erômenoi*, see Xen. *Smp.* 8.2.2-4. For love between coevals, see Thgn. 1018-9, 1063; cf. Dover (1978) 86-7 and Parker (2015) 24, n.5.

[214] See Jahn (1875) 56, Bury (1932) 32, and Vicaire (1989) 16, who is approved by Tarrant (1991) 27.

[215] Noted by Rettig (1875) 132, Hug (1884) 54, Dover (1980) 98, Rowe (1998) 142.

delaying the fulfilment of *erôs* (τὸ διαπράξασθαι, 181b5, 183a1), the lover can inaugurate a relationship which is due to last throughout life (τὸν βίον ἅπαντα, 181d3-5; διὰ βίου, 183e5-6): once the soul of the youth has revealed its value, the *erastês* will remain in love with it, since, contrary to a body, a soul does not lose its charms over time (ἅτε μονίμῳ συντακείς, 183e6).

2. The good *nomos* on *erôs* (Athens and Sparta)

a. *Nomos*-principle vs *nomos*-instruction

This fine way of loving is ensured by the combination of two distinct rules of conduct (*nomoi*) that can be found only in Athens and Sparta. It has already been noted that the word *nomos*, in Pausanias's speech, covers both the official written law and the unwritten social conventions and customs which Athenian citizens were expected to follow.[216]

Pausanias' use of *nomos* involves another semantic distinction, which is key to understanding his argument. (1) *Nomos* first refers to the *explicit* legal instruction, written or unwritten, formally dictated by the state or by the social conventions, e.g. the prejudice against youths being seduced by adults, followed by fathers and educators (183c4-d2); as we will see, Pausanias refers here both to widely accepted social conventions and to precise written laws on the protection of youths. (2) *Nomos* can also be understood more fundamentally as the *implicit* moral and rational principle which is at the basis of the law-instruction (1), e.g. the principle of self-restraint that, according to Pausanias, genuinely noble lovers follow when they refrain spontaneously from seducing young boys, on the assumption that this seduction would be useless and potentially harmful to the youth (181c7-d3).

These two meanings of *nomos* are supposed to be two sides of the same coin, the letter and the spirit of the law: the law-instruction is the practical and social implementation of the intentions laid down by the law-principle. But of course there are differences between these two kinds of law: as Pausanias will show, two law-instructions may appear to contradict each other, whereas they participate in the same plan, or instantiate

[216] Bury (1932) 34, Dover (1964) 32, Cohen (1991) 175, Sier (2012) 62, Osborne (2018) 328-9. On the unwritten laws, see esp. Th. 2.37.3.

the same law-principle; and one can follow the instruction (for fear of legal or social condemnation) without embracing its moral principle. More importantly for understanding Pausanias' strategy, the law principle, contrary to the social instruction, is not explicitly stated in the legal code or the social conduct: finding out the spirit of the legal instructions is of course a matter of interpretation: this is where legal experts like Pausanias who comment on existing codes may feel free to introduce original views about what is actually licit or not.

b. The instructions: encouragement to the *erastês* vs constraints on the *erômenos*

Pausanias starts by describing the legal environment at Athens and Sparta (182d4-183d3): it is a collection of law-instructions which appear self-contradictory, as they set two opposite standards for two groups of people: on the one hand, *erastai* are invited to pursue youths from an early age, especially the noble ones (τῶν γενναιοτάτων καὶ ἀρίστων, 182d7), and they are forgiven quite shocking behaviour, like flattery or perjury (182d5-183c2). On the other hand, fathers, educators, and friends do their best to protect the youths, and blame them for discussing (διαλέγεσθαι) with lovers (183c4-d3: Pausanias is apparently talking of very young boys here). As Pausanias shows later on, there are nuances in this ban on the *erômenos*: bad reputation is attached only to those who grant their favours *too easily* (τὸ ἁλίσκεσθαι ταχὺ αἰσχρὸν νενόμισται, 184a5-6): more mature *erômenoi* are thus allowed to have *erastai*; but they should not exchange their charms for money or political benefits (τὸ ὑπὸ χρημάτων καὶ ὑπὸ πολιτικῶν δυνάμεων ἁλῶναι αἰσχρόν, 184a7-8; cf. 184e6-a5).

c. The principle: *erôs* must lead to *aretê*

Although the instructions given to the *erastês* and the *erômenos* look contradictory, they prove coherent if one assumes that they indirectly foster the kind of noble *erôs* that Pausanias initially described. On Pausanias' account, the various explicit *nomoi* on *erôs* at Athens are commanded by a fundamental law-principle which says that lover and beloved must engage in an erotic relationship in a fine (καλόν, 184d2, 184e3), or just (δικαίως, 184d5-6) way, that is with a view to transmitting virtue to the youth (πᾶν πάντως γε καλὸν ἀρετῆς γ᾽ ἕνεκα χαρίζεσθαι, 185b4-5). This fundamental principle (aiming at education) requires lover and beloved each to obey a respective particular rule (νόμον ἔχων ἑκάτερος, 184d4). The *erastês* must follow the 'law on *paiderastia*'

(τόν περὶ τὴν παιδεραστίαν [νόμον]): he must be fully devoted to the beloved (ὁτιοῦν δικαίως ἂν ὑπηρετεῖν), and 'contribute to his understanding and excellence in general' (εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετὴν συμβάλλεσθαι, 184c8-e1); the *erômenos* must follow the *nomos* 'about philosophy and the other parts of excellence' (τὸν περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν), that is, yield only to the *erastês* who is willing to make him better and wiser (τῷ ποιοῦντι αὐτὸν σοφόν τε καὶ ἀγαθόν ... δεόμενος εἰς παίδευσιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν κτᾶσθαι, 184d1-e2).

d. Equivalence between principles and instructions: the gist of the encomium

According to Pausanias, Athenian *erastai* and *erômenoi*, whether or not they are conscious of it, are encouraged to adopt these virtuous principles by the apparently contradictory instructions that are imposed on them: by inviting the lovers to pursue and the youths to flee, the lawgiver 'puts to the test' (ἀγωνοθετῶν καὶ βασανίζων, 184a3-4) good *erastai* and good *erômenoi*, and gives leeway only to those who are willing and able to engage in a mature relationship (cf. ἵνα χρόνος ἐγγένηται, 184a6) conducive to the noble — educative — form of *erôs*: the *erastês* who faces the resistance of a prudish *erômenos* and who perseveres until the youth has reached maturity will prove to be attracted by what is stronger and has more intelligence (i.e. the soul), not merely by the charms of a graceful body; by banning the *erômenos* from selling his charms for money or political benefits, the instructions prevent him from being seduced by objects which are fickle (οὔτε βέβαιον οὔτε μόνιμον, 184b3-4); and they allow him to grant his favours only if he proves interested by what is stable and constant: *aretê*.

The gist of Pausanias' argument consists in this alleged connection between principles and instruction; the encomium is based on the claim that all the manifold legal instructions on sex at Athens tend to one implicit purpose: educating the youths. By revealing not merely what the law says explicitly (the instructions), but what it means (βούλεται, 183e6), by finding out, behind the apparently meaningless collection of explicit *nomoi* an implicit consistency and purpose, a final and causal explanation (cf. διὰ ταῦτα .... ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς αἰτίας ... ἵνα χρόνος ἐγγένηται, 184a2-6), Pausanias performs a sophisticated guesswork (οὐ ῥᾴδιον κατανοῆσαι, 182d5) which is the hallmark of his *epideixis* of wisdom. Just like Phaedrus' idiosyncratic interpretations of the heroic myths, the *nomos*-principle that Pausanias perceives behind the *nomos*-instructions is both the output of an idiosyncratic interpretation, and the condition *sine*

qua non for delivering a proper praise to the god, that is, showing that *erôs*, as it was practised at Athens is directly conducive to the transmission of excellence.[217]

3. Two common criticisms

a. A self-serving praise?

It has been argued, however, that Pausanias' intended purpose is not to praise *erôs*, but to legitimise his long-standing homosexual relationship with the poet Agathon, or, in Neumann's harsh words, 'to use culture and civilization as a cloak for his vice'.[218] This criticism needs to be addressed since it rests on two prejudices which, in my eyes, are detrimental to a fair understanding of the argument.

A first prejudice is that the speaker would need to *hide* his sexual drives behind a morally noble kind of *erôs*, as if his proclaimed model, the noble *erastês*, were expected to feel no interest in sex.[219] Pausanias actually never claims that it is illegitimate for the noble lover to enjoy physical pleasures.[220] He does not simply confine noble love to the love of the soul and base love to sex: he only says that the noble lover is supposed to care *more* for the soul than for the body, in contrast with the base lover who is in love with the body *more* than the soul (ὁ τοῦ σώματος μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐρῶν, 183e1). The noble love is supposed to start when the *erômenos* reveals the value of his soul *and of his body* (cf. οἷ τελευτᾷ κακίας καὶ ἀρετῆς ψυχῆς τε πέρι καὶ σώματος, 181e2-3), and the good lover is primarily in love with 'what is *stronger* and has more intelligence' (τὸ φύσει ἐρρωμενέστερον καὶ νοῦν μᾶλλον ἔχον ἀγαπῶντες, 181c6). With time, strength will surely turn out to be of a piece with intelligence (νοῦν μᾶλλον ἔχον): souls keep improving over time, whereas bodies decay (183e1-6); but at the start of the relationship, when the youth grows his first beard (γενειάσκειν, 181d3), although his

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[217] See ἐπαινέσαι ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ (180d3), which sounds as an echo to Phaedrus' ἔρωτα (...) ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι (177c3).

[218] Neumann (1964) 261; see also Robin (1929) l, Bury (1932) xxvi, Hamilton (1951) 14, Guthrie (1975) 381-2. On Pausanias and Agathon's long-standing relationship, notorious at the time and subject to public satire, cf. *Smp.* 177d8-e1, 193b7; *Prot*. 315d6–e3; Aelian *VH* 2, 21; 13, 4, with Nails (2002) 222 and Brisson (2006) 235-8.

[219] Cf. 'a cloak for his vice', Neumann (1964) 261; 'le masque de moralité affinée', Robin (1929) l.

[220] *Pace* North (1966) 73; also noted by Dover (1964) 34 and (1978) 83-4, Vlastos (1981) 22 n. 63, Nola (1990) 67.

soul is no longer naive (ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ, 181d5-6) and already shows its mettle, it is not in its full bloom yet; what shows most strength is the body of the *meirakion*, his athletic shape and performances, and these 'virtues' may appeal to the *erastês* as much — and presumably more — than those of the soul. This is why noble loves such as between Harmodius and Aristogeiton, are likely to arise in gymnasia too (ἥ γε φιλοσοφία καὶ ἡ φιλογυμναστία, 182b8-c1). As time passes, to be sure, the lover is supposed to be less attached to the fading bodily strength of the beloved, and to focus on the moral quality of his soul (ἅτε μονίμῳ συντακείς, 183e6), but even in this late stage, sexual gratification from the *erômenos* is the only compensation that Pausanias envisages in return for the education offered by the *erastês*.[221] There is thus no point in accusing Pausanias of hiding sexual gratification behind his moral *erôs* since sex is, on his own admission, an element essential to this noble relationship: it explains how the *kalos erôs* can both arise and endure.

A second assumption underpinning the view that Pausanias is a hypocritical pederast is that he and his noble lover are sensualists, much more interested in sexual pleasure than in the soul of the youth to which they claim to be devoted.[222] This criticism does not make much sense either. If Pausanias were, as Neumann puts it, 'a slave of his desire for youthful beauty',[223] how could he have remained faithful to Agathon who, at the date of the *Symposium*, must be in his early thirties,[224] and whose charms, as Socrates pointedly recalls at the start of the dialogue, now reside in his *sophia* more than in his *sôma*?[225] If Pausanias' noble lover aimed only at sexual gratification, he would resort to male prostitutes, and enjoy a non-erotic, purely intellectual, relationship with his companion: he would not, as Pausanias claims in his theory and exemplifies through his lifestyle, remain *in love* throughout his life (181d3-5, 183e5-6).[226] Even though Pausanias admits unabashedly that the enduring noble relationship still involves sexual gratification, he is also right to say that such pleasure cannot remain the foundation of the relationship

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[221] Cf. διαπράξασθαι, χαρίζεσθαι, θεραπεύειν, ὑπουργεῖν, see above n. 209.

[222] 'une dépravation sensuelle de la nature', Robin (1929) l; 'he is fundamentally a sensualist', Bury (1932) xxvi; 'a clever pleader for homosexual licence' who seeks 'to justify the satisfaction of physical desire', Hamilton (1951) 14; see also Neumann, note below.

[223] Neumann (1964) 265.

[224] Brisson (2006) 235-6.

[225] με παρὰ σοῦ πολλῆς καὶ καλῆς σοφίας πληρωθήσεσθαι, 175e2, cf. 174c7.

[226] Well put by Rowe (1998) 10.

once the bodily charms of the youth have faded away: if the bond between the two partners is still erotic, as Pausanias claims (ἐρᾶν, 181d4; ἐραστής, 183e5), *erôs* must be based on a spiritual or moral motivation that goes beyond the satisfaction of bodily appetites, even though Pausanias is conspicuously unclear about the nature of this spiritual *erôs*. As we will see, it is in this lack of clarity about spiritual *erôs* that may lie one of the problems of the encomium, not in the fact that Pausanias and his noble lover still enjoy sexual gratifications from their beloveds.

b. Pausanias' relativism?

A second kind of criticism can be found in commentaries: is not Pausanias a relativist and a contextualist of sorts, in the wake of Protagoras' man-measure doctrine? As we saw, the speaker's distinction between the good and the bad *erôs* hinges on the view that no action (πρᾶξις) is good or bad in itself (αὐτὴ ἐφ᾽ ἑαυτῆς πραττομένη οὔτε καλὴ οὔτε αἰσχρά, 180e4-5): *paiderastia*, as a result, is valued according to the way it is practised (ἐν τῇ πράξει, ὡς ἂν πραχθῇ, τοιοῦτον ἀπέβη, 181a2-3), and this value also varies according to the cultural environment (182a7-d5). This prompts Bury, for instance, to claim that Pausanias adopts 'a principle of moral indifference (...), in his own hypothesis, there exists no superior standard of morality'.[227] Some critics have more specifically insisted on similarities with the *Dissoi Logoi* (c. 403-395 BC).[228] To be sure, the author of the anonymous treatise also argues that an action is valued according to the way it is performed, especially in sexual matters,[229] and that norms about the good and the bad vary according to specific cultural environments.[230] But from the same premises, the two texts draw opposite conclusions. The sophistic treatise makes the genuinely relativist claim that there exists no objective or universal criterion for these

[227] Bury (1932) xxvii. For a similar criticism, see esp. Dorter (1969) 218-9, Krüger (1992) 103, Alieva (2016) 134 (cf. note below). Nieddu (2012) 659 prudently refers to 'una forma ‘debole’ di relativismo', but he does not explain. On sophistic relativism, see Bett (1989), Woodruff (1999) 300-2.

[228] Susanetti (1992) 193, Nieddu (2012) 659, Alieva (2016) 133-4, with n. 15: 'both texts (...) are fallaciously reasoned. Pausanias' argument is circular: if there is nothing noble or base "by itself" any "manner" under certain circumstances can be regarded as either noble or ignoble.' For the date of the *Dissoi Logoi*, see Robinson (1979) 41.

[229] E.g. 90.2.3-4 DK (it is noble for a boy to gratify a lover, shameful to gratify a non lover).

[230] E.g. 1.21-26, 2.16-17 (young girls doing athletics are approved at Sparta, disapproved in Ionia).

notions: the fine and the good are just one and the same (τωὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ αἰσχρόν, 2.1);[231] whereas Pausanias claims that no *action* — not *nothing*, as Alieva assumes[232] — is good or bad by itself; there exists a true criterion for the good or bad way of loving: it is the Athenian and the Spartan *nomos* (ἐνθάδε δὲ πολὺ τούτων κάλλιον νενομοθέτηται, 182d4; cf. 181c2-182a6). If this criterion is not adopted in other states, it is not because it has no universal value, but because the other states are too backward (Boeotia) or enslaved (Ionia) to recognize this value, and to admit that it is in Athens that people are truly virtuous and happy.

It is worth insisting on this point as it will allow us to recognize that Pausanias' elite praise, just like the others, is based on a precise view of virtue and happiness.

B. Happiness and virtues

Pausanias' conception of excellence is not, however, articulated as clearly as his theory of *erôs*, but it surfaces in many places of the discourse, particularly in his account of the noble *erôs* and of its benefits. In a word, Pausanias' view of excellence is the ideal of citizenship that prevailed in fifth century Athens:[233] to be happy amounts to enjoying all the benefits provided by the democratic society, principally intellectual and political success; accordingly, to be virtuous is to be endowed with the various skills enabling the citizen to achieve this condition.

1. Happiness

Pausanias' implicit ideal of *eudaimonia* appears first in his criticism of those who do not adopt the Athenian complex custom on *paiderastia* (182b1-d4): the backward states (Boeotia and Elis) fail to cultivate what allows Athenian citizens to achieve political and social recognition: intellectual industry (cf. τῆς ψυχῆς ἀργίαν, 182d3-4) and particularly the skill to speak well and to persuade (cf. μὴ σοφοὶ λέγειν ... μὴ πράγματ᾽ ἔχωσιν λόγῳ πειρώμενοι πείθειν ... ἀδύνατοι λέγειν, 182b2-6). The subsequent criticism of the tyrannical states of Ionia reminds us that such excellence can be achieved only in the

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[231] I cannot thus follow Bett (1989) 147 who judges the *Dissoi logoi* as 'only superficially relativistic'.

[232] See above note 228.

[233] See Hunter (2004a) 51.

frame of a democratic regime: the tyrannicides fought against the culture of arrogance and enslavement (τῶν μὲν ἀρχόντων πλεονεξίᾳ, τῶν δὲ ἀρχομένων ἀνανδρίᾳ, 182d1-2), thus bringing about by contrast *eleutheria* and *isonomia*, the two pillars of the democratic regime which, as Pausanias also recalls, are conducive to a proper education (182c1).

2. Virtue

Two kinds of virtue are necessary for the achievement of the democratic ideal: *philia*, a collective virtue binding the citizen body,[234] and *aretê* properly speaking, which each individual citizen must cultivate.

a. *Philia*

From the start Pausanias insists on the 'strong friendships and alliances' (φιλίας ἰσχυρὰς καὶ κοινωνίας), induced not merely by *erôs*, but by the practice of *philosophia* and *philogumnastia* (182c1), two democratic institutions rightly feared by the tyrants, as they foster the formation of political clubs and the conception of bold plans (φρονήματα μεγάλα, 182b8-c7).[235] Friends reappear later on as those who remind the citizen (ὑπὸ φίλων ... νουθετούντων) not to indulge in slavish behaviours (δουλείας, κολακείας καὶ ἀνελευθερίας, 183a6-b1). *Philoi* of sorts also constitute the immediate entourage (οἱ πατέρες ... ἡλικιῶται δὲ καὶ ἑταῖροι) which exerts a similar social control over the *erômenos* and the *erastês* (ἐπιστήσαντες ... μὴ ἐῶσι... ὀνειδίζωσιν ... μὴ διακωλύωσι μηδὲ λοιδορῶσιν, 183c4-d2). This collective law-enforcement is characteristic of a democratic society, where every individual is answerable for the implementation of the common rule;[236] and it is essential to the stability of a regime which, towards the end of the Peloponnesian war, showed its vulnerability to the threat of tyranny.[237] Hence Pausanias' insistence that the bonds of *philia* forged through *erôs* should be strong and stable (cf. φιλίας ἰσχυράς ... φιλία βέβαιος γενομένη, 182c3-6), and anchored to

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[234] On *philia* as a virtue, see Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 8.1155a3-5: ἔστι γὰρ ἀρετή τις ἢ μετ' ἀρετῆς, ἔτι δ' ἀναγκαιότατον εἰς τὸν βίον.

[235] See Renaut (2016) 182.

[236] See Ludwig (2002) 162 and Renaut (2016) 182.

[237] Cf. the episode of the Thirty Tyrants and the suspicion against leaders like Alcibiades who were perceived as aspiring to tyranny, Th. 6.15.4.

permanent entities, the virtuous character of the *erômenos* (183e6) and the virtue provided by the *erastês* which, contrary to unstable goods like money or political benefits, are likely to create a genuine friendship (γενναίαν φιλίαν, 184b3-5).[238] As we will see later on in more detail, Pausanias endows the relationship forged by the noble lovers with the solidity of what Aristotle, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, characterizes as the noblest and firmest form of *philia*: a *philia* also based on virtue (*Eth. Nic*. 1156b10-12), which is the best guarantee of the sustenance of the political community (1159b25ff). By giving his noble *erôs* both the power (κατέλυσεν αὐτῶν τὴν ἀρχήν, 182c6-7) and the stability (τὸν βίον ἅπαντα συνεσόμενοι, 182d4, διὰ βίου μένει, 183e5-6) of democratic *philiai*, Pausanias makes of it the keystone both of the establishment and the sustenance of a regime which he views as the pinnacle of human happiness.

b. Wisdom and the rest of virtue

The encomium also reveals, at least implicitly, the individual virtue (*aretê* properly speaking) that each citizen should display.

i. A complex system

Pausanias seems to have in view a broad and complex set of *aretai*, where wisdom — *sophia, philosophia, phronêsis* — plays a leading role, the other types of virtue being left unnamed:

> ἢ κατὰ σοφίαν τινὰ ἢ κατὰ ἄλλο ὁτιοῦν μέρος ἀρετῆς, (...) τὴν φιλοσοφίαν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν, (...) ὁ δὲ τῷ ποιοῦντι αὐτὸν σοφόν τε καὶ ἀγαθόν, (...) εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετὴν συμβάλλεσθαι (*Smp*. 184c5-e1).[239]

The other parts of *aretê* (ἄλλο ὁτιοῦν μέρος ἀρετῆς, τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν) presumably include the other qualities demonstrated by Pausanias' noble — democratic — lover: the *sôphrosunê* and the *andreia* that must characterize a character rebelling against the arrogance (πλεονεξίᾳ) of the tyrants, and the unmanliness (ἀνανδρίᾳ) of their subjects (182d2); noble *erastai* and *erômenoi* are also said to love each other in a *just* way (δικαίως ἂν ὑπηρετεῖν ... δικαίως ἂν ὑπουργεῖν, 184d5-7).

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[238] For the importance of permanence in Pausanias, see Nola (1990) 72.

[239] εἰς παίδευσιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν (184e1-2) is strange, as Bury (1932) 43 notes. For wisdom as essential to Pausanias' view of virtue, see Sheffield (2006b) 18-20.

ii. Wisdom

Pausanias does not give explicit definitions of *sophia*, *philosophia*, or *phronesis* when he mentions them as *aretai* properly speaking (184c5-e1), but, at that point in the speech, he has already given many clues about his quite complex conception of these notions.

- **Rhetorical skills**

Sophia is reminiscent of the ability to speak which is lacking in the backward states (μὴ σοφοὶ λέγειν, 182b2): this is the rhetorical skill used in Athens for persuading (πείθειν) both beloveds and political assemblies.

- **Political commitment**

The good citizen is not only a skilful orator: he is also able to conceive bold political plans, the 'high thoughts' (φρονήματα μεγάλα, 182c2) induced by the practice of *philosophia* (182c1), which prompted the tyrannicides to stand up for a particular form of regime (*dêmokratia*) and principles (*eleutheria* and *isonomia*). In the political context (the fight against tyranny), μεγάλα (182c2) points to what was 'most important' in the eyes of many Greeks, including Plato: the administration of the city-state and the education of its citizens.[240]

- **Telling the right from the wrong**

This political perspicacity involves the ability to distinguish the right rule from the wrong one: this is the moral sagacity displayed, at least instinctively, by all the *philoi* who admonish or condemn the *erastai* and the *erômenoi* who stray from the straight and narrow (183a6-b1, 183c4-d2, see supra). This is also the kind of wisdom displayed by Pausanias himself in his speech: his entire *epideixis* is a clever demonstration of his ability to reveal the good and the bad ways (καλῶς καὶ ὀρθῶς / μὴ ὀρθῶς) in which the same *praxis* (i.e. *erân*) is performed, and he makes clear that this distinction also applies to the production of discourses (διαλέγεσθαι, 181a1-4). He opens his speech with the reproach that Phaedrus failed to introduce *correctly* the *logos* (οὐ καλῶς μοι δοκεῖ ... προβεβλῆσθαι ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, 180c4-5), and presents his whole encomium as an attempt to correct the *logos* — literally to put it *right* (ἐπανορθώσασθαι, cf. ὀρθότερον, 180c7-

[240] Cf. Pl. *Resp*. 10.599c6-d1: περὶ δὲ ὧν μεγίστων τε καὶ καλλίστων ἐπιχειρεῖ λέγειν Ὅμηρος, πολέμων τε πέρι καὶ στρατηγιῶν καὶ διοικήσεων πόλεων, καὶ παιδείας πέρι ἀνθρώπου.

d2), thus offering, in addition to an encomium of *Erôs*, a practical demonstration of the *kalôs* or *orthôs dialegesthai* which presumably constitutes an essential part of the *sophia* or *philosophia* that his noble *erastês* is expected to transmit.

- **An expert knowledge of the law**

Of course, there is more to Pausanias' *epideixis* than the common and un-reflexive opinion about the right and the wrong that the average Athenian citizens display when they instinctively scold each other (183a6-d2). The views of the right and the wrong that ground the principle that Pausanias makes out behind the contradictory instructions of the Athenian law is, as we saw, the output of a sophisticated interpretation (οὐ ῥᾴδιον κατανοῆσαι, 182d5); and this interpretation, as we will see soon, is in many respects likely to have provoked the common prejudices of the Athenians of the time. Pausanias needs to work hard to demonstrate that there is a match between his own principles and the legal prescriptions known and implemented by everybody, and that there is a rational consistency behind the contradictory set of instructions on *erôs*. The most sophisticated aspect of Pausanias' contribution as a *sophos*, is the ability to provide an original account, or interpretation (*logon didonai*) of the state of affairs in his city state. Such a skill presumably must have constituted the highest and most difficult part of the *philosophia* syllabus of his noble *erômenos*.

- **A non expert knowledge of the good**

For all that, Pausanias' student, who follows the 'rule on *philosophia'* (184d1) is apparently not expected to display expert knowledge, i.e. to give an account (*logon didonai*), of the fundamental values of the entire ethical system. For Pausanias, all Athenian citizens have access to the notions of the right and the wrong,[241] and if the philosopher possesses an expert skill which is not shared by everybody, it is the ability to interpret (κατανοῆσαι, 182d5) the law in a clever way, not the ability to understand why it is good to enjoy Athenian *eleutheria* and *isonomia*: on these fundamental topics, both Pausanias and his noble lover address the common assumptions of their Athenian audience; they just take it for granted that Harmodius and Aristogeiton reached the pinnacle of human virtue and brought about the best kind of political regime that can be found in the civilized world.

[241] Rightly noticed by Renaut (2016) 182.

Nor does Pausanias try to change or correct the values of the ethical system, and to propose a new view of *aretê* and *eudaimonia*. As we will see, he may well make subversive claims about how beneficent *erôs* can be in a city like Athens; but the benefits he relates *erôs* to (democratic excellence) are, in themselves, quite in line with the ideology of the current Athenian *polis*. Pausanias may modify the role that *erôs* plays in the common ethical system; but he eventually provides further support to the shared values of the community about what is ultimately or fundamentally good or beneficial.

This is of course in sharp contrast with the demanding kind of *philosophia* promoted by Socrates in the *Symposium* (204a-b, 210d) or in the *Republic* (5.474c-6.487a, 6.504a-7.518b): the search for a kind of *sophia* which, in the *Apology*, is denied to all the experts who claim like Pausanias to educate Athenians.[242] Socrates' *philosophia* seeks an abstract understanding of the nature of the fine and the good, and this requires engagement in a lifelong *paideia* only accessible to the happy few who have a good nature (ἡ φιλόσοφος φύσις, *Resp.* 3.410e1). The knowledge acquired at the end of this *paideia* has presumably hardly anything to do with what the average citizen thinks about the good, and as a result about *aretê* and *eudaimonia.* For both Socrates and Pausanias, *philosophia* and *sophia* involve the knowledge of *to kalon*. But Socrates' *philosophoi* are expected to grasp an unheard-of conception of *to kalon* according to which they will build and govern the utopian *Kallipolis*. In Pausanias' view, *Kallipolis* already exists: it is the city of Athens, where each citizen is equipped with ready-for-use definitions of *to kalon* and *to aiskhron*; and the good man (*kaloskagathos*) already exists too: he is the good citizen who has been successfully trained to respect and champion the values of the current *polis*.

3. A response to Phaedrus?

Pausanias' particular view of happiness (democratic *isonomia* and *eleutheria*) is at the basis of his conceptions of virtue (democratic excellence). It is also at the basis of his disagreement with (and his improvement on) Phaedrus' previous model. It is because Pausanias' happiness is not just living in a safe community (as Phaedrus seems to imply)

[242] Cf. ἡμῶν οὐδέτερος <u>οὐδὲν καλὸν κἀγαθὸν</u> εἰδέναι, *Ap*. 21d2-3; ἕκαστος ἠξίου καὶ <u>τἆλλα τὰ μέγιστα</u> σοφώτατος εἶναι, 22d7-8.

but in a just city, ruled according to a particular constitution, that it requires the citizens to show a complex form of virtue (φιλοσοφία τε καὶ ἡ ἄλλη ἀρετή, 184d1) and not mere *andreia*.[243] To be sure, Pausanias includes *andreia*, at least implicitly, in his comprehensive view of *aretê* (see supra p. 87), but in so doing he implicitly criticizes and improves Phaedrus' simplistic conception of this virtue: the courage exemplified by the figures of Harmodius and Aristogeiton is not just the temerity of the Homeric hero, or of Phaedrus' soldier; this *andreia* is enlightened by the *phronêmata megala* induced by the practice of *philosophia*: it is prompted by the view that one particular political regime (tyranny) is wrong, and another (democracy), right. Whereas Phaedrus' military virtue was potentially operative in any kind of city-state — including tyrannical regimes and Boeotia, from where Phaedrus may have borrowed his model of the army of lovers — Pausanias' complex view of *aretê* and his political and enlightened form of *andreia* can only flourish in a city like Athens. In this respect, Pausanias' stigmatization of Boeotia as a backward state (182b1-2, 182d2-4) is a dig at the conception of virtue and even the rhetorical performance of the previous speaker: Phaedrus' virtuous *erôs* is just good for those who are not σοφοὶ λέγειν (182b2). Likewise, Pausanias' mention of Harmodius and Aristogeiton as the paradigms of a democratic form of courage may be a critical response to the other famous pair of brave lovers just mentioned by Phaedrus, Achilles and Patroclus (179e1-180b5) who were bound by a less enlightened form of courage. Pausanias thereby sheds a critical light on what may have been a familiar rapprochement between the two pairs of lovers, as an Attic skolion suggests:

> φίλταθ᾽ Ἁρμόδι᾽, οὔ τί πω τέθνηκας
> νήσοις δ᾽ ἐν μακάρων σέ φασιν εἶναι
> ἵνα περ ποδώκης Ἀχιλεύς
> Τυδεΐδην τέ † φασι τὸν ἐσθλὸν † Διομήδεα.
>
> (*PMG* 894 = schol. Ar. 980, p. 124 Wilson)[244]

As befits an expert in subtle distinctions, Pausanias may indicate that, although they look similar, these two mythical pairs of lovers (epic and democratic) should not be confused as they do not illustrate the same type of virtuous behaviours. In this implicit

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[243] Cf. Hunter (2004a) 51.

[244] Note the reference to the Isles of the Blessed (νήσοις δ᾽ ἐν μακάρων), as in Phaedrus' encomium (εἰς μακάρων νήσους, 179e2). See also the joint reference to the couples Harmodius / Aristogeiton, and Achilles / Patroclus in Aeschin. 1.140; but is not this a reminiscence of Pausanias' speech?

departure from epic morals lies the explicit distinction Pausanias makes between a good and a bad form of *erôs* at the start of his speech, a distinction which is his most marked disagreement with Phaedrus' account. Phaedrus' *erôs*, which inspires mere military might, can show its value in all the states of the Greek world indifferently; it does not require any particular political enlightenment, there is no need for his lover or his beloved to distinguish a good form from a bad form of *erôs*, an *erôs* for the soul and an *erôs* for the body; in either form — physical or spiritual — *erôs* leads to performance of Phaedrus' virtue: the more you are in love (whatever may be the motivation of your *erôs*), the more you are willing to acquire *timê* in the eyes of your *erastês* or *erômenos*. Pausanias' criticism of Phaedrus' monolithic view of *erôs* does not impinge so much on *erôs* stricto sensu, since, within Phaedrus' ethical system, there is no need of Pausanias' distinction for *erôs* to be beneficial and productive of virtue; Pausanias' criticism rather centres on the ethical system wherein Phaedrus praises his *erôs*: his limited conception of *aretê* and *eudaimonia*. The two speakers, as expected in a *symposion*, champion different views of the good as much as different views of *erôs*.

II. Pausanias' use of the tradition

Pausanias claims to describe the ethical instructions and principles of Athens. As a result, his speech is sometimes taken as traditional, both by Plato's commentators, and by the historians who may use it as evidence to reconstruct the ethics of homosexuality in classical Athens.[245] As Hunter puts it, 'it is at least worth asking how many members of Pausanias's immediate audience we are to imagine as "believing" his account of Athenian practice'.[246] Despite his claim to describe the norm in Athens, Pausanias talks more as a 'nomothetes'[247] than a 'sociologist'.[248] Dover takes Pausanias' description of the law as 'true' at least for an elite class of citizens sympathetic to the Spartan model,

[245] For the commentaries, see. e.g. Wilamowitz (1920) vol. 2: 365 ('Pausanias sozusagen den Ehren kodex der attischen Knabenliebe aufstellt'); Guthrie (1975) 381, Nola (1990) 71, Rowe (1998) 10, 140-1, Sheffield (2006a) 19; an exception is Sier (2012). For the historians, see Dover (1978) 81-3 and 91 (although with reservations), Foucault (1984) 209, 216, 229, 253-4, Cohen (1991) 174-99, Hindley (1991) 172-3, Wohl (2002) 5, 226-7, 164 n. 101, Skinner (2005) 11-13, 117-8, 128-9, Lear and Cantarella (2008) 15, Robson (2013) 50, 52, 63.

[246] Hunter (2004a) 50.

[247] Hunter (2004a) 43.

[248] Robin (1929) xliii: 'un sociologue pédant'.

thus assuming that it was not supposed to surprise the elite audience at Agathon's party.[249] I will also challenge this view and argue that, even with respect to the aristocratic ideology at Athens and Sparta, Pausanias' account is likely to have appeared strikingly unconventional in several respects.

Of course, assessing Pausanias' account against the laws and the common assumptions of his time about *erôs* can only be a matter of conjecture. Such an investigation involves at least four challenges.

1. Unlike Phaedrus and Eryximachus, Pausanias does not clearly draw on a particular author (e.g. Hesiod, Parmenides, Homer), or corpus (e.g. the Hippocratic literature): he refers only to a rule (νόμος) which must be reconstructed from various sources whose identification is left to the particular knowledge and intuition of modern scholars.

2. Since Pausanias does not draw on verifiable sources, his claim to refer to *one* consistent *nomos* on *paiderastia* can be questioned. He himself recognizes that the actual set of laws he refers to is apparently contradictory, and the consistency he claims to unravel in this complex system may well be his own idle fantasy. Given the possible disagreement among laws and individual assumptions about what is right or wrong in erotic matters, one particular claim, even if found in a prominent authority, cannot be taken as expressing the universal, nor even the dominant, view of the time. My intention however is not to pin down the views shared by *all* of Plato's contemporaries, but to relate what Pausanias says to views which had already been expressed on the public stage by at least one prominent authority, and which, as a result, were unlikely to sound new to the ears of Pausanias' audience and Plato's readers. It is in this loose sense — 'not totally new' — that I will use the terms 'conventional' or 'traditional' from now on.

3. Our evidence on homosexuality in Athens before Plato is limited: our most important sources are the late archaic and early classical homosexual poetry, mainly the last 164 verses (the so-called 'Book II') of the *Theognidea*, Attic comedy, and, most of all, Aeschines' *Against Timarchus*. Although written some thirty years after Plato's *Symposium* (346 BC), this text can still be taken as evidence about the common assumptions that Agathon's audience and Plato's readership may have shared: Aeschines intends to convince a jury composed of average citizens, and, unlike a writer like Plato,

[249] Dover (1964) 31.

he cannot take the liberty to surprise or shock his audience about what he claims to be the 'right' or the 'wrong' form of sexual conduct.[250]

4. We must finally remember that our evidence — literary or forensic — should not be taken as describing the actual sexual practices and preferences of the time: they mirror the normative assumptions of the authors and their contemporaries, what they took as honourable and not, not what they did nor what they found actually pleasant.[251] This proviso however is not a hindrance to my investigation since Pausanias himself does not claim to report objectively the sexual conducts and preferences of the Athenians: as a mouthpiece of the *nomos*, he rather reports, or distorts, what they viewed as *kalon* or *aiskhron*, and it is these normative views, on which texts offer some good evidence, that I intend to investigate.

With all these restrictions in mind, I will argue that it is nevertheless reasonable to think that Plato's reader may have not been surprised by what Pausanias takes as the 'virtue' and 'happiness' to which his noble *erôs* is supposed to lead (A); Pausanias also seems to describe quite accurately the letter of the Athenian law on *paiderastia*, i.e. the religious and legal instructions, written or non written (B). But he probably invents the spirit of the law, the principle that implicitly legitimizes the legal instructions. The primary intention of the Athenian sexual code was probably not, as he suggests, to transmit virtue to the youths: it was rather to protect their virtue. As a result, Pausanias' definition of the good *erôs* is unconventional in at least three respects (C).

A. The good

Pausanias' main notions about virtue and happiness seem to find echoes in what many of Plato's forerunners or contemporaries already propounded.[252]

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[250] On our sources of Greek homosexuality before Hellenistic time, see Dover (1978) 4-14, Hubbard (2003a) 25-267, Robson (2013) 147-272. As Dover (1978) 7 puts it, the evidence from vase painting must be used cautiously, since the documents relevant to sexuality at Athens date before 470 BC. For a general criticism of using vase painting as evidence for sexual norms and practices, see Osborne (2018).

[251] See Thornton (1991) 186 who attacks the 'constructionist approach' of Foucault, Halperin, and Winkler.

[252] Cf. Hunter (2004a) 52: 'Pausanias's model is traditional, not innovative'.

1. Happiness

For example, Pericles' funeral oration, as reported by Thucydides (2.37-46), expresses a similar feeling of self-confidence about the superiority of Athens (§42.1) and its democratic regime (37.1), characterized by *isonomia* and *eleutheria* (36.1-2, 37.1-3, 40.5, 43.4-5, 62.3, cf. *Smp.* 182c1-d2). Athens engages its citizens in a 'virtue contest' (ἀπ' ἀρετῆς προτιμᾶται, 37.1, cf. *Smp.* 184a3), it is an open society where everybody has access to knowledge (39.1), and as a result the city stands as a model for all the Greek world (τήν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παίδευσιν εἶναι, 41.1, cf. *Smp.* 182d4-5). Thucydides, with other sources, recognizes that according to the popular belief the love between Harmodius and Aristogeiton was the cause of the fall of the tyrants and the advent of democracy (1.20.1-3, 6.54.1-21.20), and praising the heroes in such terms also seems to have been a familiar sympotic exercise.[253]

2. Virtue

a. *Philia*

As we have already seen, the notion that *philia* is essential to the justice and the cohesion of the political society is well attested in Aristotle (*Eth. Nic.* 1159b25ff, 1161b8-10),[254] and it has ancient roots in Theognis, where *philia* is often promoted as the primary virtue of the good citizen.[255]

b. Wisdom and the rest of virtue

i. A complex system

The view that the individual virtue of the democratic man is a complex ensemble, dominated by *sophia* and including *andreia, sôphrosunê,* and *dikaiosunê*, is also well documented outside Pausanias' speech. In Plato's *Protagoras*, the sophist who claims to

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[253] For the democratic myth, see also Hdt. 6.109.9-12; Aeschin. 1.132.6, 140.1; Isaeus 5.46-7; Dem. 21.170; Arist. *Rh.* 1401b11-12; Athen. 13.561f-562a. See the early 5th cent. BC couple of statues erected on the Agora, with Lear and Cantarella (2008) 15. On the tyrannicides, see Ludwig (2002) 160, Wohl (2002) 3-10, 20-4, 28, 152-8, 210-3, 266-69, 278, Robson (2013) 49.

[254] See above p. 87.

[255] See, e.g. Thgn. 61-2, 77-8, 113-4, 641-4, etc. We will go back to Theognis.

be a teacher of democratic excellence readily recognizes that virtue has the same complexity,[256] and that wisdom is its main part.[257] Isocrates, who claimed to train good orators to be able to benefit the democratic regime, refers to virtue in the *Busiris* with words almost identical to Pausanias' (ἢ κατὰ σοφίαν ἢ κατ᾽ ἄλλην τιν᾽ ἀρετήν, Isoc. 11.24). The enlightened and political courage connoted by the φρονήματα μεγάλα (182c2) harboured by the tyrannicides seems to find an echo in the feelings that, in Thucydides, Pericles seeks to rekindle in his audience: because of the hardships of the war, the Athenians lost their spirit (δουλοῖ γὰρ φρόνημα), that is, both the courage to pursue the war and the confidence they had in their city (πόλιν μεγάλην) and its values (ἤθεσιν ἀντιπάλοις); this spirit, Pericles argues, will revive if the citizens give precedence to the common interest over their private concerns (ἀπαλγήσαντας δὲ τὰ ἴδια τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι, Th. 2.61.3-4).[258]

ii. Wisdom

Pausanias' view of wisdom is also in line with what many intellectuals of the time proclaimed, particularly the sophists (Gorgias, Protagoras) or the 'philosophers' such as Isocrates, who also claimed to train the Athenians to engage successfully in the practical and daily life of democratic Athens.[259] Isocrates' *philosophos*, against Plato's, is first and foremost *deinos legein* (Isoc. 13.14);[260] he has a good knowledge of the various customs and historical exempla (Isoc. 2.55, cf. *Smp.* 182a7-182d2) and, most of all, of the rules of discourse (Isoc. 13.1, 11, 16-18, 15.50). The hallmark of Isocrates' style is a lavish use of rhythmic correspondence of clauses and periods (*euruthmia* and *isokôla*), a device particularly dear to Pausanias, as Apollodorus' mocking comment at the end of the speech suggests:

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[256] δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, ὁσιότης, *Prot.* 329c4-5; σοφία and ἀνδρεία, 330a1; Aristotle adds to this list μεγαλοπρέπεια, μεγαλοψυχία, and ἐλευθεριότης (*Rh.* 1366b1-2).

[257] καὶ μέγιστόν γε ἡ σοφία τῶν μορίων, *Prot.* 330a2.

[258] On the call for patriotism, see also 60.5 (φιλόπολις).

[259] See, e.g. Pl. *Gorg.* 452e1-4, and Pericles' self-characterization as a good speaker at Th. 2.60-64.

[260] καὶ λέγειν καὶ πολιτεύεσθαι δεινοὶ γεγόνασιν, cf. *Smp.* 182b2.

> Παυσανίου δὲ παυσαμένου – διδάσκουσι γάρ με ἴσα λέγειν οὑτωσὶ οἱ σοφοί (*Smp.* 185c4).[261]

In *Against the Sophists*, Isocrates also insists that the most challenging part of the rhetorical training is not the learning of the stylistic devices themselves (τῶν μὲν ἰδεῶν), but their use (τὰς χρήσεις): what is difficult is employing them correctly (πρεπόντως, εὐρύθμως καὶ μουσικῶς) without missing the good opportunities (τῶν καιρῶν, Isoc. 13.16-18). Like Pausanias, the orator considers as the highest task of *philosophia* to be the ability to distinguish a good use from a bad one. Just as Isocrates' good use of the *logos* requires him to know the good *kairos* for using such or such *idea*, Pausanias' good use of *erôs* requires him to know the good circumstances in which one should *eran* or *philein* (cf. ὁρῶντες αὐτῶν τὴν ἀκαιρίαν καὶ ἀδικίαν, *Symp* 182a4). By determining the proper time for action, both orator and lover perform an expert skill that is supposed to benefit themselves and their fellow citizens.

Distinguishing the right from the wrong is also what sophists claimed to teach. Prodicus' parable of Heracles at the crossroads (Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.21-34), a text probably already referred to in Phaedrus' complaints to Eryximachus (177b2-4), is all about distinguishing the right from the wrong — namely, Virtue (Ἀρετή) from Vice (Κακία). Prodicus features in Plato's *Protagoras*, and Pausanias is mentioned among his followers (315d4-7): his main contribution to the dialogue consists in making a series of distinctions between the right and the wrong ways of performing the same practice, particularly conversing (ἀμφισβητεῖν/ἐρίζειν etc, *Prot.* 337a1-c4; cf. διαλέγεσθαι ... καλῶς μὲν ... καὶ ὀρθῶς ..., μὴ ὀρθῶς δὲ, *Symp* 181a1-4). By making this series of distinctions, the sophist displays his own ability to use words (i.e. apparent synonyms) in the right way, he performs an *epideixis* of the *kalôs* or *orthôs dialegesthai*.[262] Protagoras himself, of course, was another famous expert of the 'correctness of words' (ὀρθοέπεια):[263] in Plato's dialogue, he boasts that he can speak in various manners (καὶ ἐν μακρολογίᾳ καὶ ἐν βραχυλογίᾳ, 335b7-8), and can distinguish what is right and what

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[261] See e.g. 180e1-4, 184d3-e2, 185b5-c1; compare with Isoc. *Hel*. 17; on the device, see Arist. *Rh.* 3.1409a25 (invented by Thrasymachus); cf. Bury (1932) xxvii-xxviii and Brisson (2006) 240.

[262] On Pausanias and Prodicus, see already Rückert (1829) 265.

[263] Cf. Plat. *Crat*. 391c6; *Phaedr*. 267c4-d1; Hermias *In Phaedr.* 267c, p. 251.14-6; Arist. *Rh.* 3.5 1407b7-8; etc. See Woodruff (1999) 295.

is wrong in the poets (ἅ τε ὀρθῶς πεποίηται καὶ ἃ μή), by giving an account (λόγον δοῦναι), that is, assessing the deep meaning of their words (338e6-339a3).

The expert skill we have recognized in Pausanias' *philosophia* — his clever interpretation of the intention of the law — the guessing of the principle behind the prescriptions — is also displayed by forensic orators, when they need to legitimize their behaviour, or blame their opponents by appealing to a law which is not explicit about of it. *Against Timarchus* is a case in point; although Aeschines' agenda is different from Pausanias', he follows the same method: he recalls explicitly the various legal instructions on *paiderastia* to which Pausanias refers more allusively, and he elicits behind the paradoxes or the puzzles of the laws the intention of the legislator, a moral purpose that suits his case. Section 17 in particular points to some aspects of the law on *hubris* that may 'amaze', or 'puzzle' the audience (Ἴσως ἂν οὖν τις θαυμάσειεν), just as Pausanias reports the 'amazing' excesses that the law grants to the *erastês*, and the wrong interpretations that they may induce (ἡ παρακέλευσις τῷ ἐρῶντι παρὰ πάντων θαυμαστή, ... θαυμαστὰ ἔργα, *Smp.* 182d8-e2; οἰηθείη ἄν τις πάγκαλον νομίζεσθαι, 183c2-3); and just like Pausanias, Aeschines, offers a close examination (σκοπῆτε, εὑρήσετε Aeschin. 1.17, cf. κατανοῆσαι, *Smp.* 182d5) that reveals what the legislator actually intends (βουλόμενος ὑμᾶς ἐθίσαι, Aeschin. 1.17; cf. βούλεται ὁ ἡμέτερος νόμος, *Smp.*183e6-184a1).

For all that, as Aristotle shows in the *Rhetoric*, the good orator is not required to teach and explain to his audience what is right or wrong, shameful or noble; he must rather know what the general public commonly assumes about these notions, in order to make his case.[264] Nor does the good orator intend to change the law: he always presents his behaviour in order to show that it conforms with the laws as they stand, i.e. with the letter of the laws, and with the fundamental values of the legal system (the views of *to kalon* and *to aiskhron*), even if this does not appear to be the case.

This is, again, most reminiscent of Isocrates, who famously opposes Plato's view that the knowledge of abstract moral notions like the good or the just could be reached and taught: it is enough for Isocrates' *philosophos* to find the *good* argument at the *good* moment in order to persuade the audience about a decision that is in line with the common view of the good (Isoc. 13.1-3, 20). This mainstream and democratic view of

[264] Arist. *Rh.* I, ch. 5-6.

philosophia is also endorsed by Pericles' famous claim: φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας (Th. 2.40.1). On this account all the Athenians philosophize (φιλοσοφοῦμεν), and ἄνευ μαλακίας implies that philosophy is not their full-time activity, as it is for the students of Aristophanes' *phrontistêrion*: it does not divert them from training in the gymnasium and performing their civic duties.[265] As to Protagoras, his version of Prometheus' myth in Plato demonstrates that everyone has a share in justice (πάντα ἄνδρα μετέχειν δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ τῆς ἄλλης πολιτικῆς ἀρετῆς, 323a5-7) and is therefore likely to give advice on the leadership of the city (324c5-7). Protagoras' citizens, especially the kin (οἱ οἰκεῖοι, 323b1), can exert a moral control about the individual, just as the *philoi*, *hetairoi, pateres* and *presbuteroi* in Pausanias' Athens.[266]

B. The letter of the law

Just as Pausanias did not invent his view of the good, his report of what the religious and the legal tradition explicitly say about *erôs* seems to appeal to widespread conceptions.

1. The religious account

The claim that there are two Aphrodites (180d6-e1) finds support in the poets: in Hesiod, Aphrodite is born from Ouranos' genitals (*Theog*. 188-202); but in Homer, she is child of Zeus and Dione (*Il*. 5.370-417, see also 3.374; 5.131, 312, 374). *Ourania* and *Pandemos* were two epithets applied to the goddess in Athens and the cults of both Aphrodite Ourania and Pandemos are well attested.[267] The religious distinction between the two *Erôtes* appears less traditional: in Hesiod, the god appears first as a primal entity (*Theog*. 120-3), second as a companion of Aphrodite (v. 201), but scholars debate

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[265] See Gomme (1956) 120-1, who rightly refers to Callicles and Adeimantus' opposition to Socrates' ideal of *philosophia* (*Gorg*. 484c-486c and *Resp*. 487b-d).

[266] Compare οἱ οἰκεῖοι προσιόντες νουθετοῦσιν (*Prot.* 323b1) with ὑπὸ φίλων (...) τῶν δὲ νουθετούντων (*Smp.* 183a8-b2). For the many uses of *philosophia* in this non-expert sense in the *Protagoras*, including by Socrates, see also 335d7, 342a7, 342d5. Protagoras' expression φιλοσοφεῖν ἢ φιλογυμναστεῖν (342e6-7) is also reminiscent of Pausanias (*Smp.* 182c1).

[267] Cf. Paus. 6.25.1 (in Elis), 8.32.2 (Megalopolis), 9.16.3 (Thebes). For Aphrodite Ourania, see also Paus. 1.19.2 (an ancient divinity, πρεσβυτάτην) and 1.14.7. Cf. Pirenne-Delforge (1988), Stafford (2000) 121-9, Ferrari (2002) 107-11.

whether the poet refers to two different gods[268] or two different functions of the same god.[269] In any case the notion that *erôs* is twofold, as we have seen, was already a commonplace in the *moral* discourse on love.[270] As to the view that Aphrodite is necessarily followed by *Erôs* (180d4-6), it seems to be directly borrowed from Hesiod (τῇ δ' Ἔρος ὡμάρτησε, *Theog*. 201).

2. The law on *paiderastia*

a. The legal instructions

The claim that a variety of moral judgements were applied to pederastic relationships across the Greek world (182a7-d5) does not come as a surprise either.[271] Pausanias also seems right to point out the complexity of the law in Athens and Sparta (182a8-b1, d5): the reference to Sparta has puzzled some,[272] but if we follow Xenophon, the Spartan norm also revealed a tension between permissiveness granted to the *erastês*, and self-restraint imposed on the *erômenos* (*Smp.* 184a2-3).[273] As for Athens, historians generally recognize that such a double standard applied to *erastai* and *erômenoi*.[274] In view of the widespread prejudice against the passive sexual role assumed by the *erômenos*, homosexual relationships were likely to tarnish the honour of the youth more than the dignity of the *erastês*, and, as Pausanias recognizes (182a2-3), this suspicion could lead comic poets and severe moral censors to assume that it was *always* ignoble for a boy to grant his favours to an *erastês*.[275] This general anxiety about the *erômenos*

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[268] Vernant (1989) 153-9.

[269] Calame (1983) xxxiv-v.

[270] Cf. above note 49 on the twofold *erôs*, see also Robin (1929) xlii. I will come back to this point.

[271] Cf. the *Dissoi Logoi* mentioned above (p. 84). For permissiveness in Elis and Boeotia, see esp. Xen. *Lac.* 2.12-14, *Smp.* 8.34.

[272] E.g. Jahn (1875) 57, Lamb (1925) 112, Bury (1932) 35, Robin (1929) xlvii n. 1, Vicaire (1989) 17.

[273] See Xen. *Lac.* 2.13 with Dover (1978) 190-1. For the valuation of the qualities of character and the educational responsibility of the *erastês* in Sparta, Plut. *Agis* 2.1, *Lyc*. 22.8, with Dover (1978) 201. See also, for Crete, Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F 149 l. 96-125.

[274] See Fisher (2001) 26-7, 34-6; Robson (2013) 50.

[275] See e.g. Ar. *Eq.* 736-40; *Plut.* 153-9; Xen. *Smp.* 8.34; Plut. *Amat*. 751d-e; etc. Cf. Dover (1978) 145, Hubbard (1998) 55-9 (on Aristophanes), and Fisher (2001).

was reflected in the official legal code, although only particular kinds of relationships were liable to legal prosecution. Aeschines' *Against Timarchus* mentions four sets of laws on *paiderastia*, all of which aim at protecting the dignity of the *erômenos*, not that of the *erastês*, and these particular instructions seem to find echo in various places of Pausanias' account:[276]

(1) The law on the supervision of boys gave various instructions about the role of the *paidagogoi*, in order to prevent potential *erastai* from having close contacts with young boys (Aeschin. 1.9-11, cf. [Arist.] *Ath. Pol*. 56.3); compare with *Smp.* 183c4-d1: Ἐπειδὰν δὲ παιδαγωγοὺς ἐπιστήσαντες οἱ πατέρες τοῖς ἐρωμένοις μὴ ἐῶσι διαλέγεσθαι τοῖς ἐρασταῖς etc.

(2) The law punished the sexual exploitation of boys: hiring out or procuring a free boy for sexual services (ἑταιρεῖν, Aeschin. 1.13, cf. Lys. 1.32); cf. the moral prejudice against mercenary sex: ἄν τ᾽ εὐεργετούμενος εἰς χρήματα, *Smp.* 184a7-b3; καὶ μὴ λάβοι χρήματα, 185a4-5. [277]

(3) The law punished the *erastês* in various cases: when slaves loved or followed free boys (Aeschin. 1.139), and when *erastai* (including free men) committed *hubris* against a youth (Aeschin. 1.15, cf. Dem. 21.47). Aeschines does not define *hubris* in the passage, but he must refer, as MacDowell puts it, to any 'sexual intercourse imposed upon an unwilling partner'.[278] This is close to Pausanias' claim that a noble Aphrodite is ὕβρεως ἄμοιρος (181c4).

(4) The law also punished the *erômenos* for practising sodomy against payment or recompense (ἑταιρεῖν, Aeschin. 1.19-20, see also Dem. 22.21).[279] This applied only to Athenian citizens (Aeschin. 1.19): such a sexual record, just like other shameful behaviours (striking one's father or throwing away one's shield on the battlefield) debarred them from exercising their civic rights (Aeschin. 1.28-32, 164; cf. Dem. 24.126, 22.73, 24.181). If the citizen still dared to participate in the assemblies and to

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[276] On these laws, see Dover (1978) 19-39, Cohen (1991), and MacDowell (2000) who offers the most precise account.

[277] For the ban on mercenary sex, see also Aeschin. 1.51; Dem. 22.58; etc. Cf. Dover (1964) 32-3 and (1978) 20-3, 107, and Cohen (2005).

[278] MacDowell (2000) 20; for a detailed discussion of *hubris* in general, see Arist. *Rh.* 2.1378b10-31 with Fisher (1992) and Cairns (1996); for sexual hubris, see Dover (1978) 34-9.

[279] See MacDowell (2000) 21-2.

give public advice, he was liable to the kind of prosecution used by Aeschines against Timarchus, the 'scrutiny of orators' (*dokimasia rhêtorôn*).[280] Hence, in comedy, the familiar characterization of politicians (*rhêtores*) as passive homosexuals.[281] This is reminiscent not only of Pausanias' ban on mercenary sex (see above), but also of his suspicion against homosexual relationships involving political benefits (πολιτικῶν δυνάμεων ... διαπράξεις πολιτικάς, *Smp.* 184a7-b3).

b. Base and noble *erôs*

As Pausanias also says, the ban on the *erômenos* did not bluntly prevent homosexual relationships between adult males and youths, since this practice was widespread and could be viewed as honourable.[282] The ban rather monitored the behaviour of both *erastai* and *erômenoi*, and engaged them to behave in a right way.[283] Hence, as we saw in Chapter 1, the moral view that there are two kinds of *erôs*[284] and that the noble *erôs* is, as Aeschines also argues, a bond between two virtuous men: a chaste *erômenos* and an *erastês* who is ready to benefit him:

> Ὁρίζομαι δ' εἶναι τὸ μὲν ἐρᾶν τῶν καλῶν καὶ σωφρόνων φιλανθρώπου πάθος καὶ εὐγνώμονος ψυχῆς, τὸ δὲ ἀσελγαίνειν ἀργυρίου τινὰ μισθούμενον ὑβριστοῦ καὶ ἀπαιδεύτου ἀνδρὸς ἔργον εἶναι· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀδιαφθόρως ἐρᾶσθαί φημι καλὸν εἶναι, τὸ δ' ἐπαρθέντα μισθῷ πεπορνεῦσθαι αἰσχρόν. (Aeschin. 1.137)

Educational responsibility is crucial in our testimonies about the legitimate homosexual relationship at Sparta.[285] At Athens, the emphasis seems to be that the good lover was

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[280] See Fisher (2001) 5-6, 40-53.

[281] See e.g. Ar. *Eq.* 877-80, *Eccl.* 110-114, *Vesp.* 1068-70, *Nub.* 1093-4 ({Ητ.} δημηγοροῦσι δ' ἐκ τίνων; | {Κρ.} ἐξ εὐρυπρώκτων.); Dem. 22.30-1. See also Eupol. fr. 118.2; Pl. Com. fr. 186.5. Cf. Winkler (1990) 54-64.

[282] See Hindley (1991) 183 (note below).

[283] Eur. fr. 897 (χρῆσθαι δ᾽ ὀρθῶς) and [Dem.] 61.3-4. Cohen (1991) argues from Aeschin. 1.54-5 (Timarchus committed hubris against his own body) that the law on *hubris* (see above) extended at least theoretically to consensual homoerotic relationships; I rather follow Hindley (1991) 183 who argues against Cohen that 'A way of honour was recognized for both *erastês* and *erômenos* which could involve much more than sexual conquest'; the view is supported by better evidence (Aeschin. 1.139; Lys. 3.5; etc.). A problem in both interpretations remains that they include Pausanias' speech in their evidence: cf. Cohen (1991) 174-5, Hindley (1991) 172-3.

[284] See above note 49. According to Sier (2012) 53, Pausanias borrows from medical knowledge the distinction between good and bad use, and the notion that the *nomos* is *poikilos*, cf. *Vet. Med.* 9.

[285] See, e.g. Plut. *Lyc.* 22.8; Xen. *Lac.* 2.13, with Bethe (1907) 465-74 and Dover (1978) 202.

especially expected to benefit the youth with respect to wisdom, that part of virtue so important in Pausanias' eyes. In Euripides' *Medea*, the praise of Attica sounds like a poetic version of Pausanias' vindication of the Athenian pederastic model: along the Cephisus, as the chorus sings, Aphrodite blows 'temperate and sweet breezes' (μετρίας ἀνέμων | ἡδυπνόους αὔρας, 839-40), and 'sends the Loves to sit at Wisdom's side, joint workers in every kind of excellence':

> τᾶι Σοφίαι παρέδρους πέμπειν Ἔρωτας,
> παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνεργούς
> (*Med*. 839-45).[286]

In the *Theognidea*, the narrator claims to teach his *paidika*:

> Σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ εὖ φρονέων ὑποθήσομαι, οἷά περ αὐτός,
> Κύρν', ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαθῶν παῖς ἔτ' ἐὼν ἔμαθον·
> πέπνυσο ...
> (*Thgn*. 27-29)[287]

In this teaching programme, the main advice that the *erastês* give his *erômenos*, who is *philos* to him,[288] is about the benefits of making good *philoi* in the city (ἐσθλοὶ φιλοί, πιστοὶ ἑταῖροι).[289] The bonds of *philia* forged between *erastês* and *erômenos* are, as in Pausanias' speech, supposed to foster the collective virtue of *philia* which is essential to the maintenance of the democratic society.[290] The cultivation of erotic relationships in the context of democratic institutions like the symposion, which was the performance context of the *Theognidea* and a prime site for education, as well as in the gymnasium, a place Pausanias indirectly refers to (φιλογυμναστία, 182c1), may have been commonly viewed as a powerful means to forge bonds of *philia* which were to survive later on in political societies such as demes or *hetaireiai.*[291]

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[286] See also Eur. fr. 897 quoted in Chapter 1, p. 22 (παίδευμα δ' Ἔρως σοφίας ἀρετῆς | πλεῖστον ὑπάρχει), and fr. 663 (ποιητὴν δ' ἄρα | Ἔρως διδάσκει, κἂν ἄμουσος ᾖ τὸ πρίν), cited in part by Agathon (*Smp.* 196e2-3).

[287] For a discussion of this passage, see Calame (1999) 94-5.

[288] Cf. Thgn. 38, 372, 1091, 1099.

[289] Thgn. 31-2, 61, 73-4, 93-5, 113-4, 529-30, etc. with Donlan (1985) and Konstan (1997) 48ff. On the political aspect of Theognis' exhortations, see Nagy (1985) and Edmunds (1985).

[290] For this connection between erotic *philia* and *philia* broadly speaking, see also Thgn. 37-8, 97-9, 1377-80, with Calame (1999) 94-5.

[291] For the symposion, see Calame (1999) 93-7; on the symposion's importance as an education leading to citizenship, see Schmitt-Pantel (1992) 70ff. and 76ff; for celebration of *philia* in the

Finally, the legal and moral discourse on *dikaios erôs* also seems to support Pausanias' claim that the noble or virtuous *erôs* involves delaying the relationship to a time where the youth will not be easily abused (ὕβρεως ἀμοίρου, 181c4) by a lover taking advantage of his naivety (cf. ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ (...) ὡς νέον, 181d5-6): it is indeed better for the beloved to be able to recognize the virtuous lover who can actually be *philanthropos* to him.[292]

C. The spirit of the law

Although Pausanias seems to follow what was explicitly stated in the religious and legal discourse on *erôs* and *paiderastia*, he shows much more originality when deducing the implicit claims of these discourses: the religious signification of the double Aphrodite and the purpose of the legislator (the implicit principle), which is reflected by this duality, and which is supposed to account for the various instructions described so far.

1. The religious account

Although Homer and Hesiod provide two genealogies for Aphrodite, nowhere is it stated that there were actually *two* goddesses. 'Ourania' and 'Pandemos' were certainly two epithets given to Aphrodite, but among many other designations,[293] and by giving different epithets to a god, the Greek did not necessarily refer to different gods, as Pausanias claims (πῶς δ' οὐ δύο τὼ θεά; 180d6).[294] Furthermore, the double epithets 'Ourania' and 'Pandemos' were surely not taken as matching the two genealogical

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symposion, see Thgn. 489, 515-6. See also Ford (2002) 35-9 on sympotic *kosmos* as a reflection of civic order. For the gymnasium, see Athen. 13.561d (κατὰ τὰ γυμνάσια αὐτὸν [i.e. τὸν Ἔρωτα] συνιδρῦσθαι Ἑρμῇ και Ἡρακλεῖ, τῷ μὲν λόγου, τῷ δ' ἀλκῆς προεστῶτι· ὧν ἐνωθέντων φιλία τε καὶ ὁμόνοια γεννᾶται, δι' ὧν ἡ καλλίστη ἐλευθερία τοῖς ταῦτα μετιοῦσιν συναύξεται) and 13.602d, with Fasce (1977) 39-43 and Scanlon (2002) 258, 268. Athen. 13.561f-562a also mentions a festival of Eleutheria dedicated to *Erôs* in Samos.

[292] See Aeschin. 1.139, with Dover (1978) 9 (the good lover must not seduce a youth who cannot make an informed choice: Ἀκύρου δ' οἶμαι καὶ ἀδυνάτου ἔτι ὄντος κρῖναι τὸν ὄντως εὔνουν καὶ μή); Aeschin. 1.19, 22, with Cohen (1991) 177-80 (the charges brought in the legal prosecutions were usually related to what *erômenoi* did when they were young); Xen. *Lac.* 3.1 (the rule about teachers, at least outside Sparta, ceased at puberty).

[293] Paus. 8.32.2 and 9.16.3 refers to *three* Aphrodites.

[294] Cf. Socrates' reservations in Xen *Smp.* 8.9: εἰ μὲν οὖν μία ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη ἢ διτταί, Οὐρανία τε καὶ Πάνδημος, οὐκ οἶδα· καὶ γὰρ Ζεὺς ὁ αὐτὸς δοκῶν εἶναι πολλὰς ἐπωνυμίας ἔχει· See also Soph. fr. 941.1-2: ὦ παῖδες, ἥ τοι Κύπρις οὐ Κύπρις μόνον, | ἀλλ' ἐστὶ πολλῶν ὀνομάτων ἐπώνυμος. Cf. Nieddu (2012) 656.

accounts provided by Hesiod and Homer ('Daughter of Ouranos' / 'Daughter of Zeus', *Smp.* 180d6-e1), since Euripides, for example, calls Aphrodite the 'Ouranian daughter of Zeus' (fr. 781.14-17).[295] Nor did the two epithets have the moral signification that Pausanias derives from the double genealogy: 'more ancient and only for male love' (Ourania) vs 'younger and for both sexes' (Pandemos, cf. 181a7-c4). 'Ourania' presumably just meant 'heavenly', a common sense the epithet had in the old religion of Greece and the East: this designation was probably a reminiscence of the title of the Oriental semitic goddess Ishtar-Astarte 'queen of Heaven', which was adopted in the Greek Pantheon.[296] Furthermore, Aphrodite Ourania was associated with heterosexual love: Euripides refers to her as presiding over marriage (Eur. fr. 781.14-17) and Pindar (fr. 122.1-5) suggests that her cult was linked to the sacred prostitution in Corinth.[297] 'Pandemos' must have originally been a political epithet, with democratic connotations, meaning 'of the whole people', not 'vulgar',[298] and it probably kept this political meaning up to Plato's time.[299] Finally, even if *Erôs* follows Aphrodite in Hesiod (*Theog*. 201), the notion that two different *Erôtes* follow two different Aphrodites and share their characteristics is also unheard of out of Pausanias' encomium.[300] Plato's speaker is thus obviously reconfiguring the mythological background he refers to in order to illustrate his moral teaching about the noble and the base forms of love, the moral 'principle' that he claims to find out behind the explicit prescriptions.

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[295] See the same epithet for Artemis in *Hipp*. 59-60. Cf. Nieddu (2012) 657.

[296] Cf. Hdt. 1.105; 1.131.3; Paus. 1.14.7. See Farnell (1896) 621-2, 629-630, 661, Burkert (2003) 303-4, Pirenne-Delforge (1996) 839.

[297] Hunter (2004a) 46, n. 8 suspects a joke on the part of Pausanias here.

[298] Paus. 1.22.3 who puts it in relation with Theseus' synoecism. Hunter (2004a) 44, Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2004) 61-2, Nieddu (2012) 657-8. On Aphrodite's political epithets, see Pirenne-Delforge (1988) 148-157 and Petre (1997) 8.

[299] Pace Dover (1980) 97 and Burkert (2003) 308, who postulate an evolution of the term in the 4th cent., from 'civic' to 'vulgar': there is no trace of the second meaning outside Plato, and the continuance of the first meaning is attested in epigraphic uses, cf. Petre (1997) 7. Our only non-Platonic evidence for a moral meaning attached to the two epithets ('noble' vs 'vulgar') is Paus. 9.16.4, but this unique and late testimony is probably influenced by Plato's passage; cf. Nieddu (2012) 658 n. 27.

[300] Nieddu (2012) 654.

2. The moral rule on *paiderastia*

As we saw, Pausanias did not invent the view that there is a contradiction between the various legal and moral prescriptions, nor the view that this complex set of instructions led *erastai* and *erômenoi* to behave in a virtuous way; thus his claim that one must distinguish between a virtuous and a base form of *erôs* also agrees with the moral discourse of his time. However his Athenian audience might have been amused when hearing that the two contradictory prescriptions at Athens were intending to a *common* purpose (a), and that this purpose was the *transmission* of virtue from the *erastês* to the *erômenos* (b); they may also have been surprised by three features which, as a consequence, Pausanias ascribes to his noble *erôs* (c).

a. A genuine contradiction

Instead of the hidden educative plan that Pausanias cunningly works out behind the two sets of rules imposed on *erastai* and *erômenoi* (τοῖς μὲν διώκειν παρακελεύεται, τοῖς δὲ φεύγειν, 184a2-3), there was more likely a genuine contradiction, as historians have often argued.[301] On the one hand, the implicit encouragement given to the *erastês*, as Dover puts it, had certainly more to do with the agonistic culture of ancient Greece than with the intention of educating the youth in a fine way: lovers, who were often compared to hunters, took pride in winning the favours of fine boys, whatever may have been the educational output of the relationship.[302] Due to the self-restraint imposed on the *erômenoi*, a competition between *erastai* certainly arose (cf. ἀγωνοθετῶν, 184a3), but the winners were arguably not those who were ready to stand back and wait for a late surrender of the youth, as Pausanias suggests; rather, they were those who managed to snatch the favours of the youth before their rival lovers (*anterastai*): these were more probably the 'good lovers' that passed the 'test' (βασανίζων, 184a4) and were applauded by their *philoi* and *hetairoi*.

On the other hand, this permissiveness given to the *erastai* was perceived as nothing other than a threat to the honour of the youths. A free adult male citizen was supposed

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[301] See esp. Dover (1964) 31, 34-5, 38; Cohen (1991) 172-4, Robson (2013) 49-52.

[302] Dover (1964) 38. On hunting boys, see, e.g., Aeschin. 1.170 (θηρεύων νέους πλουσίους), 195 (τοὺς δὲ τῶν νέων ὅσοι ῥᾳδίως ἁλίσκονται θηρευτὰς ὄντας); Pl. *Prt*. 390a, *Phdr*. 241d, *Lys*. 206a, with Dover (1978) 87-8. See also the boasting graffiti on Thera (*IG* xii. 3.537, 538b) with Dover (1978) 122-3 and Calame (1999) 105.

to be active and dominant both in the assembly and on the battlefield, and assuming a passive sexual role was viewed as at odds with this status.[303] Thus, even if the law and customs may have allowed by default youths to submit to *erastai* in some particular circumstances, the prescriptions invited the youths just to resist the advances of the *erastês*;[304] or, if he did succumb, to do it in a reluctant way, without taking pleasure in the act,[305] and in a manner that would not debase his body. Most importantly, he should not engage in any kind of sexual practice that would involve *hubris*, particularly through payment or the exercise of force: in so doing, the freeborn citizen would be behaving like a slave.[306] If the *meirakia* and *neaniskoi* were no longer protected by the law on the supervision of boys (cf. Xen. *Lac.* 3.1, see supra), it was arguably just because they were assumed to be strong enough to defend themselves against any kind of *hubris*, not because they were ripe for education. In sum, the prescription of moderation imposed on the *erômenos* seems to have encouraged sexual abstinence, not patience and postponement of *to kharizesthai*, as Pausanias puts it. The youth was presumably not encouraged to wait for a lover that could benefit him, since sexual submission seems to have been *always* potentially harmful to the youth. Pausanias' leading principle that no practice is good or bad in itself (180e5-181a3) probably did not have the extension and the flexibility that he claims in the case of sodomy: for the young male citizen for which Pausanias' *paiderastia* is designed, submitting to such a

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[303] See esp. Winkler (1990) 48-51, Halperin (1990) 30-2, Cohen (1991) 179-82, 193, Ogden (1996) 130, Brisson (2006) 231, Davidson (2007) 446-65.

[304] For Athens, see the strict prescriptions of the *arkhaia paideia* in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (961-83) which, despite being a comic reconstruction of the good old days, may mirror the ideal to which severe moral censors thought that the *nomos* tended; for Sparta, see the Lycurgan rule at Xen. *Lac.* 2.13-4.

[305] Cf. Dover (1978) 52-3, 96-7. See, e.g. Xen. *Smp.* 8.21-2, Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 7.1148b29-31 with Dover (1978) 168f, Hindley (1991) 18.

[306] Cf. Aeschin. 1.137 cited above (ἐπαρθέντα μισθῷ πεπορνεῦσθαι) and 141; Lys. 3.5; Xen. *Mem.*, 1.6.13 *Hiero* 1.29-38; Arist. *Pol.* 1311b18, 1315a23; Dem. 22.58; Ar. *Plut.* 153-9; with Fisher (2001) 46 and Nieddu (2012) 662. From our knowledge of the legal code, when pederastic relationships involved an adult citizen and a free boy, an action was possible only when force was applied or when money changed hands; see Robson (2013) 56. Was intercrural intercourse viewed as a chaster replacement for buggery, as vase painting has led scholars to assume, cf. Dover (1978) 98-9, Cartledge (1998) 127, Parker (2015) 32? Osborne (2018) 318-28 argues convincingly against this view.

praxis, seems to have been viewed as shameful in itself (ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς, 180e5).[307]

b. The intention of the law on *erôs*: preservation vs transmission of *aretê*

It appears therefore that what the lawgiver had primarily in view was the protection, not the education, of the *erômenos*, as Pausanias puts it. The whole set of constraints put on the *erômenos* had certainly something to do with *aretê*: but the intention was not to create the ideal conditions in which the *erastês* could contribute to the *aretê* of the *erômenos* (ἀρετῆς γ' ἕνεκα καὶ τοῦ βελτίων γενέσθαι, 185b2-3; cf. 184c7-e4, 185b7-c1); it was rather to ensure that the *erastês* would not jeopardize the *aretê* that the boy already had — i.e. his dignity as a free-born male citizen. This is not to say that education was not viewed approvingly in the frame of the noble *paiderastia*; the *erastês*' ability to teach, the *erômenos*' willingness to learn were surely viewed as constitutive of a noble form of homosexual relationship;[308] but it was not essential to it: the purpose of the *rules* (νόμοι) that framed *paiderastia* was presumably not, as Pausanias argues, to optimize the educative potentialities of *erôs*; it was rather to protect the upbringing of the good citizen from the potential dangers of this passion.

c. Base and noble *erôs*

As a result, the virtue that traditionally made the distinction between the noble and the base *erôs* was not, as Pausanias insists, the intellectual virtue of wisdom (σοφία, φιλοσοφία, φρόνησις, 184c5-d7), but temperance, or moderation (σωφροσύνη, μετριότης), a virtue on which Pausanias, the self-proclaimed mouthpiece of the Athenian code of conduct, is surprisingly silent.[309] The noble *erômenos* was not eager to learn, but temperate.[310] Conversely the good *erastês* was not viewed as eager to teach,

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[307] See the comic vilifications of the *katapugôn* in Aristophanes (*Thesm*. 200, *Eq*. 639, *Ach*. 79), with Dover (1978) 142-3 and Fisher (2001) 46

[308] See above p. 102.

[309] Although, as we saw, *sôphrosunê* might be implicitly included in his conception of virtue, see above p. 87. In the *Symposium*, σώφρων/σωφροσύνη makes its first appearance in Eryximachus' speech, 188a5, d5-6.

[310] On moderation as essential to the noble *erôs*, see Pind. *N*. 11. 47-8 (κερδέων δὲ χρὴ μέτρον θηρευέμεν· | ἀπροσίκτων δ' ἐρώτων ὀξύτεραι μανίαι), and *P*. 3.34 (χρὴ δὲ κατ' αὐτὸν αἰεὶ παντὸς ὁρᾶν μέτρον); Eur. fr. 967 (πρὸς τὴν Ἀφροδίτην | εἴης μοι, μέτριος δέ πως | εἴης μηδ' ἀπολείποις), *Med*. 627-44 (στέργοι δέ με σωφροσύνα). See also the prayers for passion in

but rather as ready to obey the same requirement of temperance: he would not subject the youth to *hubris*, as appears in Democritus' famous definition of the just *erôs*:

δίκαιος ἔρως ἀνυβρίστως ἐφίεσθαι τῶν καλῶν. (55B73 DK = Stob. III 5, 23)

When Aeschines claims that the noble *erastês* must be *philanthropos* to his *erômenos* (Aeschin. 1.137, see above p. 102) he does not ask him to educate the youth, but rather not to corrupt him through his love (ἀδιαφθόρως ἐρᾶσθαι), opposing this fine (καλόν) way of loving to the manners of the wanton man (ὑβριστοῦ καὶ ἀπαιδεύτου ἀνδρός).[311] Similarly, the unknown speaker in Lysias' *Against Simon*, who like his rival has clearly slept with the young Theodotus, contrasts his own virtue with his opponent's *hubris*, but he does not claim to have contributed in any way to the *aretê* of the youth.[312] The law forbidding slaves from following free boys (Aeschin. 1.139) implies that there was nothing wrong about a free man loving and following a boy — whatever may have been his educational capacities or intentions: in Athens, the good lover is not meant to cultivate the soul of the youth, but rather to respect his body, so that he does not threaten his status of freeborn citizen.[313] Conversely, the 'bad lovers' who prompt people to disapprove of pederasty as a whole are not, as Pausanias claims, those who primarily seek pleasure in bodily delights (181b5): they are rather those who indulge in bodily pleasures in a wrong way, i.e. by mistreating the beloved. It is such a criterion, not the educational purpose suggested by Pausanias, that prevails in all the other testimonies about the 'double' *erôs* that we reviewed above.[314]

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moderation in Eur. *Hipp*. 528-9, *Med*. 835-40, *Iph. Aul.* 542ff, esp. 554ff, *Hel*. 1105-6, fr. 503. This is also the hallmark of the *arkhaia paideia* in Aristophanes' Clouds (ὅτ' ἐγὼ τὰ δίκαια λέγων ἤνθουν καὶ σωφροσύνη 'νενόμιστο, *Nub.* 962). The moderation requirement is particularly characteristic of 4th century oratory, e.g. Aeschin. 1.137 (see below) and [Dem.] 61.3-6, maybe because pederasty came under more scrutiny at the time, cf. Keuls (1995) 263-9 and Robson (2013) 49-52.

[311] See Dover (1978) 36-7.

[312] Lys. 3.5; see Hindley (1991) 172 and Dover (1978) 33.

[313] Cf. Aeschin. 1.195: τοὺς μὲν εἰς τὰ σώματα ἡμαρτηκότας.

[314] See above n. 49, and Xen. *Lac.* 2.13-4; cf. Dover (1978) 45-6, Hindley (1991) 176 with n. 42.

d. Uncommon features of Pausanias' noble *erôs*

By driving a wedge between educative and non-educative *erôs* — not between moderate and immoderate *erôs* — Pausanias changes the signification and the scope of the *kalos erôs*. This allows him to make three claims about this noble relationship, which are essential to strategy of encomium, but which may have sounded paradoxical to his Athenian audience.

i. Willing slavery and long-term relationship

Pausanias' core principle that it is *always* noble for an *erômenos* to submit to an *erastês*, as soon as both partners have education in view (cf. οὕτω πᾶν πάντως γε καλὸν ἀρετῆς γ' ἕνεκα χαρίζεσθαι, 185b4-5), first leads him to legitimize 'willing slavery':

> ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐρασταῖς ἦν δουλεύειν ἐθέλοντα ἠντινοῦν δουλείαν παιδικοῖς μὴ κολακείαν εἶναι μηδὲ ἐπονείδιστον [cf. 183a6-b5], οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἄλλη μία μόνη δουλεία ἑκούσιος λείπεται οὐκ ἐπονείδιστος. (*Smp.* 184b7-c3)

The approval of δουλεία ἑκούσιος on the part of the *erastês* is already odd;[315] it is even more strange on the part of the *erômenos* since the bulk of the legislation about *erôs*, as we saw, was designed to protect the youth from engaging in any kind of practice that would identify him with a slave.[316] To be sure, by δουλεία (184c2), Pausanias cannot refer to what slavish love most commonly meant, i.e. prostitution (*porneia*, *hetairêsis*), since, at this point of the discourse, he has already ruled out mercenary sex from his noble *erôs* (184a7-b3). He must instead refer to the unconventional aspect of the long-standing relationship he plans for his noble lovers. According to Pausanias, good lovers start their relationship at a late stage (181d1-3, 184a6-7), and this relationship is due to last all lifelong:

> Παρεσκευασμένοι γὰρ οἶμαί εἰσιν οἱ ἐντεῦθεν ἀρχόμενοι ἐρᾶν ὡς τὸν βίον ἅπαντα συνεσόμενοι καὶ κοινῇ συμβιωσόμενοι (...) ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἤθους χρηστοῦ ὄντος ἐραστὴς διὰ βίου μένει, ἅτε μονίμῳ συντακείς (*Smp.* 181d3-5, 183e5-6).

As we saw, the instruction to postpone the talk of *philia* to an age when the youth is mature enough and cannot be deceived easily was certainly viewed as appropriate, and

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[315] cf. Hunter (2004a) 53.

[316] See above note 306.

it was acceptable for a young man (νεανίσκος, μειράκιον) to have *erastai* at an age when he started to have his own *erômenoi*.[317] But this ambivalent situation was not supposed to extend beyond that period: once the *neaniskos* turned into an adult *anêr* — at age 20 or later?[318]— granting one's favours (*kharizesthai*) to another *anêr*, although not illegal, was open to a great deal of gossip and disrepute, as it involved endorsing a passive sexual role which was inappropriate for a free male citizen and soldier.[319] Such a transgression was equivalent to subjecting oneself to *hubris*[320] and therefore to endorsing willingly the status of a slave.[321]

By using a striking oxymoron to refer to his noble relationship (δουλεία ἑκούσιος, 184c2), Pausanias, on the one hand, recalls that according to a common prejudice any noble relationship must be free (cf. ἑκούσιος); on the other hand, he indicates that *his* personal view of a noble relationship is in some respect paradoxical (cf. δουλεία); although he claims that such a late relationship is actually οὐκ ἐπονείδιστος (184c3), and ὕβρεως ἄμοιρος (181c4), he reminds his audience that, in view of the traditional standards, his noble *paiderastia* is likely to be taken as exactly the opposite.

ii. The lover is in love with the soul of the student

Now that *erôs* is responsible for the sustenance of virtue throughout life, the *erastês* can no longer be primarily attached to the body: even if sexual gratification may play a

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[317] See above p. 78. On approving representations of mature *erômenoi*, see Xen. *Smp.* 1.2 (Autolycus has won the pancration, not a sport for boys), *Anab*. 7.4.7 (the youth Episthenes is a full-fledged soldier); [Dem.] 61.26-29 and 36-42 (Epicrates is mature enough for dangerous sports and serious philosophical study); see also the statuary group of Harmodius and Aristogeiton (cf. note 253 above). Cf. Hindley (1991) 179.

[318] See above note 212.

[319] See e.g. Aristoph. *Eq.* 877 (the sodomites — τοὺς κινουμένους — are booted out from the *citizens'* roles), Xen. *Mem*. 2.1.30.12-3 (γυναιξὶ τοῖς ἀνδράσι χρωμένη [i.e. Κακία]), Aeschin. 1.185 (τὸν ἄνδρα μὲν καὶ ἄρρενα τὸ σῶμα, γυναικεῖα δὲ ἁμαρτήματα ἡμαρτηκότα); cf. Hindley (1991) 180; Fisher (2001) 34-5, 39.

[320] Cf. Aeschin. 1.54-5 and Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 7.1148b29-33 (on the anomaly of ἡ τῶν ἀφροδισίων [ὁμιλία / συνουσία] τοῖς ἄρρεσιν, characterisitic of τοῖς ὑβριζομένοις ἐκ παίδων); Aristotle's reference to development from a childhood experience suggests that mature men are in view, see Dover (1978) 168-9, Hindley (1991) 181, Skinner (2005) 129.

[321] The law penalizing the *erômenos* did not apply to slaves, cf. Aeschin. 1.139 with Hindley (1991) 168. On *hubris* as imposing *douleia*, see Dem. 21.180 (ὡς δούλοις χρώμενος τοῖς ἐλευθέροις) and Arist. *Polit*. 1310b.39-1311a4; 1313b9 (*hubris* and tyranny), cf. *ibid.* 1311a39-b1 (sexual *hubris* committed by a tyrant).

leading role at the start of the relationship, bodily charms fade away and cannot remain the primary incentive for the long-standing lover. Since the noble *erastês* primarily cares for virtue, and virtue is essentially present in souls, Pausanias claims that his *erôs* must be essentially directed towards the soul and the character:

> τῆς ψυχῆς ἐρῶν (...) ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἤθους χρηστοῦ ὄντος ἐραστὴς διὰ βίου μένει, ἅτε μονίμῳ συντακείς. (*Smp.* 183e1-6)

This view does not fit with the *dikaios erôs* as usually promoted in moral discourse. The noble lover was required to *respect* the virtues of the soul — and possibly to improve them by educating the beloved, but he still desired (*erân*) the body of his *erômenos*, and erotic gratification was the counterpart of spiritual care.[322] By contrast, in Pausanias' view, spiritual care in itself constitutes the erotic engagement, for Pausanias, the virtuous soul (ψυχῆς) or character (ἤθους) is the very object of the noble *erôs*.

This view cannot be found even in the most idealized depictions of *erôs* provided by Euripides.[323] In these passages, first, *erôs* is said to lead to virtue (ὁ δ᾽ εἰς τὸ σῶφρον ἐπ᾽ ἀρετήν τ᾽ ἄγων ἔρως, Eur. fr. 672), to support wisdom (τᾶι Σοφίαι παρέδρους πέμπειν Ἔρωτας,| παντοίας ἀρετᾶς ξυνεργούς, *Med*. 840-5); but the *erastês* is not supposed to be in love (*erân*) with the virtue of the *erômenos*. *Sôphrosunê, aretê, sophia* are the benefits which the noble *erôs*, when properly performed, can promote in the soul of the *erastês* and the *erômenos*; but performing *erôs* properly does not mean, as in Pausanias' model, sublimating it, redirecting the desire from the body to soul: it rather means taming or suppressing a desire which remains focussed on the body. This appears clearly in fr. 388, which looks the closest to Pausanias' model:

> ἀλλ᾽ ἔστι δή τις ἄλλος ἐν βροτοῖς ἔρως
> ψυχῆς δικαίας σώφρονός τε κἀγαθῆς.
> καὶ χρῆν δὲ τοῖς βροτοῖσι τόνδ᾽ εἶναι νόμον,
> τῶν εὐσεβούντων οἵτινές τε σώφρονες
> ἐρᾶν, Κύπριν δὲ τὴν Διὸς χαίρειν ἐᾶν
> (Eur. fr. 388)

Temperance is the hallmark of both *erastês* (ψυχῆς ... σώφρονος), and *erômenos* (οἵτινές τε σώφρονες): the lover loves the virtuous beloved not because the virtue of his

[322] On this asymmetry, see Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 8.1157a6-8.

[323] See above p. 22 with n. 54.

soul (σωφροσύνη or εὐσέβεια) arouses his *erôs*, but because the continence of the youth is the best guarantee for himself to remain *sôphrôn*, that is, to be able to dismiss the final purpose of *erôs*: the pleasures of sex (Κύπριν δὲ ... χαίρειν ἐᾶν).[324] The prescription of curbing (not sublimating) *erôs* proves to be based on the traditional view (i) that *erôs* essentially belongs to the body, and (ii) that it is therefore *per se* detrimental, not conducive to the virtue of the soul. Pausanias opposes those two assumptions throughout his speech.

iii. *Erôs* as a substitute for *philia*

A third paradoxical claim that follows Pausanias' core principle that *erôs* is directly conducive to virtue is that erotic relationships are substituted for the bonds of *philia* which form the cement of the civic community. Pausanias uses the term *philia* in three main senses:

1. Non-erotic and reciprocal. He refers to friendships which do not involve *erôs*, i.e. the environment of friends and companions who invite the citizen to do the right thing: ἐμποδίζοιτο ἂν ... ὑπὸ φίλων, 183a8; see also ἡλικιῶται δὲ καὶ ἑταῖροι, 183c7. This is the most common meaning of *philia*, which, on Aristotle's account, corresponds to the *philia* based on *aretê*, or on utility (τὸ χρήσιμον), or on non-erotic pleasures (e.g. the pleasure felt in the company of a witty person, *Eth. Nic.* 1156a6-14).

2. Erotic and reciprocal. Pausanias also refers to the reciprocal bonds of friendship which are forged between the *erastês* and the *erômenos* through the particular feeling each one feels for the other: φιλίας ἰσχυρὰς καὶ κοινωνίας, 182c2; γενναίαν φιλίαν, 184b4-5. This is what Aristotle calls the *philia* based on pleasure (φιλία δι' ἡδονήν, *Eth. Nic.* 8.1156a31-b5, 1157a6-8).

3. Non-reciprocal and erotic. In most cases, *philia* is understood as the non-reciprocal affection felt by the *erômenos* for his *erastês*, which is the counterpart of the *erôs* felt

[324] Xenophon's description of Lycurgus' law on *paiderastia* (*Lac*. 2.13-14) is another expression of this idealized form of *erôs*, which puts a strict ban on erotic pleasures (cf. ἐραστὰς παιδικῶν ἀπέχεσθαι).

by the latter: ὁ γὰρ Ἀριστογείτονος ἔρως καὶ ἡ Ἁρμοδίου φιλία, 182c6, see also 183c4, 184b5; 185a7.[325]

A key feature of Pausanias' argument consists in suggesting that those three distinct meanings actually overlap. This strategy appears most clearly in the passage on Harmodius and Aristogeiton:

> οὐ γὰρ οἶμαι συμφέρει τοῖς ἄρχουσι φρονήματα μεγάλα ἐγγίγνεσθαι τῶν ἀρχομένων, οὐδὲ φιλίας ἰσχυρὰς καὶ κοινωνίας, ὃ δὴ μάλιστα φιλεῖ τά τε ἄλλα πάντα καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἐμποιεῖν. ἔργῳ δὲ τοῦτο ἔμαθον καὶ οἱ ἐνθάδε τύραννοι· ὁ γὰρ Ἀριστογείτονος ἔρως καὶ ἡ Ἁρμοδίου φιλία βέβαιος γενομένη κατέλυσεν αὐτῶν τὴν ἀρχήν. (*Smp.* 182c1-7)

At first reading, φιλίας ἰσχυρὰς καὶ κοινωνίας refers to the most common, non-erotic sense (1): the democratic bonds of friendship in the city which are conducive to democratic associations (demes, *hetaireiai*, etc.) and political projects. Then, ὃ δὴ μάλιστα φιλεῖ (...) καὶ ὁ ἔρως ἐμποιεῖν leads to reinterpretation of these φιλίαι καὶ κοινωνίαι according to sense (2): the most perfect instantiation of political association proves to be the *philia* that binds *erastês* and *erômenos*. Finally, ἡ Ἁρμοδίου φιλία βέβαιος γενομένη refers to the specific erotic sense (3): the affection of the *erômenos* for his *erastês*, and the strong parallelism between βέβαιος and ἰσχυράς leads to the further interpretation of φιλίας ἰσχυράς in light of this erotic sense. By the end of the passage, it appears that Pausanias has merged the common political sense of *philia* with its two erotic meanings, and that he views the two erotic senses as the perfect instantiation of *philia*, the *philia* par excellence.

Pausanias' reinterpretation of the common understanding of *philia* seems confirmed when he talks more about the fragility of the erotic links which are not based on *aretê* but on money and political interests:

> οὐδὲν γὰρ δοκεῖ τούτων [i.e. χρήματα and διαπράξεις πολιτικαί] οὔτε βέβαιον οὔτε μόνιμον εἶναι, χωρὶς τοῦ μηδὲ πεφυκέναι ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν γενναίαν φιλίαν. (*Smp.* 184b2-5)

βέβαιον echoes the (erotic) φιλία βέβαιος that linked Harmodius with his lover; γενναίαν φιλίαν, on the other hand, is strongly reminiscent of the φιλίαι ἰσχυραί and κοινωνίαι which, in the same passage, referred to the political associations in the city. Pausanias refines the view and strengthens the paradox: whereas he claimed first

[325] Cf. Pl. *Phaedr.* 255e1-2: καλεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ οἴεται οὐκ ἔρωτα ἀλλὰ φιλίαν εἶναι. Plato refers to a common assumption about the feeling of the *erômenoi* here. See also Xen. *Smp.* 8.21 with Dover (1978) 52.

(182c1-7) that erotic links (broadly speaking) were most conducive to political associations, he now claims that this is most particularly the case with erotic links *which are not based on political interests*. *Erôs* is not merely viewed as similar or conducive to the bonds of friendship essential to the formation and survival of the *polis*: it is substituted for them.

There are good reasons for thinking that this was not a prevailing view at the time. Aristotle, in Book 8 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, presumably follows a more common understanding of the notion by taking the erotic *philia* as a flawed form of relationship: *philiai* based on pleasure, just like those based on utility, depend on contingent and fleeting objects (κατὰ συμβεβηκός) and, as a result, are easily broken (εὐδιάλυτοι, 1156a16-19); the perfect (τελεία) form of friendship is necessarily non-erotic: it binds good men (ἀγαθοί) and is based on their virtue (ἀρετή), a permanent object which, unlike pleasure or utility, is anchored in the character of each partner:

> δι' αὐτοὺς γὰρ οὕτως ἔχουσι, καὶ οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός· διαμένει οὖν ἡ τούτων φιλία ἕως ἂν ἀγαθοὶ ὦσιν, ἡ δ' ἀρετὴ μόνιμον. (Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1156b10-12).

Aristotle thus shares Pausanias' view that strong and stable *philiai* are based on *aretê*.[326] But he categorically denies that such bonds could be, at the same time, viewed as erotic since, as moralists usually assume, *erôs* seeks pleasure, not virtue.

To be sure, as we saw, the Athenian *paiderastia*, especially in the context of the symposion, seems to have viewed *erôs* as conducive to the formation of the bonds of *philia* that cement the political community. Such a notion is conveyed, for example, in the *Theognidea*, where the *erastês* gives advice to his *erômenos* on how to strike bonds of *philia* with other citizens, while suggesting that he himself belongs to this wide political community of *philoi* surrounding the youth and supporting his morality.[327] This link between erotic and political *philia* has been well investigated, in particular by Calame: *erastês* and *erômenos* could be expected to become members of the same *hetaireia*; their erotic *philia* was supposed to form the breeding ground for a strong and trustful *philia* which was supposed to last throughout their lives.[328] Yet, on this model,

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[326] Note ἡ δ' ἀρετὴ μόνιμον, strikingly reminiscent of Pausanias' οὔτε βέβαιον οὔτε μόνιμον, *Smp.* 184b3-4; see also διαμένει, which seems to echo διὰ βίου μένει, *Smp.*183e5-6: is chapter 8 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* a direct echo of Pausanias' speech, and a response to it?

[327] See above p. 103.

[328] See Calame (1999) 93-7.

the political *philia* was not supposed to be still fueled by *erôs*: it was to *follow* the erotic relationship which remained confined within the time frame of the traditional *paiderastia*; *erôs* was replaced by a life-long friendship, not substituted for it.[329]

Even Socrates' Celestial love in Xenophon's *Symposium* (ch. 8), which is very close to Pausanias' model, does not display such a paradox. Like Pausanias in Plato, Socrates in Xenophon claims that the best form of *erôs* is directed towards the qualities of the soul, since these do not fade away; as a result the noble love is supposed to lead to a long term relationship.[330] But Xenophon does not claim that this lifelong relationship is still of an erotic kind: he simply characterizes it as *philia*.[331] Eventually, what Xenophon's noble *erastai* turn out to be in love with is *philia* itself!

ἐρῶντες τῆς φιλίας καὶ χρώμενοι αὐτῇ εἰς γῆρας διατελοῦσι (Xen. *Smp.* 8.18-19)

By contrast, Pausanias' *erastês*, we should emphasise, is still in love with the soul of his noble paidika (ὁ δὲ τοῦ ἤθους χρηστοῦ ὄντος ἐραστὴς διὰ βίου μένει, ἅτε μονίμῳ συντακείς, Plat. *Smp.* 183e5-6). Commentators do not always point to this difference between Plato's and Xenophon's models. Nieddu, for example, suggests that Pausanias promotes a traditional post-erotic *philia* between *erastês* and *erômenos*;[332] whereas Pausanias insists that the lifelong relationship *is erôs*: this permanence of *erôs* is crucial to his encomiastic enterprise, as it allows him to show that the god is beneficial to the virtue of the citizens throughout their lives. Pausanias seems to underline his departure from the traditional model of the post-erotic *philia* by insisting that each of his two *Erôtes*, including the noble one, is attached to a particular Aphrodite (180d3-4). He thus makes clear that the noble erotic relationship cannot be conceived without sex (Aphrodite), thereby warding off the more conventional views that the long-standing *philia* comes *after* the erotic relationship (cf. Xen. *Smp.* 8), or that the noble erotic

[329] See Dover (1978) 203: 'the *erômenos* graduated from pupil to friend, and the continuance of an erotic relationship was disapproved, as was such a relationship between coevals'. See also Calame (1999) 95 about Theognis: 'the relationship of *philotês* that a narrator of symposiac poetry tried to establish with his young addressee was bound to prefigure the political bond of trust that united all the members of a *hetaireia* (fellowship).' (my emphasis).

[330] Xen. *Smp.* 8.12-15.

[331] Xen. *Smp.* 8.13, 15, 18, etc.

[332] Nieddu (2012) 664: 'Ad essere da lui giustificata o legittimata non è insomma qualsiasi relazione, ma solo quella più elevata che si instaura fra partners di qualità, mossi da nobili intenti.'

relationship itself should discard the pleasure of *ta aphrodisia* (cf. Eur. fr. 388: Κύπριν δὲ τὴν Διὸς χαίρειν ἐᾶν).[333]

Pausanias' encomium thus implicitly formulates a wish similar to Phaedrus' project of an army or city of lovers: in both models, erotic bonds between beloved and lover are expected to extend to the whole body of citizens, and to replace the looser links of *philia* that traditionally cement these communities: military comradeship and discipline (Phaedrus) or the sense of citizenship (Pausanias). But Pausanias' model differs from Phaedrus', first, as we saw, because his city of lovers is bound by a larger set of virtues (not just military courage), and he aims at a more sophisticated — fully political — project of civic happiness;[334] second Pausanias' city of lovers, may have looked more novel than Phaedrus' model which, as we saw, was not designed to convey Phaedrus' most original view about the benefits of *erôs*.[335]

Conclusion: Pausanias and the tradition

We recognized in Pausanias' account three layers: a view of the good on which the encomium is based: the kind of excellence that a free male citizen is expected to achieve in a democracy like Athens (A); a series of legal instructions, the letter of the law on *paiderastia*: contradictory instructions set to the *erastês* and the *erômenos* (B); a principle revealing the spirit of the legal instruction (C). According to Pausanias, the intention (C) of the various instructions (B) is to shape the *erôs* relationship in such a way that *erômenoi* and *erastai* could most efficiently reach democratic excellence, and especially become *sophoi* and *philoi* (A).

Broadly speaking, there seems to be nothing new in the view of virtue and happiness (A), nor in the legal instructions on *erôs* (B) as Pausanias presents them. But from what we know of the sexual code of practice at Athens, it is hard to recognize the principle, or the intention of the law (C), whereby Pausanias relates the legal instructions to the civic ideal of virtue and happiness. In its traditional form, the noble *erôs* was not a

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[333] See also Xen. *Lac.* 2.13-4. Sier (2012) 64 and Halliwell (2016) 7 rightly point to the persistence of Aphrodite in Pausanias' view of the noble *erôs*.

[334] See above p. 90ff

[335] See above p. 44. Pausanias' model may have had some afterlife in Zeno's republic of lovers, cf. Athen. 13.561c, with Schofield (1991) 22-56.

prime candidate for an encomium: it had only to be in line with democratic excellence, but it was not expected to be the best way to achieve it. Since censors and educators usually regarded erotic passion as a potential threat to the legal and moral system, they viewed *erôs* as *kalos* and *dikaios* only so long as it was *sophrôn*, that is, not detrimental to virtue. By contrast, Pausanias claims that *erôs* is *kalos* as soon as it fosters virtue. This leads him to modify the traditional boundaries between noble and base *erôs* and to include in the good *erôs* behaviours which were viewed as reprehensible (long term relationships), or extraneous to an erotic relationship (desire for the soul, lifelong *philia*).

Pausanias obviously invents this principle in order to offer a dignified encomium to *erôs*. Just like Phaedrus' novel account of the heroic myths, his unconventional claims about the intentions of the Athenian law allow him to show that *erôs* is not just compatible with excellence, but directly conducive to it: he can show first that homosexual relationships are not just allowed during a short-lived education period, but fully responsible for what makes a citizen *kalos kagathos* from his late youth until his death (p. 110); second that the lover does not just care for the soul and its virtue, but directly tends to them (p. 111); third that *erôs* is not just indirectly responsible for the bonds of *philia* which are essential to the maintenance of the city: it is of a piece with them (p. 113).

III. Problems of Pausanias' encomium

Just like Phaedrus' claims about the heroes, Pausanias' claims about the virtues of the noble *erôs* are not only unconventional; they are also puzzling. By showing that the *erômenos* is engaged in a lifelong relationship and education, that the *erastês* is in love with the soul, and that the two lovers are bound by a stable *philia* based on virtue, Pausanias eventually seems to transform *paiderastia* into a relationship where the role of *erôs* becomes unclear, to say the least.

A. The longlife education of the *erômenos*

What is Pausanias' *erômenos* going to learn from his *erastês* throughout his life?

For all the liberties Pausanias takes with the traditional *paiderastia*, he still describes the relationship between *erastês* and *erômenos* as an asymmetrical relationship where the

erastês provides the *erômenos* with knowledge and virtue in exchange for sexual gratifications:

> ὁ μὲν χαρισαμένοις παιδικοῖς ὑπηρετῶν ὁτιοῦν δικαίως ἂν ὑπηρετεῖν, ὁ δὲ τῷ ποιοῦντι αὐτὸν σοφόν τε καὶ ἀγαθὸν δικαίως αὖ ὁτιοῦν ἂν ὑπουργῶν <ὑπουργεῖν>, καὶ ὁ μὲν δυνάμενος εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετὴν συμβάλλεσθαι, ὁ δὲ δεόμενος εἰς παίδευσιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν κτᾶσθαι. (*Smp.* 184d4-e4)

This model makes good sense in the narrow time frame of the traditional Greek *paiderastia*, which Pausanias seems to have in mind here, where an adult male takes full charge of the formation of a youth between, say, age 12 and 20. Then an important transfer of knowledge takes place, the youth is taught all the major skills that will enable him to behave well in the assembly, in the symposion, and on the battlefield for the rest of his life. Such an intense training, which culminates in the ephebeia, presumably involves a close intimacy and a great commitment from the educator: all this may justify the formation of erotic bonds, and entitle the *erastês* to expect sexual gratifications from the youth. In the frame of the traditional *paiderastia*, the intensity of the passion (i.e. *erôs*, not just *philia*) is, as it were, justified by the intensity of the intellectual training. Once this traditional training is over, that is, roughly speaking, a couple of years after Pausanias' lifelong education starts, the relationship between the *erastês* and the *erômenos* understandably turns into a less passionate and reciprocal *philia*, since the *erômenos* no longer owes sexual submission to the older partner in exchange for education.

Pausanias, in order to justify his lifelong *erôs*, seems to envisage a higher and demanding educational programme for his *erômenos*: the noble *paiderastia* is addressed only to a select class of citizens — those best suited to acquire *aretê* (181d7-e3) — and it requires effort and commitment (cf. πᾶν ἂν παντὶ προθυμηθείη, 185b2-3).

However it is hard to understand what kind of elite teaching programme Pausanias plans for this lifelong *paiderastia*. How is the *erastês* going to 'contribute intelligence and the rest of virtue' (184d7-e1) to a man who is already provided with the main skills needed for performing his task as a citizen? Pausanias' long life *paiderastia* seems designed for the high philosophical kind of education proposed by Socrates in the *Symposium*, or in *Republic* 7, which culminates in the philosophical knowledge of the Forms. One can understand how a passion as strong as *erôs* is needed to sustain the efforts required from the Socratic philosopher; but as we saw, Pausanias does not share Socrates' discontent

with the mainstream kind of *philosophia* taught to the Athenian youths by the traditional educators: his educative programme does not intend to produce the philosopher king of Socrates' *Kallipolis*, who has an expert knowledge of the good. Even Protagoras and Isocrates — the experts in distinguishing the good from the bad — did not benefit, as far as we know, from the constant care of an *erastês* in order to hone their skills. Pausanias himself, another incarnation of such an expert, is presumably not still learning nor improving his 'philosophical' skills from an *erastês*: in his relationship with Agathon, he is supposed to be the *erastês*, that is, the educator. But how, we could also ask, does Pausanias still contribute to the virtue, especially the καλὴ σοφία (175e2) of his famous beloved? Pausanias is presumably not an expert in writing tragedies, and it is at best unclear how his legal knowledge and his Isocratean rhetoric may contribute to the success of the poet on stage.

We can thus also wonder what kind of sexual favour Pausanias can still require from Agathon. If the *erastês* has hardly anything new to bring to the *erômenos* besides what has already been taught at school or at symposia, how can the *erastês* still feel entitled to require gratifications (*kharizesthai*) from his *erômenos*? What kind of benefit should the *erômenos* be grateful for?

This is a first problem that Pausanias' account leaves unsolved.

B. The desire of the *erastês* for the soul

Even if we assume that the *erastês* has enough teaching material to offer to his *erômenos* to justify requiring some gratification throughout his life, we can wonder why he should ask for such gratifications. Why should the *erastês* still feel *erôs* for the partner over such a long relationship? Although Pausanias says that he feels *erôs* for the character, or the soul, of the *erômenos*, he does not give any clue about how this *erôs* actually works: what kind of pleasure does it seek? How does it reach it?

The only kind of 'gratification' that Pausanias explicitly envisages for the *erastês* is obviously sexual.[336] As we saw, bodily gratification can still be a valuable incentive, even for a noble lover, as long as the *erômenos* is a *neaniskos*, a *meirakion*, or a young *anêr*. But what can prompt the *erastês* to remain faithful to the *erômenos* once the

[336] See above n. 209.

bodily charms of the latter have faded away (183e3-4)? Pausanias' model of a long erotic relationship surviving the waning of bodily charms necessarily implies an erotic experience which is specific to the soul, a kind of psychological or intellectual pleasure and gratification. Since Pausanias is still Agathon's *erastês*, his *erôs* must actually find his object in something which is beyond the body, and which has something to do with the poet's famous *sophia*; the lover must take pleasure in having intercourse with the poet's unfading intellectual or moral charms. Pausanias however is conspicuously unclear about the nature of such erotic intercourse and pleasure. Although he posits an *erôs* for the *psukhê* he does not give any proper psychological account of *erôs*: he does not explain how an erotic desire can be experienced by a soul, nor how this desire can be prompted by another soul. In sum, Pausanias's noble *erôs* seems to lack proper erotic motivation.[337]

C. *Erôs* and *philia*

We also saw that Pausanias intended to merge three meanings of *philia* and to connect the broad meaning (friend, 1) with the erotic one (intimacy between *erastês* and *erômenos*, 2). His argument, as I understood it, was that the bonds of friendship which are conducive to the maintenance of a democratic society are never so strong as when they are fuelled by *erôs*. Good citizens should ideally remain lovers and beloveds throughout their lives, since the *philia* that binds lovers can play the role of the traditional *philia* in a much more efficient way.

Now, in light of the two problems already discussed (A and B), we may find it hard to perceive how the erotic *philia* that binds Pausanias' celestial lovers stands out from the traditional, un-erotic *philia* that binds former *erastai* and *erômenoi*, or the citizens of the same deme, or the members of a political club. The enduring relationship described by Pausanias does not seem to require the presence of *erôs*: once the citizen is an *anêr*,

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[337] This has been noted by commentators who generally try to justify Pausanias by extrapolating, esp. from what Diotima says afterward: cf. Vernant (1989) 164, 169, Nola (1990) 61, 73, Sheffield (2006a) 19, Nieddu (2012) 664. I do not think that Diotima's insights are implicit in Pausanias' speech, nor that the reader is expected to make sense of Pausanias' claims retrospectively in light of the following accounts; to be sure, I will show that Diotima's account solves the problem noticed here, but she does it through new insights into the nature of *erôs* and of the good, which are obviously beyond Pausanias' traditional view of these notions, not implied by his account; Diotima eventually shows that Pausanias' claims do not make sense at all; on this, I follow Sier (2012) 60.

there is no major piece of wisdom to be transmitted by the *erastês* anymore (cf. A) and the beauty of the youth has passed away (B); as a result, the partners should not need to gratify each other with the particular benefit (sex, education) that each one possesses on his own. Although Pausanias suggests that there is still an emulation towards *aretê* between the lovers (185b6-c1), there is hardly any 'teacher' or 'student' anymore at that stage: the emulation is reciprocal; as time passes, this reciprocity can only increase, and the difference in age and experience between the lovers is due to become irrelevant. This dispassionate and reciprocal psychic '*erôs*', where both souls choose and evaluate each other according to the only criterion of *aretê* (not beauty), and where no particular sexual pleasure seems to be experienced by the soul, bears all the essential characteristics of what Aristotle describes as the non-erotic, genuine, *philia* which links souls (not bodies): it is based on *aretê* (not pleasure), and it is permanent (*Eth. Nic.* 8.1156b7-10). By substituting virtue for pleasure as the primary goal of *erôs*, Pausanias has fulfilled his duty as an encomiast: he has shown how *erôs* is essentially conducive to human excellence, and endowed *erôs* with the stability of *philia*; but at the same time he has deprived *erôs* of two of its essential features: pleasure and transience. Pausanias' substitution thus rather amounts to a confusion: although he claims to substitute erotic *philia* for the non erotic one that usually prevails in society, it is unclear what role he still ascribes to *erôs* properly speaking in this allegedly new erotic form of political community.

This problem points to a general question: are erotic pleasure and transience compatible with the achievement of a good life (*aretê* and *eudaimonia*)? Pausanias' picture of the noble *erôs* suggests that they are not; Socrates, as we will see, will oppose this view, and show that one can offer a proper encomium to *Erôs* without depriving it of its essential features, and without confusing it with *philia*.

The philosophical benefit of Pausanias' encomium is thus to raise a question; and the benefit of the answer he provides, is to show that, within the framework of his ethical system (Athenian citizenship), it is quite difficult, maybe impossible, to demonstrate how the intense and transient pleasure provided by *erôs* can be conducive to virtue and happiness. We finally get the sense that, even if Pausanias links his *erôs* to what is, from his point of view, the pinnacle of human life, one does not really need *erôs* to achieve this ideal.

Conclusion

In order to praise *erôs* as he deserves (cf. ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι, 177c3), Pausanias follows a method similar to that of Phaedrus: he claims that *erôs* is outstandingly conducive to a form of virtue and happiness which was usually viewed as neither produced nor sustained by this passion. By giving *erôs* a role that it does not have in a particular ethical system where it was traditionally regarded with suspicion, Pausanias inevitably improves on the traditional picture of *erôs*; but he remains true to the view of virtue and happiness promoted by the traditional ethical system in which his *erôs* operates.

This tour de force not only prompts him to design an unconventional kind of *kalos erôs*; it also leads him to make problematic claims: the kind of process that he describes as conducive to virtue and happiness (the communion of souls based on *aretê*, where no one learns much from the other), although still labelled '*erôs*', proves devoid of recognizable erotic features. Just as Phaedrus linked *erôs* to some heroic achievements which were more plausibly performed without *erôs* (Alcestis' and Achilles' self-sacrifices), Pausanias claims that *erôs* is outstandingly conducive to a superior model of excellence, but he fails to demonstrate why what is essential to *erôs* (pleasure, sexual intercourse, and unsteadiness) is necessary for achieving democratic excellence.

CHAPTER 4. ERYXIMACHUS' SPEECH (185e6-188e4)

Introduction

Of all the speeches, Eryximachus' encomium is probably the one that has most puzzled commentators: the depiction of *erôs* looks bizarre and Eryximachus' contribution to Plato's overall reflection on love seems hard to evaluate. I will first focus on the line of argumentation, and show that the way Eryximachus construes his good *erôs* is more consistent than often claimed (I). Nevertheless, I will show that this account does contain a problem: it provides an implausible view of the good *erôs*: an *erôs* deprived of desire, tension, and pleasure (II). I will finally argue that Plato expects his reader not just to notice the problem, but to understand where it comes from, and especially how it arises from Eryximachus' reliance on medical traditions. I will show that what is properly medical in the encomium is more the view of the good than the view of *erôs*; and that this explains why the doctor is led to draw a strange picture of *erôs*. As a consequence, Plato's criticism may not bear so much on the doctor's view of *erôs* as on his view of the good (III).

I. Overview of Eryximachus' encomium: a consistent argument

Let us first try to make sense of Eryximachus' theory: following the lead of Konstan and Young-Bruehl (1982), I will show that the argument is more consistent than sometimes claimed by commentators.[338]

[338] See esp. Dover's criticism that Eryximachus 'runs together (1) the contrast between good desires or tendencies and bad desires or tendencies and (2) the contrast between the good consequences of reconciling opposites and the bad consequences of failure to reconcile opposites', Dover (1980) 105. For a disparaging treatment of the argument, see also Gildersleeve (1887) and (1909), Wilamowitz (1920) vol. 1: 366-7, Bury (1932) xxix, Robin (1929) li-iii, lvi, Rosen (1968) 119, Levin (2009), Nieddu (2009) 111-9, Trivigno (2017) 60-8. A few commentators have argued for the consistency of the argument, most convincingly Konstan and Young Bruehl (1982). See also Hyland (1968) and Rowe (1999).

A. Good *erôs* and bad *erôs* as desires (186a2-d5)

At the start of his speech, Eryximachus distinguishes two forms of *erôs*. As there are two distinct kinds of bodies — a healthy (τὸ ὑγιές), and a sick one (τὸ νοσοῦν) — there must be one *erôs* belonging to the healthy (ὁ ἐπὶ τῷ ὑγιεινῷ ἔρως), and another belonging to the sick (ὁ ἐπὶ τῷ νοσώδει, 186b5-7). A key premise of Eryximachus' argumentation is that 'what is unlike desires and loves unlike things':

> τὸ δὲ ἀνόμοιον ἀνομοίων ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ ἐρᾷ. (*Smp*. 186b6-7)

In the passage, I read καί as epexegetic: ἐρᾷ is a specification of ἐπιθυμεῖ, *erôs* is viewed here as a kind of desire.

As the doctor will show in the sequel, a healthy body is characterized by a good balance between the most opposite and inimical elements (ἐναντιώτατα, ἔχθιστα), such as the cold and the hot, the bitter and the sweet, the dry and the wet (186d5-e1).[339] Thus we must understand that the healthy desire mentioned at the start of the speech (ὁ ἐπὶ τῷ ὑγιεινῷ ἔρως) is the one which, when satisfied, is conducive to this healthy state: for example, the desire to practise heating and drying activities on cold and rainy days. By contrast, an unhealthy desire (ὁ ἐπὶ τῷ νοσώδει) will foster a state of unbalance between these elements: for example, the desire to practise the same activities on hot and sunny days. An unhealthy desire, which is characterized by the excessive presence of a given element, is logically ascribed to those who are 'unbridled', or 'licentious' (τοῖς δ' ἀκολάστοις, 186c1); the doctor must 'frustrate' (ἀχαριστεῖν, 186c4) such desires, e.g. by checking drinking during the humid season; but he must gratify (χαρίζεσθαι, 186c3) the opposite desire, e.g. by prescribing physical exercise. Such an explication is suggested by the medical tradition itself, especially Alcmaeon's fragment 4,[340] and the Hippocratic treatises *On Ancient Medicine* (ch. 14) and *On Diet* (ch. 1 and 2); we will go back to these texts.

Eryximachus goes on to say that, by frustrating the bad *erôs* and by gratifying the good one, the doctor makes a change (μεταβάλλειν): he substitutes one *erôs* for another (ἀντὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου ἔρωτος τὸν ἕτερον κτᾶσθαι), thus introducing (ἐμποιῆσαι) a good *erôs* in bodies where it was not present in the first place (186d2-5).

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[339] See also *Smp*. 188a2-6.

[340] Cited below, p. 142.

B. Good *erôs* as a state (186d5-187c8)

At this point, Eryximachus' argument takes a surprising turn: it appears now that, when the doctor talks of 'the other' *erôs* (τὸν ἕτερον), that is, the healthy one that the physician should introduce into the body, he no longer refers to the desire whose satisfaction is conducive to a healthy state, but to the healthy state itself. The good practitioner (ἀγαθὸς δημιουργός) is able to make the most inimical elements love each other:

> δεῖ γὰρ δὴ τὰ ἔχθιστα ὄντα ἐν τῷ σώματι φίλα οἷόν τ' εἶναι ποιεῖν καὶ ἐρᾶν ἀλλήλων (186d5-6).

Whereas *erôs* was formerly viewed as a desire (ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ ἐρᾷ, 186b6-7), it now appears as a state of friendship (φίλα [...] ποιεῖν καὶ ἐρᾶν), a state which, later on, Eryximachus will also call 'unanimity' (ὁμόνοια, 186e2, 187c4), 'attunement' (ἁρμονία, 187b4, 188a4), 'concord' or 'harmony' (συμφωνία, 187b4), 'agreement' (ὁμολογία, 187b4, 187c2), and 'temperate mixture' (σώφρων κρᾶσις, 188a4-5).[341]

Such a state of balance and peaceful agreement is free from any kind of tension, as appears when Eryximachus talks of 'the very constitution of attunement and rhythm' (αὐτῇ συστάσει ἁρμονίας τε καὶ ῥυθμοῦ, 187c6). He then quotes and analyzes part of what has been transmitted as fragment 51 of Heraclitus:

> Τὸ ἓν γάρ φησι [Ἡράκλειτος] "διαφερόμενον αὐτὸ αὑτῷ συμφέρεσθαι," "ὥσπερ ἁρμονίαν τόξου τε καὶ λύρας." ἔστι δὲ πολλὴ ἀλογία ἁρμονίαν φάναι διαφέρεσθαι ἢ ἐκ διαφερομένων ἔτι εἶναι. Ἀλλὰ ἴσως τόδε ἐβούλετο λέγειν, ὅτι ἐκ διαφερομένων πρότερον τοῦ ὀξέος καὶ βαρέος, ἔπειτα ὕστερον ὁμολογησάντων γέγονεν ὑπὸ τῆς μουσικῆς τέχνης. (187a4-b2)[342]

Most commentators agree that Heraclitus' statement does not say what Eryximachus implies that it says.[343] Other testimonies indicate that, in Heraclitus' view, opposition does not precede agreement, as Eryximachus wants it (πρότερον); it rather constitutes

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[341] The English 'harmony', that is, the concord of several sounds, translates the Greek συμφωνία. ΄Αρμονία rather refers to 'the orderly adjustment of parts in a complex fabric; then, in particular, the tuning of a musical instrument; and finally the musical scale, composed of several notes yielded by the tuned strings', that is a musical 'mode' (Cornford 1950: 19); see Barker (1984) 163–8 and (1989) 53-65; West (1992b) 160–1; Landels (1999) 86-109.

[342] Eryximachus slightly truncates and modifies the fragment as it is transmitted by Hippolytus: οὐ ξυνιᾶσιν ὅκως διαφερόμενον ἑωυτῶι ὁμολογέειν · παλίντροπος ἁρμονίη ὅκωσπερ τόξου καὶ λύρης (22 B51 DK = Hippol. *Ref*. 9.9.2).

[343] See esp. Moutsopoulos (2017) 313 and Levin (2009) 290-8.

the agreement and the attunement of everything in the world (ἐκ διαφερομένων ἔτι εἶναι).[344]

This is not to say that Plato's character naively misunderstands Heraclitus' text, as is sometimes assumed,[345] since the doctor readily admits that his interpretation does not match the literal meaning of the words on which he comments.[346] Instead, through this bold reformulation, Eryximachus displays his disagreement with Heraclitus about the relationship between opposites; he makes clear that he would never conceive any form of union — ἁρμονία, συμφωνία, ὁμολογία — as compatible with contradiction (διαφέρεσθαι):

> ἡ γὰρ ἁρμονία συμφωνία ἐστίν, συμφωνία δὲ ὁμολογία τις — ὁμολογίαν δὲ ἐκ διαφερομένων, ἕως ἂν διαφέρωνται, ἀδύνατον εἶναι. (187b4-6)

For the doctor, attunement is synonymous with the good mixing of opposite properties (cf. ἁρμονίαν καὶ κρᾶσιν σώφρονα, 188a4-5):[347] it is not merely a good fit or a good proportion between different properties, but a perfect blending, where the tension between opposite elements is dissolved into a homogenous whole.

Although Eryximachus calls '*erôs*' the good state of balance created or maintained by the good *erôs*-desire, there is no indication that the opposite state of imbalance, 'injustice' (ἠδίκησεν, 188a6) or 'disorder' (ἀκοσμία, 188b4) created by the bad *erôs*-desire should also be viewed as an opposite kind of *erôs*. There is no bad *erôs* as a state, imbalance and disorder appear as what is most un-erotic. Thus on Eryximachus' account there are two *erôs*-desires (a good and a bad one); and one *erôs*-state, which is necessarily good, and is the product of the good *erôs*-desire. The doctor's view of *erôs* is complex but, as Konstan and Young-Bruehl (1982) also argue, quite consistent. The good *erôs*-state is created or maintained by a good *erôs*-desire that contributes to the acquisition of a well distributed number of properties; it will be threatened by a desire that tends to acquire one property more than it should, an insolent desire (ὁ μετὰ τῆς

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[344] See e.g. 22 B60 DK (ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὠυτή) with Warren (2007) 69: 'It is only by being one and the same road that it can be both a road up and simultaneously a road down.' See also A22, B8, B80 DK.

[345] See, e.g., Konstan and Young-Bruehl (1982) 41, Nehamas and Woodruff (1989) 37, Levin (2009) 292. Friedländer (1969) 16 suspects here 'an excessively critical hairsplitting'.

[346] ὥσπερ ἴσως καὶ Ἡράκλειτος βούλεται λέγειν, ἐπεὶ τοῖς γε ῥήμασιν οὐ καλῶς λέγει (187a3-4), cf. Dorter (1969) 226.

[347] I also take this καί as epexegetic.

ὕβρεως Ἔρως, 188a7), which always tends to have more (πλεονεξία, 188b4) and thus disturbs the good organization of the whole to which it belongs (διέφθειρέν τε πολλὰ καὶ ἠδίκησεν, 188a8). As a consequence, there cannot exist any bad *erôs* in a system which is already well ordered — a *kosmos stricto sensu.* The well ordered system is to be disturbed by a bad desire, but this would annihilate the good *erôs*-state, not replace it by a bad *erôs*-state.

This sheds light on what Eryximachus says at the end of his skirmish with Heraclitus: he has been dealing so far with one particular part of music (μουσική): 'the very constitution of attunement and rhythm' (αὐτῇ συστάσει ἁρμονίας τε καὶ ῥυθμοῦ); and in this domain there is no twofold *erôs* (οὐδὲ ὁ διπλοῦς ἔρως ἐνταῦθά πω ἔστιν, 187c4-8): there is only the good one, the peaceful state of attunement (ἁρμονία), harmony (συμφωνία), agreement (ὁμολογία), that he has just described (187a8-c5). In my opinion, the only way to make sense of what Eryximachus means by αὐτῇ συστάσει ἁρμονίας τε καὶ ῥυθμοῦ is to assume that he is referring to the sounds and rhythms as long as they are ordered by musical theory: immediately afterwards, he opposes this account to musical *practice* — the application of the theory to men (πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καταχρῆσθαι), i.e. musical composition and performance (187c8-e8, see below).[348] Αὐτῇ συστάσει could thus be glossed as 'the *abstract* constitution' of modes and rhythms, that is, music conceived independently from any human practice. What is at stake here is how to arrange the various pitches and lengths of musical sounds or human voices according to particular musical modes or rhythmical systems. Therefore when the doctor says, in his daring reinterpretation of Heraclitus, that through the intervention of the art of music (ὑπὸ τῆς μουσικῆς τέχνης) the high and the low pitches, the slow and the quick notes should be put in agreement (ἁρμονία, συμφωνία, ὁμολογία), and that such an agreement would abolish any *diapheresthai* between them (187a8-c4), he certainly does not claim that pitches and rhythms should be made equal to one another: had all the notes the same pitch and the same length, there would be no music anymore. He rather says that the sounds should be regulated within a rational system: a 'mode' (ἁρμονία),[349] like the Phrygian scale, or a rhythmical pattern, like the

[348] On this point I am close to Strauss (2001) 102, but the latter understands 'theoretical music' as mathematics and arithmetic; I rather suggest something like mathematics applied to music, that is, musical theory properly speaking: the rational arrangement of sounds and rhythms, what we call today 'harmony'.

[349] Cf. above n. 341.

dactylic hexameter. In these systems, the combination of sounds of different values (lengths and pitches) will sound consistent, not dissonant (διαφερομένων, 187b5). Once the musical theorist has organized the sounds according to a particular harmonic or rhythmical pattern, he has certainly not abolished the differences between high or low pitches, quick or short syllables, but he has organized the sounds in such a way that none of them may sound *too* high or *too* low, *too* long or *too* short any more. As soon as pitches and rhythms belong to a coherent system (σύστασις), whatever it may be (Phrygian or Lydian mode, epic hexameter or iambic tetrameter), this system will constitute a set of rules, and the consistency of this abstract normative system is presumably what Eryximachus calls *harmonia, sumphonia, homologia*.

Such an abstract system has all the characteristics of the *kosmos stricto sensu*, i.e. Eryximachus' good *erôs*-state, which is deprived of any desire: there is no danger that the particular set of intervals that characterizes the scale of a mode should be disturbed by the 'desire' of a note to raise its pitch. Such an alteration could occur only through the intemperance of external agents, who would wrongly apply these rules — a bad composer or a bad interpreter who would, for example, turn into an A sharp the expected A note that must form one degree of the ancient Greek Phrygian scale. It is also impossible to imagine that the system itself could bear such an *akosmia*, in the way a body can bear a disease, since a musical system is by definition a *kosmos*: because of the modification of the pitch of the A note, or because of the unconventional lengthening of a syllabe, the Phrygian mode or the dactylic hexameter will not be 'disturbed': they will disappear. It is in this sense that there can be no 'twofold *erôs'* in 'the very attunement of harmonies and rythms' (187c4-8).

Eryximachus' argument against Heraclitus about *harmonia* thus makes good sense if we assume, as I suggest, that the doctor plays on the two meanings that *harmonia* could have in Greek musical theory: stringing (or attunement), and mode (or scale). Of course, the two meanings were closely related: 'the lyre was pretuned according to the formal structure (the scale) of the particular mode'.[350] But they were distinct enough to allow of Heraclitus' and Eryximachus' divergent interpretations. Heraclitus views *harmonia* as the attunement of the instrument (ὥσπερ ἁρμονίαν τόξου τε καὶ λύρας, 187a6); in this sense, tension between opposed forces (διαφέρεσθαι) plays a key role, since attuning a

[350] Wallace (2015) 33; cf. Moutsopoulos (2017) 314.

lyre or tending a bow consists in stretching strings *against* a resisting frame. Eryximachus, on the other hand, understands *harmonia* and, by analogy, any kind of rhythmical pattern, as a theoretical construction, a system (αὐτῇ τῇ συστάσει, 187c6), that is, a mode (or a rhythmical model) where, as we saw, there is hardly any place for the notion of *diapheresthai*. Therefore Heraclitus and Eryximachus are both right, each according to the particular sense that he gives to *harmonia*.

Behind the implicit semantic disagreement between the philosopher and the thinker, there lies a discussion about the good. Through his particular understanding of *harmonia*, Eryximachus reveals his view of what is good and beneficent, since *harmonia* is not just order, but *good* order. It appears thus that, according to the doctor, there could be no good order, except in a system where any kind of contradiction is abolished, whereas, for Heraclitus, nothing well ordered can be conceived without tension and opposition. The good *erôs* as a state, as Eryximachus defines it in his conception of musical theory, is what best reveals his view of what is good and beneficent. In this central part on 'pure music' the doctor puts forward his view of the good even more clearly than his view of *erôs*: he shows that, in his mind, no system (human body or cosmos) can be virtuous or conducive to human happiness as long as it contains any kind of opposition and tension.

C. Back to the twofold *erôs* (187c8-188d3)

After dealing with *erôs* in medicine (cf. A) and pure music (cf. B), Eryximachus shows how it is present in various domains: musical practice (187c8-e3), cooking (187e3-7), meteorology and astronomy (188a1-b6), divination (188b6-d3). In all these *tekhnai*, Eryximachus says, the double *erôs*, i.e. the double desire mentioned initially (cf. A), resurfaces. But his account now also heavily draws on the view that the good *erôs* is a state, as has been explained in the meantime (cf. B).

The first domain considered is music as applied to men (πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καταχρῆσθαι ῥυθμῷ τε καὶ ἁρμονίᾳ, 187c8-d1). Here, the reappearance of the twofold *erôs* is clearly linked to the reappearance of the notion of desire: the expert must gratify the good *erôs* attached to orderly men (τοῖς μὲν κοσμίοις τῶν ἀνθρώπων ... χαρίζεσθαι 187d4-6). The good *erôs* Eryximachus refers to here is reminiscent of the *epithumia* in the healthy bodies which, at the start of the discourse, the doctor also had to 'gratify' (χαρίζεσθαι, 186b9, 186c3). As we saw, this good desire was supposed to be conducive

to a good order (cf. κοσμίοις, 187d5), a healthy state (cf. ὑγιεινοῖς, 186c2), and now we can understand that this good and healthy state is itself an ideal form of good *erôs*: the good *erôs*-state, the good balance between opposite properties. The good *erôs*-desire is supposed to achieve or to maintain a good *erôs*-state.

The bad *erôs*, now, is much more clearly characterized as an appetite:

> ὁ δὲ Πολυμνίας ὁ πάνδημος, ὃν δεῖ εὐλαβούμενον προσφέρειν οἷς ἂν προσφέρῃ, ὅπως ἂν τὴν μὲν ἡδονὴν αὐτοῦ καρπώσηται, ἀκολασίαν δὲ μηδεμίαν ἐμποιήσῃ, ὥσπερ ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ τέχνῃ μέγα ἔργον ταῖς περὶ τὴν ὀψοποιικὴν τέχνην ἐπιθυμίαις καλῶς χρῆσθαι, ὥστ' ἄνευ νόσου τὴν ἡδονὴν καρπώσασθαι. (187e1-6)

The vulgar *erôs* here is a desire (ἐπιθυμία) driving towards pleasure (ἡδονή), and it is characterized by intemperance (ἀκολασία), just as, at the start, the unhealthy systems which were supposed to possess a bad *erôs* (τοῖς δὲ κακοῖς καὶ νοσώδεσιν) were said to be intemperate (ἀκολάστοις, 186c1). The mention of pleasure (ἡδονή) now explains why the bad *erôs* was said to be proper to the intemperate (ἀκόλαστος), who pursues pleasure without restraint. *Erôs* is bad inasmuch as its innate drive towards pleasure is left unchecked.

The role of the expert here — the 'musical therapist' (presumably the educator) or the doctor — is not, as it was said before, to merely oppose or 'frustrate' (ἀχαριστεῖν, 186c4) the bad *erôs*: humans like to dance, to listen to pleasurable sounds, just as they like to eat spicy meals. The expert must make allowances for this human drive towards *hêdonê*, but he must ward off the danger of intemperance (ἀκολασία) which it naturally contains, and which is likely to bring disease (cf. ἄνευ νόσου), presumably by introducing into the bodily system too much of the pleasurable element (e.g. sugar, or alcohol), thereby compromising the good balance of the body. The final goal of the good management of the desires (ἐπιθυμίαις καλῶς χρῆσθαι, 187e5) is thus the preservation of a state of good balance that Eryximachus has just defined as 'good *erôs*'.

How is this medical model supposed to work in musical practice (πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους)? Eryximachus talks here of the use of modes and rhythms (καταχρῆσθαι ῥυθμῷ τε καὶ ἁρμονίᾳ), both in musical compositions (μελοποιία) and in education (παιδεία, 187d3) — that is, presumably, musical performances, like choral songs and dances. The reference to pleasure (ἡδονήν) and desires (ἐπιθυμίαις) points to the emotions raised by musical modes and rhythms, and their influence on the education of the moral character (*êthos*). This is most reminiscent of Socrates' theories in *Republic* 3

about the close relationship between musical modes and the *êthos* in education. Such views, as Moutsopoulos recalls, were not specific to Plato, and may have been borrowed, in particular, from Damon of Oa, a musical conservative like Plato, to whom Socrates explicitly refers.[351] Socrates bans from his *Kallipolis* the soft and lamenting modes and rhythms on the assumption that they will foster bad desires in the souls of the guardians (398d8-402a4). He prescribes in particular an energetic (Dorian) and peaceful (Phrygian) mode, in order to stimulate two opposed but complementary desires: courage (i.e. desire to fight) and temperance (desire for peace; 399a5-b5). The whole point of this good check and cultivation of the desires in the soul is to favour a state of good balance between the various parts of the soul, a *kosmos* or *harmonia* that Eryximachus views as a good *erôs*-state.[352]

Eryximachus then applies his medical model to astronomy and climatology (188a1-b6) and, again, he seems to rely on what was said before about the twofold *erôs* as a desire and the good *erôs* as a state. The domain envisaged here is the whole *kosmos*, which involves natural elements, plants, beasts and men, but not gods. Such a whole is in a good shape when there is a good balance and mix (ἁρμονίαν καὶ κρᾶσιν σώφρονα) between its basic components (τά τε θερμὰ καὶ τὰ ψυχρὰ καὶ ξηρὰ καὶ ὑγρά, 188a3-5). We recognize here the good *erôs* as a state, which is constitutive of the structure of the system (ἡ τῶν ὡρῶν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ σύστασις, 188a1, cf. τῇ συστάσει ἁρμονίας τε καὶ ῥυθμοῦ, 187c6): it binds the elements (πρὸς ἄλληλα τοῦ κοσμίου τύχῃ ἔρωτος, 188a2-3), and, just like the temperate medical *krâsis*, it is conducive to good health in living beings. Such a good balance can be disturbed by an intemperate *erôs* (ὁ μετὰ τῆς ὕβρεως Ἔρως, 188a7) which is described as a force, a desire for power that brings natural disasters:

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[351] *Resp*. 3.424c6: ὥς φησι Δάμων καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι. See Moutsopoulos (2017) 314-6 who identifies echoes of Damon's doctrines in Eryximachus' conservative attitude toward the muse Polymnia (187c8-e8). On Damon's *êthos* theory of music and poetic metre, see Wallace (2015) 25-48.

[352] Compare *Resp*. 3.400d11-e1 (εὐαρμοστία ... καὶ εὐρυθμία, referring to music) with 4.413e4 (εὔρυθμόν τε καὶ εὐάρμοστον ἑαυτὸν ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις παρέχων, referring to character). See also 4.430e3-4 (συμφωνίᾳ τινὶ καὶ ἁρμονίᾳ προσέοικεν), 4.441e8-9 (μουσικῆς καὶ γυμναστικῆς κρᾶσις σύμφωνα αὐτὰ ποιήσει), and 7.522a4-5 (κατά τε ἁρμονίαν εὐαρμοστίαν τινά, οὐκ ἐπιστήμην, παραδιδοῦσα). On the influence of music on the soul in Book 3, see Halliwell (2012) 197, n. 90.

> καὶ γὰρ πάχναι καὶ χάλαζαι καὶ ἐρυσῖβαι ἐκ πλεονεξίας καὶ ἀκοσμίας περὶ ἄλληλα τῶν τοιούτων γίγνεται ἐρωτικῶν, ὧν ἐπιστήμη περὶ ἄστρων τε φοράς καὶ ἐνιαυτῶν ὥρας ἀστρονομία καλεῖται. (188b3-6)

ἀκοσμίας περὶ ἄλληλα refers here to the disturbance of the good balance between the components of the whole, i.e. the good *erôs*-state (cf. πρὸς ἄλληλα τοῦ κοσμίου τύχῃ ἔρωτος, 188a2-3); πλεονεξία refers to the cause of the disturbance: the bad *erôs*-desire that drives one of these components and leads to its harmful domination; πάχναι καὶ χάλαζαι καὶ ἐρυσῖβαι indicates that the components driven by such bad desires are the opposite elements mentioned above: τά τε θερμὰ καὶ τὰ ψυχρὰ καὶ ξηρὰ καὶ ὑγρά (188a3-5): frost (πάχναι) is caused by an excess of cold; hail (χάλαζαι), by an excess of wet and cold; blight or rust (ἐρυσῖβαι), by an excess of wet and hot. Ascribing desire (*epithumia*) to such material elements requires Eryximachus to conceive them as living beings animated by an autonomous force. Such a conception might be alien to us, but it was certainly more familiar to the ancient Greeks, and not only poets and mythographers: Heraclitus' fire is 'ever-living' (πῦρ ἀείζωον, 22B30 DK), his thunderbolt 'pilots all things' (τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός, B64), and the Hippocratic treatise *Regimen*, perhaps under the inspiration of Heraclitus, refers to fire and water as self-moving forces that 'dominate and are dominated in turn' (ἐν μέρει δὲ ἑκάτερον κρατέει καὶ κρατέεται, *Vict.* 1.3, see below). Conversely, we must assume that there is in Eryximachus' cosmos a good *erôs*-desire that counterbalances the bad one, even if the doctor does not explicitly describe it: each quality (the cold, the dry, etc.) must desire its opposite (the hot, the wet) in order to create and maintain the good *erôs*-state, the moderate mix (κρᾶσιν σώφρονα, 188a4-5).

The last domain where Eryximachus (188b6-d3) shows that there is a double *erôs* is the relationship between gods and men (ἡ περὶ θεούς τε καὶ ἀνθρώπους πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνία, 188b7-c1). In this case, the good *erôs*-state that must be secured is a peaceful relationship between the two main elements of this community, men and god: a friendship (φιλίας θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων, 188d1) similar to the good balance between the hot and the cold, the dry and the wet (cf. φίλα οἷόν τ᾽ εἶναι ποιεῖν καὶ ἐρᾶν ἀλλήλων, 186d6). The way Eryximachus describes this reciprocal relationship (πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνία, 188c1) is most reminiscent of the way he has just referred to the good *erôs*-state among the natural elements of the cosmos (cf. πρὸς ἄλληλα, 188a2).

The opposite of this good state of friendship is a situation where men and gods are at variance because one of these two groups has taken an excessive power over the other.

Eryximachus does not envisage the case when gods are driven by *hubris*, maybe through a sense of Socratic piety,[353] or sympotic etiquette.[354] He only talks of humans as responsible for outrage and unjust desires: they sometimes do not gratify the orderly *erôs* (μή τις τῷ κοσμίῳ Ἔρωτι χαρίζηται), when they commit impiety (ἀσέβεια) towards their parents, living or dead, and the gods (188c3-4). Such impieties are typical cases of *hybris*: they seem to echo the outrageous *erôs*-desire just mentioned in the cosmological account (ὁ μετὰ τῆς ὕβρεως Ἔρως, 188a7) where, e.g., an excess of heat was said to bring about epidemics. Now human beings motivated by an outrageous desire for power neglect their duties towards the divine and therefore may lead the other party (the gods) to retaliate. The 'orderly desire' (τῷ κοσμίῳ Ἔρωτι, 188c3) that we should rather cultivate (χαρίζηται — the verb points to a desire here) amounts to not seeking too much power, but rather yielding to the gods by performing our religious duties and remaining pious (e.g. respecting parents, honouring the dead). We find thus here all the elements of Eryximachus' medical model: a good *erôs*-state (*philia* between men and gods) can be preserved by a good *erôs*-desire (piety towards gods, desire to submit to the divine), or threatened by a bad *erôs*-desire (*asebeia, hubris*).

Accordingly the religious *tekhnai* which are responsible for the maintenance of the good order — sacrifices (θυσίαι, 188b6) and divination (μαντική, 188b7, 188c6, d1) — work after the fashion of medical art. Divination presumably plays the role of the medical diagnosis: just as the doctor 'discerns (διαγιγνώσκων) the noble and the shameful *erôs*' (186c7-d1; cf. τὰ ἐρωτικὰ διαγιγνώσκειν, 187c6-7), the seer divines the intentions of the gods that lie behind unexplained calamities, and identifies what is right and what is wrong in the complex system formed by the community (κοινωνία) of men and gods; he finds out what kind of crime (ἀσέβεια) allowed a man driven by *hubris* to take an unjust power over the divine. Sacrifices (θυσίαι) are rather analogous to the doctor's remedies, which consist in filling and emptying parts of the disrupted body in order to restore a proper balance (cf. πρὸς πλησμονὴν καὶ κένωσιν, 186c6-7): a sacrifice is literally an operation of filling and emptying, it is a food transfer between men and gods, and its function is to entertain the just balance between the two parties, or to restore it when it has been threatened by human *hubris*.

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[353] Cf. *Resp*. 2.377c7-380c5: gods would not commit crimes.

[354] Cf. Xenophanes' fr. 1, l. 21-4: one should not talk about divine combats (στάσιας σφεδανάς) in an elite *symposion*.

Iliad I provides a good illustration of this medical-like process: a man (Agamemnon), driven by an unjust desire, snatches a divine property (the daughter of Apollon's priest), refuses to give it back, and insults the priest: these are typical cases of *hubris* or unjust desires. He then provokes the wrath of the god who punishes the army through a disease, a λοιμός (*Il*. 1.60), that is, the very same cosmological disaster that Eryximachus mentioned as the consequence of the insolent *erôs* (ὁ μετὰ τῆς ὕβρεως Ἔρως) which creates injustice (ἠδίκησεν, 188a6-8) and imbalance among the primary elements of the cosmos (οἵ τε γὰρ λοιμοὶ φιλοῦσι γίγνεσθαι ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων, 188b1). In Homer, the difference between men and gods will be settled by a transfer of property: Agamemnon will give back Chryseis and offer sacrifices to the gods (*Il*. 1.309-11).

Conclusion

Eryximachus' argument divides into three main parts: the doctor starts by distinguishing two kinds of *erôs*, which are two desires: one is conducive to a healthy state, the other, to an unhealthy one. He then defines the healthy state itself as a good form of *erôs*: *erôs* is the good balance that characterizes a harmonious system, and is deprived of any kind of tension, desire, and pleasure. He then shows how the two models can be illustrated in several domains: musical composition and education, astronomy and meteorology, religion. In each field what is to be preserved is the good *erôs* as a state (the good balance between the elements of the system). The balance may be threatened by the bad *erôs* when one element desires too much power. It is preserved by the good *erôs*-desire, which drives the constituents of the whole to be tamed by their opposites.

Eryximachus' account may appear strange at first sight, as it seems to hesitate between *erôs* as a state and *erôs* as a desire. However it makes sense if we understand that these two views refer to two kinds of good *erôtes* which are logically articulated with each other.

II. Problems of Eryximachus' encomium: an un-erotic good *erôs*

This is not to say that the speech does not contain any problems at all. As I see it, the main problem does not reside in the consistency of the line of argumentation, but in the plausibility of the good *erôs* that Eryximachus advocates: despite its name, this good *erôs* appears in many respects un-erotic. As revealed in our analysis of the argument, the doctor understands 'good *erôs*' in two senses: a state of perfect balance (*philia*) and a desire leading to this state. However, Eryximachus himself does not insist on this distinction: there is in his view no sharp divide between the desire and the state, since the good *erôs*-desire has no other function than to prefigure and bring about the good-state; the good *erôs*-state, the healthy balance, is *the* good *erôs*, the good *erôs* par excellence, to which all the arts must aim, taking their lead from the medical art: music, agronomy, astronomy, divination. On this account, *erôs* is good, i.e., praiseworthy, only inasmuch as it is devoid of desire (in the good *erôs*-state) or tends towards its suppression (in the good *erôs*-desire).

A. The good *erôs*-state

The paradox is of course most obvious in the good *erôs* that Eryximachus describes as a state: in its most characteristic form — the perfect balance, mix, and harmony — the good *erôs* is obviously free from any tension, since the opposition between opposite forces must be solved for *erôs* to appear. In this model, there is no place for desire or pleasure, neither in the elements of the system, nor in the system itself (σύστασις). How could the Phrygian mode or its constitutive notes be deficient or satisfied?

B. The good *erôs*-desire

The paradox also appears in the doctor's view of *erôs* as a desire (*epithumia*). Eryximachus' good *erôs*-desire is certainly, just like Diotima's *erôs*, conducive to the achievement of a peaceful state free of tension and desire, and there is nothing strange about that. This is how we tried to make sense of the good *erôs*-*epithumia* when Eryximachus first mentioned it (186b5-c3, see above): my desire to drink when my body is dry is conducive to the establishment of a better balance between the dry and the wet within my body. But Eryximachus pushes the medical model further; once he has defined *erôs* as a *state* of connection between opposites (the dry and the wet), the

desire is no more conceived as my desire for the wet: it is the desire of the dry itself to mix with the wet. The opposites themselves feel *erôs* for each other. What feels desire for the wet is no more a complex system made of wet and dry (my bodily constitution); it is the dry in myself that desires the water that I drink. Such a shift makes a big difference. Surely, when I am thirsty, I desire what I lack — because there are too many dry elements in myself; but this does not mean that it is the dry in myself that desires to drink. It is indeed hard to conceive any *erôs* between two *absolute* opposites, such as the material primary elements.

There emerges a very paradoxical view of the good *erôs*-desire in Eryximachus' speech: as it is a desire for the very opposite, its primary aim seems to be its own frustration. What is desired by the dry is not to acquire more dryness, but to be less of what it is, to be deprived of what is essential to it. This love is good only inasmuch as it curtails the lover. The good lovers are the moderate (κόσμιοι, 187d4-5, cf. 188c3), that is, those who do not desire too much. The virtue of Eryximachus' good lovers is *sôphrosunê*, that is, the very contradiction of desire; in actual fact the doctor's good desire is an anti-desire.

This might explain why the good *erôs*-desire as we depicted it, although required by Eryximachus' argument, remains implicit: the doctor never insists on the fact that it is a desire: he calls it explicitly 'desire' only at the start (ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ ἐρᾷ, 186b6-7), and he does not depict it as a spontaneous drive towards an object; the connection between the desire and its object is rather described as a skilful operation performed by the expert (δημιουργός, 186d5) who artificially implants and checks *erôs* from outside (ἐμποιῆσαι, 186d4; φυλάττειν, 187d6; φυλακτέον, 187e8). This also explains why Eryximachus never attaches to this good *erôs* the very goal of desire: pleasure (ἡδονή).

Desire and pleasure rather appear attached to the bad *erôs*. After having defined the good *erôs* as a state devoid of desire, desires (ἐπιθυμίαις) reappear and pleasure (ἡδονήν) makes its first appearance, when the doctor mentions the return of the bad *erôs* (187e2-6). Desires and pleasure represent the threat of intemperance (ἀκολασία, 187e3): they are likely to jeopardize the good *state* of balance (ἁρμονία, 188a4) which, since the discussion on pure music, has been defined as the ideal form of the good *erôs*.

Therefore, although Eryximachus started by opposing the good and the bad *erôs* as two kinds of desire (ἐπιθυμεῖ καὶ ἐρᾷ, 186b6-7), he eventually opposes them as a state (good *erôs*) vs a desire (bad *erôs*). In the doctor's final picture, the good *erôs*-desire remains in

the background, but as a shadowy figure: it is only a first sketch of the good *erôs* as a state (balance between opposite things). As a result, this good *erôs*-desire hardly resembles *erôs* (complete opposites do not feel *erôs* for each other) and it is good only insofar as it is frustrated (the dry desires nothing else than to be 'un-dried' by the wet). Eryximachus' good *erôs*-desire is thus not only paradoxical, as his good *erôs*-state (ἁρμονία) is; but it is self-contradictory, since it appears as the very negation of desire.

In sum, Eryximachus' picture of the good *erôs* (state and desire) reveals that, in order to show that *erôs* is good, the doctor needs to put aside the essence of *erôs* (desire) and two of its essential features: the tension that characterizes desire, and the pleasure to which desire leads. Since the doctor cannot see any virtue in these notions, he leaves them out of his picture of the good *erôs*, and eventually depicts the good *erôs* as something which has hardly anything to do with *erôs*. This is, I argue, the 'problem' of Eryximachus' speech.

III. Eryximachus' reliance on medical tradition

Why does Plato make his character engage in such a fantasy? What kinds of intellectual motives prompt Eryximachus to build such a strange picture of *erôs*? Plato gives at least one clear signpost by portraying, from the start, the speaker as a medical expert (176c8-d2); and at the outset of his speech, the doctor claims to praise *erôs* from the point of view of his art:

> καθεωρακέναι μοι δοκῶ ἐκ τῆς ἰατρικῆς, τῆς ἡμετέρας τέχνης, ὡς μέγας καὶ θαυμαστὸς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ὁ θεὸς τείνει. (186a7-b1)

One (if not the main) purpose of his encomium is to honour his art (ἵνα καὶ πρεσβεύωμεν τὴν τέχνην, 186b3).[355] If Eryximachus' depiction of the good *erôs* is strange, it may be due, to some extent, to its reliance on the medical tradition. Does Eryximachus borrow from his art the whole of his picture of the good *erôs*? Or only part of it?

By comparing Eryximachus' account with some extant medical treatises (the so-called Hippocratic corpus), I will argue that the doctor obviously owes to the medical tradition

[355] Nearly all commentators agree that Eryximachus represents the medical type: Edelstein (1945) 91, Craik (2001) 110, MacPherran (2006) 74, Levin (2009) 277, etc.

his view of what he sees as good, or virtuous, in *erôs*: the healthy balance between opposite elements (A); but he departs from his art by claiming that *erôs is* such a healthy balance (the good *erôs*-state), or a desire *directly conducive* to it (the desire of the wet for the dry). To put it crudely, what is medical in Eryximachus' good *erôs* is his view of the good, not his view of *erôs* (B). Therefore, despite appearances, the doctor submits to a daring manipulation the tradition he claims to herald: he recognizes in *erôs* some characteristics that no doctor has ever ascribed to it, even if all doctors claim that these features are especially conducive to human wellness (health) (C). Understanding such a manipulation and its motives will finally allow us to assess better the problem previously identified in the encomium — the construction of a quite un-erotic good *erôs*. Through this problem, Plato may invite his reader to criticize the doctor's view of the good much more than his view of *erôs* (D).

Of course, one cannot insist enough on how tentative is an inquiry into what is 'medical' or not in Eryximachus' speech: (1) the Hippocratic corpus does not transmit such a thing as *a* medical tradition, as the treatises sometimes strongly disagree with each other;[356] (2) the dating of the treatises is still debated;[357] and (3) the extant corpus is only a fragment of the literary production of the time.[358] Although I will try to circumvent these problems as much as possible, the best I can claim to achieve is to make the best plausible case on the basis of fragmentary material.[359]

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[356] Nutton (2004) 62.

[357] Nutton (2004) 60.

[358] Nutton (2004) 1-7.

[359] The diversity of doctrines (problem 1) is not a real obstacle to my inquiry: finding in one treatise a claim that supports Eryximachus' point of view will suffice to conclude that his view is not original. For the chronology (problem 2), I will follow the dating suggested by Thumiger (2017) 423-4, who draws on Jouanna (1999) 373–416 and Craik (2015). My inquiry covers the texts supposedly written up to c. 370 BC, the most probable *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the *Symposium* (cf. Hunter 2004a: 3, pace Dover 1965 who suggests 379 BC). Only the fragmentary nature of our sources (problem 3) constitutes an insuperable problem: even if the Hippocratic corpus, as it was transmitted to us, was probably collated at an early date (3^{d} cent. BC, see Nutton 2004: 60-1), we cannot be sure that Plato had not access to a text — or an unwritten tradition — which advanced what I identify as Eryximachus' proper invention, in this case, the notion that *erôs* is a good *krâsis*.

A. A traditional view of the good

Commentators have already pointed out that most of Eryximachus' views find parallels in Hippocratic treatises, especially *Breaths*, *Ancient Medicine*, and *Regimen.*[360] Characteristically medical is the operation whereby the 'good expert' (ἀγαθὸς δημιουργός) implants the good *erôs*: opposing the contraries (ἀχαριστεῖν, 186c4)[361] through processes of filling and emptying (πρὸς πλησμονὴν καὶ κένωσιν, 186c6-7),[362] in order to bring about a change in the system (μεταβάλλειν, 186d2).[363] Many Hippocratic authors also claim, like Eryximachus, that their *tekhnê* allows them to understand the entire universe (ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι, 186a6-7), and provides the standard for the other *tekhnai* — gymnastic, farming, astronomy and divination.[364] Even the doctor's claim to musical expertise, which may appear grotesque today,[365] must have looked more familiar to ancient readers,[366] and it sounds like a direct echo of two passages of *Regimen*.[367]

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[360] Edelstein (1945) 85-7, Craik (2001) 109, MacPherran (2006) 76-7, Levin (2009), Hunter (2004a) 54-7, Trivigno (2017) 53-4, 65; Pfleiderer (1896) 551-2 reads the whole encomium as a parody of *Regimen* and proposes Eryximachus himself as the author of the Hippocratic treatise! On the similarities between the encomium and *Regimen*, see Levin (2009) 280.

[361] On the opposition between contraries, see e.g. *Nat. Hom.* 9.5-6 (δεῖ τὸν ἰητρὸν ἐναντίον ἵστασθαι τοῖσι καθεστεῶσι); *Flat.* 1.25-6.

[362] *Aph.* 2.22 (Ἀπὸ πλησμονῆς ὁκόσα ἂν νοσήματα γένηται, κένωσις ἰῆται, καὶ ὁκόσα ἀπὸ κενώσιος, πλησμονὴ, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἡ ὑπεναντίωσις); *Nat. Hom.* 9.1-3; see also *Aph*. 6.39; *Vet. Med.* 9.6-9; *Aer*. 3-4, 7; *Flat.* 1.24-5.

[363] On change, see *Nat. Hom*. 9.24 (τῇ τῶν διαιτημάτων μεταβολῇ); *Vet. Med*. 19.15-6; *Loc. Hom.* 45.1.

[364] On the epistemic priority of medicine in general, see *Vet. Med*. 20 (Νομίζω δὲ περὶ φύσιος γνῶναί τι σαφὲς οὐδαμόθεν ἄλλοθεν εἶναι ἢ ἐξ ἰητρικῆς); *Aer*. 1.2 and 12; *Nat. Hom.* 1; *Vict*. 3.1-3, 11.1-3, and esp. ch. 12-24, Cf. Robin (1929) lii. Platon also refers to the scope claim of medical art in the *Laws* 10.903c3-d1. On the doctors' claims to know astronomy and climate, cf. *Aer*. 2 (οὐκ ἐλάχιστον μέρος ξυμβάλλεται ἀστρονομίη ἐς ἰητρικήν), 10, 11, with Jouanna (1996) 24-33; *Vict*. 2. For the Greeks, astronomy includes meteorology, see Aesch. *Ag*. 5 with Dover (1980) 110. Note that Eryximachus, in the *Protagoras* (315b9-c3), listens to Hippias' lecture on astronomy *and climate*. For divination, see *Vict*. 12; for the recurrent claim that the doctor can foresee the future, see *Vict*. 2.41-3 (on προδιάγνωσις) and *Aer.* 2, 10.1-2, with Lloyd (1966) 353-4, Jouanna (1996) 23-4, and Demont (2014) 15. I thus do not follow commentators who see Eryximachus' claim to universal expertise as a parody, cf. Edelstein (1945) 89, MacPherran (2006) 76–7, Trivigno (2017) 61. The 'problem', in my view, is elsewhere.

[365] See e.g. Trivigno (2017) 64. Edelstein (1945) 87 rightly notices that 'his analysis of medicine (186b-e) is shorter than his analysis of music (187a-e)'.

[366] MacPherran (2006) 77.

[367] *Vict*. 8 and 18. I will come back to *Vict*. 18 later on.

I shall focus on what I see as Eryximachus' main debt to the medical tradition: his conception of what is good and what is not. We find in the Hippocratic texts the notion that what is essentially beneficial to humans is a good balance or a good mix (1), and that, as a result, tension, desire and pleasure are potentially harmful (2); these assumptions about the good and the bad determine the way medical texts value *erôs* and sex (3).

1. Good balance and mixing (*krâsis*)

Eryximachus' fundamental assumption that what is good is agreement (ὁμόνοια, 186e2, 187c4; ἁρμονία, 187b4, 188a4; συμφωνία, 187b4; ὁμολογία, 187b4, 187c2), and good mixing (σώφρων κρᾶσις, 188a4-5) pervades the medical literature.[368] We find a first formulation of this view in Alcmaeon's fragment 4, where health and disease are explained in political terms. Health is brought about by 'equality' (ἰσονομία) between opposite properties; disease by the unjust predominance (μοναρχία) of one property over the others:

> Ἀλκμαίων τῆς μὲν ὑγείας εἶναι συνεκτικὴν <τὴν> **ἰσονομίαν** τῶν δυνάμεων, ὑγροῦ, ξηροῦ, ψυχροῦ, θερμοῦ, πικροῦ, γλυκέος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν· τὴν δ’ ἐν αὐτοῖς **μοναρχίαν** νόσου ποιητικήν, φθοροποιὸν γὰρ ἑκατέρου μοναρχία. καὶ νόσον συμπίπτειν ὡς μὲν ὑφ’ οὗ ὑπερβολῇ θερμότητος ἢ ψυχρότητος, ὡς δ’ ἐξ ἧς διὰ πλῆθος τροφῆς ἢ ἔνδειαν, ὡς δ’ ἐν οἷς ἢ αἷμα ἢ μυελὸν ἢ ἐγκέφαλον· ἐγγίνεσθαι δὲ τούτοις ποτὲ κἀκ τῶν ἔξωθεν αἰτιῶν, ὑδάτων ποιῶν ἢ χώρας ἢ κόπων ἢ ἀνάγκης ἢ τῶν τούτοις παραπλησίων. τὴν δὲ ὑγείαν τὴν σύμμετρον τῶν ποιῶν κρᾶσιν. (Alcmaeon 24 B4 DK = Aët. 5.30.1).[369]

In the subsequent Hippocratic texts, Alcmaeon's ideal of *isonomia* finds its most characteristic formulation in the good mix (*krâsis*) between opposite elements — the hot and the cold, the dry and the wet, etc.[370] The author of *Ancient Medicine* presents this view as the basis of the theory of the 'ancients' he approves of:

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[368] See Hunter (2004a) 56.

[369] In Aetius, editors recognize only ἰσονομίαν and μοναρχίαν as quotations from Alcmeon. See also 24 A3 DK. Rosen (1968) 94 sees in Alcmeon’s theory a 'revision of the Pythagorean theory of opposites.'

[370] For Alcmeon's view as laying the basis for the subsequent medical tradition, see Nutton (2004) 80, Kosak (2004) 54 n. 22, Gosling and Taylor (1982) 23-4.

> Οὐ γὰρ τὸ ξηρὸν, οὐδὲ τὸ ὑγρὸν, οὐδὲ τὸ θερμὸν, οὐδὲ τὸ ψυχρὸν, οὐδ' ἄλλο τουτέων οὐδὲν ἡγησάμενοι [scil. οἱ πρῶτοι εὑρόντες] οὔτε λυμαίνεσθαι οὔτε προσδέεσθαι οὐδενὸς τουτέων τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἰσχυρὸν ἑκάστου καὶ τὸ κρέσσον τῆς φύσιος τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης· οὗ μὴ ἠδύνατο κρατέειν, τοῦτο βλάπτειν ἡγήσαντο, καὶ τοῦτο ἐζήτησαν ἀφελέειν. (...) Ἔνι γὰρ ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ πικρὸν καὶ ἁλμυρὸν, καὶ γλυκὺ καὶ ὀξὺ, καὶ στρυφνὸν καὶ πλαδαρὸν, καὶ ἄλλα μυρία, παντοίας δυνάμιας ἔχοντα, πλῆθός τε καὶ ἰσχύν. Ταῦτα μὲν μεμιγμένα καὶ κεκρημένα ἀλλήλοισιν οὔτε φανερά ἐστιν, οὔτε λυπέει τὸν ἄνθρωπον· ὅταν δέ τι τουτέων ἀποκριθῇ, καὶ αὐτὸ ἐφ' ἑωυτοῦ γένηται, τότε καὶ φανερόν ἐστι καὶ λυπέει τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ([Hp.] *Vet. Med*. 14.15-29)[371]

From this theory of health, ancient doctors deduced a theory of alimentation. A healthy food, like a healthy body, must be mixed and well balanced:

> Τοῦτο δὲ, τῶν βρωμάτων ὅσα ἡμῖν ἀνεπιτήδειά ἐστι καὶ λυμαίνεται τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐμπεσόντα, τουτέων ἕκαστον ἢ πικρόν τι καὶ ἄκρητόν ἐστιν, ἢ ἁλμυρὸν ἢ ὀξὺ, ἢ ἄλλο τι ἄκρητόν τε καὶ ἰσχυρὸν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ταρασσόμεθα ὑπ' αὐτέων, ὥσπερ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι ἀποκρινομένων. Πάντα δὲ ὅσα ἄνθρωπος ἐσθίει ἢ πίνει, τὰ τοιαῦτα βρώματα ἥκιστα τουτέου χυμοῦ ἀκρήτου τε καὶ διαφέροντος δῆλα ἔσται μετέχοντα, οἷον ἄρτος τε καὶ μᾶζα καὶ τὰ ἑπόμενα τουτέοισιν οἷσιν εἴθισται ὥνθρωπος πλείστοισί τε καὶ αἰεὶ χρέεσθαι, ἔξω τῶν πρὸς ἡδονήν τε καὶ κόρον ἠρτυμένων τε καὶ ἐσκευασμένων· ([Hp.] *Vet. Med.* 14.30-8)

Some food containing an excessive amount of one property (θερμόν, ψυχρόν, ξηρόν, ὑγρόν) is detrimental to health, and for this reason the properties must be fully mixed and compounded with one another, so that none of them may be apparent (φανερά), separated off (ἀποκρινομένων, cf. ἀποκριθῇ, *Vet. Med.* 14.27), or potent (διαφέροντος). Let us note that the mix must be *perfectly* homogeneous, as in the case of cooked foodstuffs (bread and cake, ἄρτος τε καὶ μᾶζα). The doctor will not be content with a piece of food or a body where there is an *overall* balance between opposite properties — some parts being hot, others being proportionally cold. For the foodstuff to be wholesome, and the body to be healthy, each part must be lukewarm. On this account, *diapheresthai* (cf. διαφέροντος) cannot be taken as meaning simply 'differing' since, in

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[371] On medical *krâsis*, see also *Nat. Hom.* 2-4, 9; *Flat.* 1; *Vict.* 35, 2-8; *Vet. Med*. 16. On the four properties that should be mixed (τά τε θερμὰ καὶ τὰ ψυχρὰ καὶ ξηρὰ καὶ ὑγρά, *Smp*. 188a3-4), see *Vet. Med*. 14, and *Nat. Hom.* 3.4-7 (εἰ μὴ τὸ θερμὸν τῷ ψυχρῷ καὶ τὸ ξηρὸν τῷ ὑγρῷ μετρίως πρὸς ἄλληλα ἕξει καὶ ἴσως); they are most famous as part of the system of the four humours, cited in *Nat. Hom.* and systematized by Galen, see King (2011) 110.

the doctor's eyes, difference entails harmful domination and internal trouble (cf. ταρασσόμεθα).[372] This sheds light on the distorting interpretation to which Eryximachus seems to subject Heraclitus' thought: the doctor cannot conceive that difference (διαφέρεσθαι) can amount to anything else than a conflict compromising the survival of the whole (τὸ ἕν, *Smp*. 187a4-7).

2. Suspicion about desires and pleasures

The end of chapter 14 of *Ancient Medicine* quoted above also sheds light on the doctor's prejudices against desires and pleasures: cooked and temperate foodstuffs like bread and cake, exempt from *diapheresthai*, are opposed to 'the highly seasoned delicacies which gratify pleasure and excess' (τῶν πρὸς ἡδονήν τε καὶ κόρον ἠρτυμένων τε καὶ ἐσκευασμένων). The underlying assumption here is that pleasure (ἡδονήν) is produced by the excessive amount of one property (a strong seasoning), which is potentially harmful to bodily health. This explains why, when Eryximachus talks of the vulgar *erôs*, he compares the educator's prejudices against intemperance (ἀκολασία) to the way a doctor deals with the pleasures of food: he must ensure that pleasure (ἡδονήν) does not bring about any disease (ἄνευ νόσου, 187e5).[373]

This view is confirmed by the author of *Regimen.* The whole treatise, in which commentators have long identified direct, although superficial, echoes of Heraclitus,[374] shows that tension between opposite elements (in particular water and fire) constitutes the structure of the entire cosmos. In a passage strikingly similar to Eryximachus' discussion of musical harmony, it is explained that difference between opposite properties is the basic condition for pleasure:

> Μουσικῆς ὄργανον· ὑπάρξαι δεῖ πρῶτον ἐν ᾧ δηλώσει ἃ βούλεται ἁρμονίη· συντάξιες ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν οὐχ αἱ αὐταὶ, ἐκ τοῦ ὀξέος, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ βαρέος, ὀνόματι μὲν ὁμοίων, φθόγγῳ δὲ οὐχ ὁμοίων. τὰ πλεῖστον διάφορα μάλιστα συμφέρει, τὰ δὲ ἐλάχιστον

[372] See also *Vet. Med.* 19.25-30.

[373] The sources of Eryximachus' claim that doctors should take account of the pleasures of eating (187e3-6) have long been discussed: Taylor (1936) 218 suggests Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Sicilian medicine; Edelstein (1945) 92, n. 25 suggests *Ancient Medicine.*

[374] See Joly (2003) 25-7.

> διάφορα ἥκιστα συμφέρει· εἰ δὲ ὅμοια πάντα ποιήσει τις, οὐκ ἔνι[375] τέρψις· αἱ πλεῖσται μεταβολαὶ καὶ πολυειδέσταται μάλιστα τέρπουσιν. ([Hp.] *Vict*. 18)[376]

The author of *Regimen* conceives *diapheresthai* according to Heraclitus, not Eryximachus: difference is fully compatible with agreement (τὰ πλεῖστον διάφορα μάλιστα ξυμφέρει). Eryximachus, who views harmony and any kind of agreement according to the medical model of the healthy *isonomia* and *krâsis*, is necessarily led to oppose the view of Heraclitus and of the author of *Regimen* on music.[377] For all that, *Regimen* confirms Eryximachus' point that pleasure arises from difference (διαφόρων) and variety (παντοδαπά), as already appeared in *Ancient Medicine*. This confirms why Eryximachus, for whom *diapheresthai* is harmful, refers to pleasure (ἡδονή) only when he talks of the vulgar *erôs*, which contains the seeds of intemperance (ἀκολασία, 187e2-3).

3. What is good and what is not in *erôs* and sex

This view of what is good (the healthy mix) and not (desire and pleasure) is reflected, in part, in the medical discourse of *erôs* and sex.

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[375] οὐκ ἔνι θ: οὔκετι M.

[376] I print the text proposed by Demont (2014) 16, which closely follows Littré, i.e. the text of manuscript M (except for οὐκ ἔνι, from θ, see note above). The first sentence has been heavily emended: Fredrich, Jones, and Joly-Byl bracket: Μουσικῆς ὄργανον — ἃ βούλεται, they read: ἁρμονίης instead of: ἁρμονίη, and they punctuate: ἃ βούλεται. Ἁρμονίης συντάξιες instead of: ἃ βούλεται ἁρμονίη· συντάξιες. Demont (2014) 16-7 convincingly argues for retaining the text by showing that the mention of musical instrument (Μουσικῆς ὄργανον) makes good sense at the start of the chapter. This difficult passage can be translated as follows: 'A musical instrument: firstly, that by which the meaning of harmony is made clear. Chords coming from the same elements are different, from the high and from the low, alike in name but not alike in sound. Those that are most diverse make the best harmony, those that are the least diverse make the worst. If somebody makes everything similar, it would fail to please; it is the greatest changes and the most varied that please the most.' (transl. Demont = Jones slightly modified).

[377] Let us note that the author of *Regimen* does not talk of the healthy balance within the body here; furthermore, Demont (2014) 17 suggests that he refers to the 'complex, surprising and various harmonies' of new music, that were looking for the utmost pleasure of the listener; on this account, he is not talking of modes as abstract systems, like Eryximachus in his discussion of Heraclitus, but rather of harmony as applied to men (πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καταχρῆσθαι ῥυθμῷ τε καὶ ἁρμονίᾳ, 187c8-d1); his mention of pleasure and tension is therefore in line with Eryximachus' view of music in the context of performance and education.

a. ἔρως — ἐρᾶν in the Hippocratic corpus

A first point, to which I will come back later, should be noted: *erôs* properly speaking is of almost no interest to the Hippocratic authors. A TLG search yields only four occurrences of ἔρως or ἐρᾶν in the medical texts dating up to the *Symposium*.[378] In three passages, ἐρᾶν refers to the desire for death in patients prostrate with grief;[379] in one passage, ἔρως refers to passion in general — e.g. love for dice games.[380] In all these cases, *erôs* remains desire;[381] and indeed in no case does the emotion appear as particularly praiseworthy.

Although Hippocratic authors rarely mention *erôs* (the emotion) they discuss more often sex (the erotic activity),[382] to which they refer through various words and phrases (τὰ ἀφροδίσια, μίσγεσθαι, προσίεναι, παρὰ τὸν ἄνδρα ἰέναι, λαγνείη/λαγνεύειν, μίξις).[383] To be sure, sexual activity should not be confused with *erôs* properly speaking,[384] but discussions of sex often mention erotic desire and pleasure, and therefore implicitly refer to *erôs* as such, although not by name. These passages should thus also be taken into account, and they provide, I will argue, the closest parallels with the way Eryximachus values *erôs*.

Hippocratic authors take an interest in sex in two particular contexts: generation (b) and diet (c).

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[378] Five other occurrences appear in [Hp.] *Letter* 17 (late date) where the doctor approvingly reports Democritus' criticism of men's intemperate desires.

[379] οὐκ ἀποθανεῖν ἐρῶντες (*Art*. 7.17); θανεῖν ἐρᾶται (*Mul.*, 177, 8); ἐρᾷ τοῦ θανάτου (*Girls* 1.36-7).

[380] ἔρωτάς τινας, οἷον κύβων (*Hum.* 9), see Thumiger (2017) 41.

[381] Cf. Prodicus' definition of *erôs* as 'desire doubled': Ἐπιθυμίαν μὲν διπλασιασθεῖσαν ἔρωτα εἶναι, ἔρωτα δὲ διπλασιασθέντα μανίαν γίγνεσθαι (84 B7 DK).

[382] MacNamara (2016) 317-8; Thumiger (2017) 235.

[383] See Thumiger (2017) 238 and Catonné (1993) 344-5.

[384] MacNamara (2016) 317-8: 'neither *lagneia* nor *aphrodisia* in the Hippocratic Corpus equate directly with *erôs*, lust or passion. Both terms refer rather to the physical act of intercourse than the emotional desire for sex (let alone any other sort of relationship) with a particular beloved'.

b. Generation

The most exhaustive analysis of sex is found in chapters 1 and 4 of *On Generation.*[385] These two passages study the production and motion of semen in men and women. They also account for the origin of pleasure (ἡδονή) through mechanical causes (friction, fluids, heat),[386] and demonstrate why pleasure is more intense in men than in women.[387] For all that, pleasure as such is never mentioned as a goal that should be reached: the doctor does not prescribe any advice to arouse or strengthen pleasure. Desire is not even mentioned in the process: sexual excitation and pleasure are not aroused by desire but by the friction of the organs and the heating of humours.[388]

This lack of interest in pleasure and desire may explain why only a few passages of the Hippocratic collection discuss male impotence or female frigidity.[389] The absence of desire is viewed as not normal, and its return, as a indication of health recovery,[390] but the prescription of aphrodisiacs falls outside the doctor's area of competence and interest.[391]

Some commentators see an exception to this general lack of concern for *erôs* in chapter 12 of *Diseases of Women*, where female desire seems to play a key role in the context of generation. The passage is about women who cannot conceive when their wombs are too wet to keep the male semen in. The doctor prescribes drying medications and exercises; once the womb is dry enough, he recommends:

> καὶ αὖθις ἴτω παρὰ τὸν ἄνδρα, ὅταν τὰ ἐπιμήνια μηκέτι πολλὰ ᾖ, ἀλλ' ὀλίγα καὶ εὔχροα, καὶ ὀργᾶ. Καὶ ἐν τῇσιν ἄλλῃσιν ἡμέρῃσιν ἱμεροῦσθαι χρὴ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς, ἢν ἄριστα ἔχωσιν αἱ ὑστέραι. ([Hp.] *Mul*. 12.7-10)

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[385] For an analysis of these two passages, see Foucault (1984) 142, Dean-Jones (1992) 68-9, and Thumiger (2017) 231-5.

[386] *Gen.* 1.5-11 (for men), 4.1-3 (for women).

[387] *Gen.* 4.6-20. On orgasm (ὀργή/ὀργασμός) see also *Aph.* 1.22, 4.10, 5. 29; *Hum.* 3.6.

[388] *Gen.* 1.6-10, 4.1-3.

[389] On male impotence, see *Aer.* 21-22; on female frigidity, see *Mul.* 24 and 57.

[390] *Mul.* 17, 20-21; see MacNamara (2016) 318.

[391] There is no reference to aphrodisiacs in the Hippocratic Corpus (cf. MacNamara 2016: 318) unless we see in *Nat. Mul.* 2 an allusion to the aphrodisiac power of molluscs, as suggested by Van der Eijk (2000) 401.

According to Dean-Jones, 'this statement is the closest the Hippocratics get to saying that desire for sexual pleasure *per se* is good for a woman'.[392] In a recent study, Thumiger reads the passage, along with chapter 4 of *On Generation* mentioned above,[393] as an indication that conception *depends* on the woman's feeling desire.[394] In my view, this is not what the doctor claims here: by recommending to the patient to have sexual intercourse 'when she desires (ὀργᾷ)', he means that the return of desires, along with other phenomena such as a normal menstrual blood (ἐπιμήνια), is an *indication* of the recovery. The manifestation of desires is thus a symptom of the return of a healthy state which, in its turn, allows the woman to conceive; it is not the cause of the woman's fertility — let alone the cause of her recovery. The very cause of the woman's ability to conceive is the return of a good state of balance between the dry and the wet within the womb. It is on this healthy state — not on desires — that conception depends. The return of desires is, along with the return of fertility, the consequence of this primary, essential cause: the recovery. Since in the passage, as well as in the remainder of the book, the doctor is primarily interested in how to ensure women's fertility (this is the final good his account aims at), he is primarily concerned with the healthy condition (the instrumental good) that allows conception to happen. Although desires are mentioned in the account, they do not play the role of any kind of good — neither final, nor instrumental. Their function is only to indicate, along with other signs, that the instrumental good (health) has been achieved and that the final good (conception) can be achieved. Similarly, chapter 4 of *On Generation* to which Thumiger also refers, shows how desire (ὀργᾷ, 4.7) and pleasure (ἡδονήν, 4.12) accompany, but do not cause, the emission of semen in women; the process is caused by the heating of the humours. These passages are thus no good evidence that in the eyes of a Hippocratic author, conception depends on desires and pleasures. What conception actually depends on, is the healthy balance between the dry and the wet (*Mul*. 12), or the hot and the cold (*Gen*. 4).

This is made clearer by the author of *Nature of Man*, who refers both to the good mix of properties within the womb and to the balance between the state of the male and the female semen as the primary condition for generation:

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[392] Dean-Jones (1992) 61 n. 35.

[393] In particular *Gen.* 4.6-12.

[394] Thumiger (2017) 233-5.

> Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ἀνάγκη τὴν γένεσιν γίνεσθαι μὴ ἀφ' ἑνός· πῶς γὰρ ἂν ἕν γ' ἐόν τι γεννήσειεν, εἰ μή τινι μιχθείη; ἔπειτα οὐδ', ἐὰν μὴ ὁμόφυλα ἐόντα μίσγηται καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχοντα δύναμιν, γεννᾷ, οὐδ' ἂν ταῦτα ἡμῖν ξυντελέοιτο. Καὶ πάλιν, εἰ μὴ τὸ θερμὸν τῷ ψυχρῷ καὶ τὸ ξηρὸν τῷ ὑγρῷ μετρίως πρὸς ἄλληλα ἕξει καὶ ἴσως, ἀλλὰ θάτερον θατέρου πουλὺ προέξει καὶ τὸ ἰσχυρότερον τοῦ ἀσθενεστέρου, ἡ γένεσις οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο. Ὥστε πῶς εἰκὸς ἀπὸ ἑνός τι γεννηθῆναι, ὅτε γε οὐδ' ἀπὸ τῶν πλειόνων γεννᾶται, ἢν μὴ τύχῃ καλῶς ἔχοντα τῆς κρήσιος τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα; ([Hp.] *Nat. Hom*. 3.1-9)

Although, as we saw in the previous texts, doctors readily recognize that there is a necessary link between sexual desire and generation,[395] this passage confirms that what really matters to the doctor is not arousing erotic desire so that sexual intercourse can happen;[396] it is instead ensuring that sex is performed at the right moment and in good conditions, that is, when there is a good fit between the hot and the cold, the dry and the wet, both within the womb and between the womb and the male semen. The good conditions that the doctor must secure are nothing else than the healthy balance and mix promoted by Eryximachus (cf. τῆς κρήσιος τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα).[397] Securing this balance is the real problem the doctor has to grapple with: this is the challenge his art must meet: this is the good his *tekhnê* tends to. Therefore, although the Hippocratic doctors are the most eloquent on erotic pleasure and desire when they talk of generation, it appears that neither desire nor pleasure are of real interest to them. Their primary concern is to ensure a good *krâsis* — here resides the good the doctor looks after, as on this depends whether the practice of *erôs* (sexual intercourse) will be good or not, fruitful or sterile.

This casts light on Eryximachus' neglectful treatment of pleasure and desire in his encomium of *erôs*. It also helps better to understand why *erôs* finds value in his eyes only inasmuch as it is linked to health. For all that, Hippocratic writings on generation do not provide the model for the *causal* link that Eryximachus establishes between *erôs* and health. They show that *erôs* is beneficial insofar as it is experienced in healthy

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[395] In addition to the passages from *On Generation* and *Diseases of Women* discussed above, see *Mul*. 6.16-17 (οὐ μνησίτοκοι δέ εἰσιν, οὐδὲ κυΐσκονται) and 24.9 (οὐ μίσγεται ἀσπασίως τῷ ἀνδρὶ, οὐδὲ κυΐσκεται).

[396] See Dean-Jones (1992) 70: desiring is not necessary for the woman to conceive.

[397] See also, on the good opportunity, *Mul*. 11, 45, 49, 58, 24.3 (ἢν μιγέωσιν ὅτε χρή); with MacNamara (2016) 317.

conditions, but they do not show, as Eryximachus does, that it can create such conditions.

c. Dietetics

Such a causal link between *erôs* and health appears, however, when Hippocratic authors discuss sex in the context of a diet. Medical *diaita* encompasses the whole lifestyle: food, drink, environment, sleep, and exercise; it is as an exercise that *erôs* belongs to the diet. As sexual intercourse involves energy spending and exchange of fluid and warmth, it is likely to foster or compromise the good state of balance between opposite bodily properties. According to the author of *Regimen* 'sexual intercourse reduces, moistens and warms' (λαγνείη ἰσχναίνει καὶ ὑγραίνει καὶ θερμαίνει, *Vict.* 2.58). Therefore, along with other activities, sex must be regulated according to the seasons and the particular constitution of the patient.[398]

As a general rule, a modicum of sexual intercourse is viewed as wholesome, in men as well as in women.[399] However, a distinction must be made between the sexes. In women, sex is almost always viewed as beneficial: it keeps the female tubes open, causes the blood and the menses to flow freely, and prevents the womb from going dry and thus 'wandering'.[400] In men, however, sexual intercourse is viewed as an important expenditure of energy which is likely to dry out and emaciate the body excessively.[401] It can thus be recommended when the diet requires drying out and warming up, in cold and wet seasons,[402] or in order to cure diseases caused by an excess of phlegm.[403] But in most cases sexual intercourse must be curbed, or banned, since men naturally tend to practise it beyond measure and to run the risk of consumption.[404] That is why men are

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[398] *Vict.* 35, 37-38, 58, 68; *Aff.* 1; *Epid. VI* 8.23; cf. Foucault (1984) 115.

[399] *Prorrh. II* 4.39-40; *Epid. VI* 6.2; *Vict*. 80, 85. Cf. MacNamara (2016) 317.

[400] See esp. *Gen.* 4.20-28; *Nat. Mul*. 3.8; *Mul.* 2, 123-128, 131, 134, 135, 139, 141, 146. Sexual intercourse is prohibited only in some particular cases (convalescence or pregnancy, cf. *Superf.* 13). See Hanson (1991) 84 and 104 n. 62–3, Dean-Jones (1992) 60-5 and (1994) 126–35, MacNamara (2016) 317, Thumiger (2017) 239.

[401] Cf. *Vict.* 58.

[402] *Vict.* 35.37-8, 68.31-2, 80.17, 85.6-7; *Epid. VI* 5.15.4.

[403] *Epid. VI* 5.15.1-2. On the healing virtues of sex, see Dean-Jones (1992) 59, and Thumiger (2017) 238-9.

[404] See e.g. *Prorrh. II* 4.40-2.

usually prohibited from having sex when convalescing;[405] sexual intercourse is often viewed as detrimental to them, and it can even lead to death, if we believe the author of *Epidemics III* who reports the case of a young man who died 'after being for a long time heated by drunkenness and sexual indulgence' (ἐκ πότων καὶ ἀφροδισίων πολλῶν πολὺν χρόνον θερμανθείς).[406] In the context of a diet, moderation (*enkrateia*) in *erôs* is a requirement which always applies to men, never to women.[407] Therefore, it appears that, even if the Hippocratics never forget that *erôs* is essentially linked to pleasure and desire, they never value it for these two features, but only inasmuch as it prompts an activity (sexual intercourse) which may lead to what the doctor is actually looking for: generation and health. In both cases the primary concern of the doctor — what his *tekhnê* aims to secure — proves to be health: either because, for generation, health is the primary condition for reaching the goal (conception), or because, in diet, health is the very goal that sexual intercourse can guarantee or compromise. It is this second way of valuing *erôs* that most closely resembles Eryximachus' encomium: in the context of a diet, just as in the encomium, *erôs* can be the direct cause of the final good (health).

In sum, Plato's character visibly retains from the medical tradition that he claims to 'honour' (πρεσβεύωμεν, 186b3) (1) the general view of what is good and what is not, and therefore the motives for which *erôs* is praiseworthy: a healthy state of balance is the final good one should aim at; with respect to this objective, erotic desires and pleasures are potentially harmful and must be checked; (2) the view that *erôs* can be the direct cause of this good in the context of a diet: Eryximachus' good *erôs* can lead to health; (3) this good *erôs*, seems to originate more particularly from the way sex is valued in the context of the *male* diet: *erôs* must be moderate (κόσμιος), because indulgence in pleasure is potentially harmful to the male patient. Eryximachus, who has just put a strict ban on female presence in the drinking party (176e6-8), is addressing an all-male audience. He thus cannot argue, as he could have in front of women, that erotic intercourse is always healthy, always beneficial.

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[405] *Vict.* 73.16-7; *Int. Aff.* 32.20-1; *Morb. II* 51.18. Cf. Dean-Jones (1992) 59.

[406] *Epid. III* 17.16.

[407] On the pathogenicity of sex for men, see also *Morb. II* 51.1-3 and 18, 73.18-19; *Vict* 35.81. Cf. Foucault (1984) 136-7, Dean-Jones (1992) 55, 57-8, 62-63, Thumiger (2017) 238-40.

B. Originality of Eryximachus' *erôs*

For all these similarities, there is a major difference between Eryximachus' account and the Hippocratic corpus: the Hippocratic authors never call '*erôs*' what Eryximachus describes as 'the good *erôs*.' Even if they refer in many places to Eryximachus' state of good balance and mixture (κρᾶσις), they never label it '*erôs*'; and wherever they discuss *erôs* (explicitly or implicitly), they never forget that it is primarily a desire tending towards pleasure.[408] Nor do the Hippocratics call '*erôs*' what we recognized in Eryximachus' account as the good *erôs*-desire: the operation of mixing and harmonizing opposite properties. To be sure, in the context of a diet, erotic desire can contribute to achieving a good mixture, but we would be wrong to equate the good *erôs*-desire of *Regimen* with Eryximachus' good *erôs*. Although the good *erôs* of *Regimen* leads, like Eryximachus' one, to a state of balance between opposite properties in the body, it is not in itself desire of a property for the opposite one — desire of the hot for the cold, of the dry for the wet, etc. It is not this paradoxical desire for self-moderation that we recognized in Eryximachus' encomium (see p. 137ff). The Hippocratics conceive the good *erôs* as a strong desire aiming at pleasure, both in men and women: it is desire for sex; as such, it prompts an activity (sexual intercourse) which produces one property (the wet in women, the hot and the dry in men). In that scenario, the wet, the hot, and the dry are not the object of the erotic desire, but the by-products of the erotic activity which is itself prompted by *erôs*. The doctor must prescribe or prohibit this activity according to whether the body needs the by-product or not. When a man desires to have sex in winter, even if, in these circumstances, this desire will bring about a good *krâsis*, this desire does not work as a desire of the cold for the hot: it is, in the man, desire to get pleasure, and to maximize pleasure as much as he can. The same desire will manifest itself in summer, when the body is warmer and dry, and the fulfilment of the desire may then be harmful. Whether beneficial or not, whether occurring in winter or in summer, *erôs* will always tend toward the same kind of object and produce the same properties (the wet in women, the heat and the dry in men). As a result, for men, the good *erôs* of the Hippocratic diet is not as praiseworthy as Eryximachus' one: it is good only in some particular circumstances (in winter, to cure hydropsy), that is, when the property it brings out (the hot and the dry) will happen to correct the deficiency of the

[408] See above the four occurrences of ἔρως or ἐρᾶν and the description of sex in *Generation* and *Diseases of women*.

system; and even in these good circumstances, desire will have to be checked and curbed since, in itself, it does not tend towards good balance but towards 'having more' (πλεονεξία, 188b4). The 'good *erôs*' of *Regimen* has nothing to do with Eryximachus' heavenly (οὐράνιος) *erôs*, even if it may lead, in some particular circumstances, to the same benefit: as a desire, it rather resembles Eryximachus' vulgar (πάνδημος) *erôs* 'that one must apply with caution (...) in order to harvest its pleasure (ἡδονήν) but plant no intemperance (ἀκολασίαν, 187e3)'. As we saw, Eryximachus' good *erôs*-desire does not merely lead to the state of good balance between opposite properties: it prefigures this state.

Therefore, Eryximachus' good *erôs*, in its two forms (state and desire), does not only contradict our common conception of *erôs*: it is also paradoxical from the point of view of the medical tradition that Eryximachus claims to 'honour'.

C. Eryximachus' manipulation of the tradition and its motives

To summarize, the doctor seems to borrow from the tradition the notion of the good on which his encomium is based (the healthy balance), as well as the link that doctors usually make between *erôs* (or sex) and this ideal: Hippocratic authors already found *erôs* valuable insofar as it was related to the healthy balance, the good *krâsis*. However Eryximachus transforms the link, and strengthens the relation between *erôs* and health so as to draw a paradoxical picture of a good *erôs* which is at a piece with health itself. As a state, the good *erôs* is nothing else than the healthy balance. As a desire, it is the dynamic prefiguration of this state: it is the very process of mixing that the Hippocratics seek to achieve when they prescribe a good use of desires and pleasures, along with a good use of food, drink, and other activities. The Hippocratics show Eryximachus the way to the good: like his colleagues, the doctor values *erôs* as being conducive to health; but Eryximachus goes further along that road, he improves on the tradition by claiming that *erôs* (in its good form) is nothing else than health (as a state) or the very process of becoming healthy (as a desire).

What prompts the doctor to manipulate his own science is nothing other than the necessity to meet the main requirements of a good encomium that he pronounced himself at the start of the dialogue on behalf of Phaedrus (see Chapter 1): (1) he must show not just that *erôs* is good (e.g. pleasant or conducive to reproduction), but that it is cause of the supreme Good — that is, from a medical point of view, the healthy balance

between opposite elements. This explains why Eryximachus takes his lead from the medical discourse on diet, where *erôs* can be envisaged as the direct cause of health. (2) He must show that *erôs* is not just one cause among others, but that it is the privileged cause, the best way to achieve virtue (i.e. health) and happiness (a long life). This requirement leads him to improve on the model provided by the medical discourse on diet, and to build an identity relationship between *erôs* and health. This allows him, in addition, to considerably enlarge the domain of influence of *erôs*: being the good *krâsis* itself, *erôs* is potentially everywhere (ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι, 186a6-7). *Erôs* is thereby given a realm worthy of a god, whereas, in the Hippocratic texts, *erôs*, as we saw, is sparingly mentioned.

What Plato then indirectly invites us to notice is that the doctor must improve on his tradition because this tradition on *erôs* does not meet the requirements of an elite encomium. MacNamara suggests that the Hippocratics take so little account of *erôs* as such (the desire) because the cure of love-sickness and impotence 'is too closely associated with folk practices from which the Hippocratics are keen to distance themselves'.[409] I have suggested that the reason is rather to be found in the mere lack of interest of the doctors in such matters, since from a medical point of view, desires are at worst a threat to the very goal of the art (generation and health), and at best hardly relevant to it. Even when used properly in the context of the diet, *erôs* is not a prime candidate for praise, first because if *erôs* is valued for prompting an activity (sexual intercourse) which can create a good balance by producing particular properties (the wet, the dry, the hot), this activity is in competition with many others which can produce the same benefit: in the frame of a diet, drinking, eating, bathing, running are prescribed along with sex, as they are as likely as *erôs* to humidify the female body or to warm up the male one.[410] Second, as already said, in the male diet, sexual intercourse is the least commendable of all activities, as it contains the threat of intemperance. Thus the way Hippocratics value *erôs* does not authorize talking of it as a god, as Eryximachus must do: doctors view it as a kind of good which is both ordinary (one good among others) and suspicious (in the context of the male diet), because they never forget that *erôs* is a desire tending to pleasures. Erotic intercourse is an ordinary activity because, along with many other activities, it consists in spending energy, and it owes

[409] MacNamara (2016) 318.

[410] Cf. *Vict.* 35.20-38, 80.17, 85.6-7, with Foucault (1984) 125. See also *Epid. VI* 8.23; *VI* 5.15.

this feature to the fact that it is an epithumic activity, and not an operation of self-censorship, unlike Eryximachus' good *erôs*. If this operation remains suspicious in men, it is because it tends towards pleasure, and such a tendency constitutes a threat to the healthy harmony of the body. Therefore, by depriving his good *erôs* of desire and pleasure, Eryximachus can lift the restrictions that would hamper any doctor from praising it properly (ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι, 177c3). Now that good *erôs*-desire is the attraction of one property for the opposite one, there are no more grounds for curbing it — there is no threat that one would achieve a mix which is 'too good' — there is never excess of health in a body. And by identifying his good *erôs* with the good state of health, Eryximachus promotes it to what is from a medical point of view the pinnacle of welfare.

In sum, even if Eryximachus promotes a good *erôs* which has no direct equivalent in the medical tradition, he borrows from this very tradition the motives for his invention: the reason why the doctor departs from the tradition about *erôs* are to be found in the tradition itself. Hippocratic theories not only show Eryximachus the way — the ideal of the good; they also tell him why he should go further and overstep their own accounts. It is because, with respect to the medical ideal of health, some essential features of *erôs* (desire and pleasure) are not praiseworthy, that Eryximachus' encomium is led to dismiss these features. Although Eryximachus strongly distorts the medical discourse of *erôs*, it is his reliance on medical tradition that gives him the motives and the guidelines for the distortion.

D. Back to the problem

This leads us back to the origin of the 'problem' that we previously identified: Eryximachus' construction of a good *erôs* deprived of desire, tension and pleasure (II). From a medical point of view, this good *erôs* is an invention; but the doctor invents it because he relies on a medical view of what makes people happy and virtuous. Had Eryximachus only to show that *Erôs* is good, he could have followed his tradition *and* built a plausible encomium. Hippocratic authors, as we have seen, always recognized that *erôs* is a desire tending towards pleasure, and they were happy if their patients enjoyed pleasure, as long as pleasure did not threaten their health. Eryximachus himself would surely admit that all things being equal, he would prefer to have sex, than not to have; to drink a good wine instead of a tasteless one. Yet, since, in the *Symposium*, the

challenge presented to the speakers is to show that *erôs* is conducive, not just to some good, but to the highest good, the doctor cannot include desires nor pleasure in his encomium, since he surely knows from his experience (and we have no good reason to distrust him on this point) that, if the final goal of our life is to remain fit and healthy, we should always regard desires and pleasures as a potential threat to our well-being, and most of the time frustrate them (ἀχαριστεῖν, 186c4). The lesson of Eryximachus' consistent strategy is that, when one speaks from the point of view of the doctors about what is good and what is bad, it is impossible to meet the requirements of the elite encomium without depriving *erôs* of some of its essential features.

Conclusion

I started by summarizing and explaining Eryximachus' discourse in order to identify what makes good sense and what seems more problematic in it. I argued that, contrary to what is sometimes claimed, the conduct of the argument is consistent from the start to the end. The account draws on a dualistic model borrowed from medical science, which opposes two states (a healthy balance vs a harmful imbalance) and two processes which bring about and maintain these states (the mixing of opposite properties vs the undue domination of one property). The doctor also convincingly shows how this model applies to the whole cosmos and to the other arts (I). What appears problematic in this speech, however, is that the doctor calls 'good *erôs*' a healthy state and a healthy process, which he describes as deprived of pleasure and desire (II). I have then tried to identify the origin of the problem, assuming that Plato here points to the medical tradition Eryximachus claims to 'honour' (III). By reviewing the Hippocratic discourse on *erôs*, I noticed that Eryximachus does not borrow from the tradition his view of the good *erôs* as such. Plato's character is innovating by calling '*erôs*' the mixing of opposites and the good balance that arises from it. However he borrows from the tradition the view that mixing and good balance are supremely good, or praiseworthy, since they are the primary condition for health. It is thus by conforming *erôs* with his medical view of the highest good that Eryximachus deprives it of pleasure and desire. What Eryximachus' strange *erôs* shows is that the requirements of the wisdom contest he wants to meet (showing that *erôs* is the best means to achieve human excellence) and his own view of human excellence (health) put him in front of a dilemma. On the one hand, remaining faithful to the truth, that is, showing in a realistic way that *erôs* is

conducive to health, would not allow him to produce a *proper* encomium: *erôs* can play a role in acquiring health, but there are many other and more reliable ways to do so. On the other hand, composing a proper praise, that is, showing that *erôs* is the best way to be healthy, requires him to leave aside some essential features of *erôs*. Since the doctor is engaged in a wisdom contest, he unsurprisingly prefers to meet the requirements of the contest, rather than to compose a realistic encomium; his only way out of the dilemma is to build a good *erôs* which is in many respects un-erotic.

Eryximachus' strange *erôs*, however, proves to be the best way the doctor can find to meet the requirements of the encomium while remaining faithful to his view of what is supremely good (health). Eryximachus probably builds here the best possible *medical* encomium of *erôs*: he makes the most of the intellectual means he has at his disposal (his medical science) to build a coherent valuation of *erôs*. The limitations of the encomium do not originate in the speaker's lack of intellectual skill, but rather in the cultural material he is working with, and especially the medical ideal of the good, more than the medical conception of *erôs*. Eryximachus is presumably well aware, with all his colleagues, that *erôs* is essentially characterized by pleasure and desire; but the doctor cannot understand how pleasure and desire can lead to human excellence, since his view of virtue and happiness is not conducive to such an understanding.

This study eventually led us to oppose three assumptions commonly held about Eryximachus' speech: (1) the flaw does not lie in the inconsistency of the argument but rather in the unrealistic portrait of the good *erôs*; (2) Eryximachus does not provide a traditional or medical picture of *erôs*: his good *erôs* is a fiction created by means of what medical texts say about the good; (3) what the problem of the encomium reveals is not so much the doctor's ignorance of *erôs* as the limitations of his conception of the good.

CHAPTER 5. DIOTIMA'S RESPONSE (199c3-212c3)

Introduction

Although my focus is primarily on the first three speeches, I also need to have a look at Diotima's theory of *erôs*, as it is reported by Socrates (199c3-212c3):[411] Diotima, I will argue, directly responds to the first encomia and thereby sheds light on their function in the dialogue.

There is nothing new in claiming that Diotima's encomium engages with the previous ones,[412] but I hope to improve this view in at least four respects: (1) Commentators usually focus on the way Diotima responds to the last two speakers (Agathon or Aristophanes) with whom she is most clearly in dialogue.[413] (2) I will focus on explicit word echoes between the speeches: Diotima recalls key concepts (e.g. Pausanias' παιδεραστία, 211b5-6, cf. 181c7, 184c8) or striking examples (e.g. Achilles and Alcestis, 208d2-4, already mentioned by Phaedrus, 179a5-180b5), which sound like direct references to the previous speakers. Through this stylistic device, Plato leads his reader to identify the particular points on which Diotima addresses the previous theories.[414] (3) Most studies view the relationship between Diotima's discourse and the first ones in terms of similarities and differences: what did the previous speakers already understand? How did they fall short of Diotima's philosophical insights?[415] I will also identify common points and differences between the discourses, but this will only be my starting point. My overarching purpose is to show that the relationship between the first speakers and Diotima should be understood in terms of problems and solutions, or

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[411] I include in Diotima's theory Socrates' elenchus of Agathon (199c3-201c9), since this discussion is supposed to reproduce Socrates' former conversations with Diotima (cf. 201e6).

[412] For recent studies of this interaction, see esp. Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan (2004), Sheffield (2006a) and (2006b).

[413] See above p. 8.

[414] In Diotima's speech, I recognize as an explicit word echo the repetition of a word (i) referring to a concept or an example which is key to one of the previous theories, (ii) first mentioned by this theory, and (iii) not mentioned by the subsequent speakers before Socrates, unless as a clear reference to the former use; see, e.g. Aristophanes' discussion of παιδεραστία (192b1-6) which is an explicit reference to Pausanias (193b7).

[415] See above n. 13.

questions and answers. In this respect, Sheffield shows the way when she claims that 'the [first] speeches raise significant issues and questions in need of resolution for a philosophical account'.[416] But I will propose a more precise view than she does about what we should understand by 'issues', 'questions' and 'resolution'. Sheffield views the relationship between Socrates' account of *erôs* and the previous encomia in light of Aristotle's endoxic method:[417] the philosopher would explain, or clarify issues which were just sketched out by the previous speakers, like our love for beauty, already glimpsed by Phaedrus.[418] I have serious reservations about this approach: first because it suggests that the first speeches convey views on *erôs* which were already accepted, by the common people or by the wise, and, as I have clearly argued so far, this is probably not the case; second, because Socrates or Diotima do not just explain or clarify: they solve problems raised by the previous speakers. As I tried to show in the previous chapters, the first three speeches, despite their attempt to link *erôs* to particular kinds of human excellence, fail in some way to show that *erôs* is actually conducive to them; they explain the causal link between *erôs* and excellence through a mechanism which, in each case, dismisses some essential features of *erôs*: sexual intercourse, inconstancy, desire and pleasure. There lies, in my opinion, the *issue* raised by the first speakers. As a result the *question* prompted by these speeches is: can *erôs* be actually conducive to military courage and self sacrifice (Phaedrus)? Or to wisdom (Pausanias)? Or to harmony and beauty (Eryximachus)? And Diotima provides a *solution* by showing that it is possible to understand how *erôs* is essential to the attainment of all the boons advertised by the previous speakers without, for all that, conceiving the emotion as deprived of some of its essential features.

After recalling the main tenets of Diotima's doctrine of *erôs* (I), I will show how this theory solves the issues and questions raised by the previous speakers (II).

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[416] See Sheffield (2006a) 214. For a similar view, with a 'crescendo reading' of the speeches, see Sedley (2006) 50 and (2017) 96.

[417] Cf. Sheffield (2006b) and (2006b), see above p. 9

[418] Sheffield (2006a) 214.

I. Diotima's encomium of *erôs*

A. Summary

1. The nature of *erôs* (τίς ... καὶ ποῖός τις, 199c3-206a16)

Socrates and Diotima start by giving a definition of *erôs* (199c3-206a13, cf. ὁποῖός τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἔρως, 199c5; τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἔρως καὶ ποῖός τις, 201e1). The main tenets of this theory seem to be directly borrowed from Aristophanes and Agathon: *erôs* is a desire (ἐπιθυμεῖν) that aims at what it lacks (ἐνδεής ἐστιν, cf. Aristophanes: ποθοῦν, 191a6; τοῦ ὅλου οὖν τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ καὶ διώξει ἔρως ὄνομα, 192e10-193a1); and the objects of this lack are what Agathon viewed as the very attributes of *erôs*: the good and the fine (δι᾽ ἔνδειαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν, 202d1-2, cf. Agathon: κάλλιστος καὶ ἄριστος, 197c2). Diotima adds that, being neither good nor fine, *erôs* is not a *theos*, as all the previous speakers assumed, but a *daimôn* in charge of 'all intercourse and conversation (ἡ ὁμιλία καὶ ἡ διάλεκτος) of gods with men' (203a2-3).

Then it turns out that, of the two objects assigned to *erôs* by Diotima so far (*to kalon* and to *agathon*), only the latter is what *erôs* actually needs (χρείαν ἔχει, 204c8), since it is by possessing the good, not the fine, that we can reach the final purpose of our life: happiness (εὐδαιμονία). By taking goodness and happiness as the final goals of *erôs*, the question 'what *erôs* is *erôs* of?' reaches its end (τέλος, 205a3). Diotima thus arrives at a first definition of *erôs*: 'desire for good things and for happiness' (ἡ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐπιθυμία καὶ τοῦ εὐδαιμονεῖν, 205d2) or 'desire for possessing the good *for ever*' (ὁ ἔρως τοῦ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὑτῷ εἶναι ἀεί, 206a11-12), since there is no true happiness without a permanent (ἀεί) possession of the good. This definition leads Socrates to understand that *erôs* properly understood extends far beyond the conventional sexual meaning of the word: it covers many pursuits which are not commonly viewed as erotic (e.g. χρηματισμός, φιλογυμναστία, φιλοσοφία, 205d1-8).

2. The activity of *erôs* (τὸ ἔργον, 206b1-212c3)

Diotima then turns to the second part of the account: the activity, or workings, of *erôs* (πρᾶξις, ἔργον, 206b2-3): how does *erôs*, as it has just been defined, manifest itself in human beings in order to reach its goal?

a. General definition (206b1-207a4)

Diotima first gives a general view of this *ergon*: in order to achieve the good for ever, *erôs* aims at 'giving birth in the beautiful, in respect of body and of soul' (τόκος ἐν καλῷ καὶ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα καὶ κατὰ τὴν ψυχήν, 206b7-8; cf. τῆς γεννήσεως καὶ τοῦ τόκου ἐν τῷ καλῷ, 206e5). Whereas only immortal gods can literally achieve the permanent possession of the good, human beings can only reach a surrogate kind of immortality by giving birth to good things that will survive them. With the phrases ἐν καλῷ / ἐν τῷ καλῷ, reappears a notion (*to kalon*) which, when defining *erôs*, Diotima had put aside, as she explained that this could not be the final purpose of *erôs*. Now that she considers the practical workings (*erga*) whereby *erôs* can reach its goal, *to kalon* proves essential, since we can reproduce ourselves only through it. We understand now the combination between the two notions of the fine and the good which, at the start, were indiscriminately said to be the objects of *erôs* (201a2-204c8): the good is the final purpose; *to kalon* is instrumental, but essential to reaching this goal. The instrumental value of the fine explains, with hindsight, why Socrates was unable to answer Diotima's question about the final purpose (*telos*) of possessing *ta kala* (cf. 204d8-9).

b. The various *erga* of *erôs*: lower and higher mysteries (207a5-212a7)

After giving a general definition of the *ergon* of *erôs*, Diotima describes the various instantiations of this activity and classifies them in a value scale.

In a first part (207a5-209e4) which ends with the so-called 'lower mysteries' (208e1-209e4), Diotima starts by distinguishing between *erôs* in the body (reproduction of all sorts, including regeneration of hair and bones), and *erôs* in the soul. The latter kind of reproduction ranges from the rehearsal of knowledge (μελέτη) that gives permanence to our ideas within our lives (207e5-208b6), to the activities of the lower mysteries, prompted by *philotimia* and allowing us to survive our lives: producing brave deeds, fine poems or fine laws (208e1-209e4). The kinds of offspring produced in the lower mysteries are more valued than all those formerly mentioned: they are manifestations of virtue (ἀρετή, 209a4) and are more likely to provide immortality than our bodily offspring or the memories enduring in our souls (209e3-4).[419] Among these virtue-

[419] The two aspects are linked: it is because spiritual children are manifestation of virtue that they are immortal: cf. ἀθάνατον μνήμην ἀρετῆς, 208d5-6.

children, Diotima makes a special case of the intellectual ones (poems and laws), discussed at length at the end of the passage (209b7-e4). Manifestations of courage deserved only a brief mention at the start (Achilles' and Alcestis' self-sacrifices, 208d2-e1), since products of wisdom presumably represent firmer supports for immortal glory (καλλιόνων καὶ ἀθανατωτέρων παίδων, 209c6-7) and reveal a kind of virtue superior to mere courage. Diotima's definition of virtue, like Pausanias', gives prominence to intelligence (cf. φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν, 209a3-4).

In the so-called higher mysteries (209e5-212a7), Diotima takes over the *erôs* in the soul which, in the lower mysteries, was motivated by *philotimia*, and led to the production of all sorts of virtues (γεννήσαντες παντοίαν ἀρετήν, 209e2-3) and to the achievement of immortal glory (ἀθάνατον μνήμην ἀρετῆς, 208d5-6). She now shows how this *erôs* can be converted into a search for wisdom itself (φιλοσοφία) that may finally lead us to produce *true* virtue and to achieve a superior form of immortality (212a3-7). This process divides into several steps: the philosophical search consists in an increasingly accurate understanding (κατανοῆσαι, 210a8) of the fine (τὸ ἐπ᾽ εἴδει καλόν, 210b2): the fine in one body, in several bodies, in souls, in activities and laws (ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις, 210c3-4), in sciences (ἐπιστῆμαι, μαθήματα), and in everything the lover has been in love with so far — 'the great sea of beauty', 210d4);[420] then the lover grasps the science of the fine and, to finish with, the fine itself — its Form. While understanding better the nature of the fine, the lover gives birth to better forms of virtue: first, when in love with one body, he produces just fine discourses (λόγους καλούς, 210a8) aimed at seducing the handsome beloved; when in love with the soul, he produces educative discourses intended to benefit him (λόγους ... οἵτινες ποιήσουσι βελτίους τοὺς νέους, 210c2-3); when contemplating the sea of beauty, he brings out philosophical thoughts (καλοὺς λόγους καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς τίκτῃ καὶ διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ, 210d5-6); when contemplating the Form of the Fine, he produces 'true' virtue' (ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ), reaches a superior form of immortality (ἀθανάτῳ), and becomes 'dear to the gods' (θεοφιλεῖ, 212a5-7); here is the climax of what has been presented as the object of *erôs* and its *ergon*: achieving a divine state of immortality by

[420] ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ, 210d4; I follow Macé (2016) who takes πέλαγος τοῦ καλοῦ as referring to all the various fine items previously mentioned by Diotima (bodies, souls, laws, etc); Allen (1991) 155 rightly translates as 'the multitudinous ocean of the beautiful'.

producing virtue. It is at this point, more than in any other passage of her discourse, that Diotima praises *Erôs* 'as he deserves' (ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι, 177c3).

B. Some issues

The interpretation of Diotima's account raises several puzzles that need to be briefly addressed.

1. Producing true virtue

How should we construe the 'true virtue' produced and nurtured by the lover who contemplates the Form of the Fine at the end of the ascent (τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ καὶ θρεψαμένῳ, 212a5-6)? Sheffield and Sedley recognize here a purely intellectual process: producing true virtue amounts to becoming wise by contemplating the 'true' Form of the Fine.[421] Destrée, by contrast, argues for a moral kind of virtue: the political expertise that the philosopher king is supposed to implement in the *Republic*.[422] I do not see why these two interpretations could not be combined: in *Republic* 6, the philosopher is likened to a good painter who both contemplates the Form of the virtues and practically implements his theoretical knowledge into the laws of the city and the habits of the citizens (*Resp*. 6.501a-c, see esp. ἑκατέρωσ' ἀποβλέποιεν, 501b1-2). In Book 7, Socrates insists that the theoretical knowledge acquired by the philosopher (516b4-d7) must benefit the practical life of the *polis* (cf. δεῖ ταύτην [ἰδέαν] ἰδεῖν τὸν μέλλοντα ἐμφρόνως πράξειν ἢ ἰδίᾳ ἢ δημοσίᾳ, 7.517c4-5). I cannot see why Diotima's lover may not also be required by some (enlightened) fellow citizens to go back to the cave, i.e. to implement the knowledge of *to kalon* that (s)he has acquired in 'activities and laws' (*Smp*. 210c3-4), although he might do that reluctantly.

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[421] Cf. ἅτε τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἐφαπτομένῳ, 212a5. See Sheffield (2006a) 134 and Sedley (2017) 99-105, who argues in light of the *Timaeus*.

[422] Destrée (2017), who refers in particular to *Resp*. 10.621c-d.

2. Becoming dear to the god and immortal

We can also wonder what kind of divine favour and immortality the lover achieves by contemplating the Form (ὑπάρχει θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ εἴπέρ τῳ ἄλλῳ ἀνθρώπων ἀθανάτῳ καὶ ἐκείνῳ, 212a6-7). This divine bliss can first be viewed in light of what Diotima said previously, especially in the lower mysteries; it may be vicariously bestowed by what the lover produces — in this case, true virtue; whether the philosophers write theoretical treatises on the fine or practical laws for Socrates' *Kallipolis*, they will leave behind them more memorable testimonies of their virtue (cf. ἀθάνατον μνήμην ἀρετῆς, 208d5-6) than Homer's poems or Solon's laws, since their virtue is *true* (ἀρετὴν ἀληθῆ, 212a5-6). These elite poets or lawgivers might also become dearer to the god than other human beings, both because reproduction, which allows us to achieve immortal glory, is a divine matter (τοῦτο θεῖον τὸ πρᾶγμα, 206c6), and because, as Phaedrus already put it, the gods 'over-admire' (ὑπεραγασθέντες, 180a2) those who perform outstanding deeds.[423]

Yet we can also understand with Sedley that this divine status reached at the top of the ladder is of another kind than those achieved previously: the lover now owes his immortality to his direct intellectual intercourse with the pure and eternal Form of the Fine, and no longer to the biological progeny or creative intellectual legacy (207c9-209e4) which provided him only with 'lesser, surrogate kinds of immortalization'.[424] I am inclined to follow this interpretation, which is well supported by the immediate textual context in Plato: the Form of the Fine is characterized as an immortal and divine entity (αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλόν, 211e3; cf. 211a1-2, 211b2-5), and by contemplating it, the lover is in direct communion with it (συνόντος αὐτῷ, 212a2).

3. Contemplating *to kalon*

What is, however, this Form of the Fine contemplated at the end of the ascent, and what is its relationship with the Form of the Good?

When Diotima first defines the *ergon* of *erôs* (206b7-206e5), she describes the erotic arousal as a bodily process, by combining the male paradigm of erection, which

[423] For this interpretation, see e.g. Rowe (1998) 201.

[424] Sedley (2017) 97.

involves production of seed and generation (διαχεῖται, γεννᾷ vs συσπειρᾶται καὶ ἀποτρέπεται καὶ ἀνείλλεται καὶ οὐ γεννᾷ, 206d4-7), with the female paradigm of pregnancy (κυεῖν, 206c1, 206d4, 8) and production of offspring (τίκτειν, 206c4, etc.).[425] As a result, the fine (*to kalon*) which is supposed to foster the erotic arousal, is both the aesthetic 'beauty', likely to arouse male sexual desire, and the opportune moment, the appropriate conditions (*kairos*) in which a woman can give birth.[426] In this latter view, *to kalon* takes the abstract sense of what is fitting (cf. ἁρμόττον, 206d2).

This non-aesthetic sense of *to kalon* seems to gain strength in the higher mysteries, when Diotima enumerates the objects that appeal to *erôs* in the soul — fine occupations and laws (τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν) and fine sciences (ἐπιστημῶν κάλλος, 210c3-7). In the *Gorgias* (474d3e-5), Socrates says that things like bodies are called fine (καλά) on account of either the pleasure (ἡδονή) they provide or their use (χρεία, ὠφελία, the two terms being, in the dialogue, synonymous with τὸ ἀγαθόν).[427] This semantic ambivalence seems to hold good also for occupations and laws, at least from Polos' point of view (κατὰ τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα, *Gorg*. 474e5-6). We might surmise, though, that from a Socratic point of view at least, the good or the useful prevails when it comes to assessing this sort of things: the legal frame of Socrates' *Kallipolis* in the *Republic*, and the various occupations prescribed to the citizens are first and foremost designed in view of what is good and beneficent — not pleasant — to the citizens. Whatever may be the case, when, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates talks of sciences (ἐπιστῆμαι, τέχναι), any ambivalence about the criterion of *to kalon* is ruled out (464b2-465a7): an activity (ἐπιτήδευμα) is a science (τέχνη) if and only if it knows the good and aims at achieving it (τοῦ βελτίστου φροντίζει); if it aims at pleasure, it is a mere practice (ἐμπειρία), and such sciences include legislation (νομοθετική, 464b8, 465c3, 520b3). Socrates also supports this view in *Republic* 10 when he says that the user (ὁ χρώμενος) is the only one who actually knows the fine (τὸ κάλλος): the fine, in this case, is of a piece with the 'good' and the 'right', and these notions are directly related to the utility of the things they characterize:

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[425] This combination is obvious in phrases such as ἡ κύησις καὶ ἡ γέννησις (206c7-8); τίκτει τε καὶ γεννᾷ (206d5). On this ambiguity, see Cooksey (2010) 75-6.

[426] Cf. e.g. τίκτειν (...) ἐν (...) τῷ καλῷ, 206c. Brisson (2007) 149 rightly translates: 'accoucher ... à terme'.

[427] Cf. 475a3, 477a1-2.

> Οὐκοῦν ἀρετὴ καὶ κάλλος καὶ ὀρθότης ἑκάστου σκεύους καὶ ζῴου καὶ πράξεως οὐ πρὸς ἄλλο τι ἢ τὴν χρείαν ἐστίν, πρὸς ἣν ἂν ἕκαστον ᾖ πεποιημένον ἢ πεφυκός; (*Resp*. 10.601d4-6)

Understanding what is *kalon* in medical science surely does not amount to knowing the kinds of medications which are the most pleasant to the patient, but rather the most efficient and beneficial ones. By moving from the understanding of τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν (210c3-4), to the knowledge of ἐπιστημῶν κάλλος (210c7), that is, of the *sciences* on which activities and laws are based, Diotima's lover may thus be prompted by the educator to grasp a more abstract notion of the fine: not just 'beauty', but rather goodness, or virtue (*to agathon, aretê*).

It seems thus reasonable to assume, after other commentators, that, at the top of the ladder, the Form of the Fine contemplated by the lover, which is completely devoid of sensible characteristics (211e1-3), is identical, at least for its content, to the Form of the Good which is also the highest object of knowledge (τὸ μέγιστον μάθημα) contemplated at the end of the philosophical ascent in the *Republic*.[428] The Form of *to kalon* remains formally distinct from the Form of *to agathon* in that it is the proper object of *erôs*, and contemplating it provides pleasure; it is, as Sheffield suggests, the Form of the Good 'that shows forth', that appears in such a way that it can appeal to *erôs*.[429]

If, at the level of abstraction reached at the top of the ladder, *to kalon* amounts to *to agathon* and *aretê*, it may also amount to essence (*ousia*). In Book 1 of the *Republic*, the function (ἔργον) that gives its definition to anything (a horse, a pruning knife, etc.) is its proper virtue (οἰκεία ἀρετή): it allows it to perform well (καλῶς) a particular task (352e2-353d1). As a result, knowing what something is involves knowing what it is good at. This explains why, in Book 10, the user (ὁ χρώμενος), who knows the fine (κάλλος) and the virtue (ἀρετή) of what (s)he uses, also knows its 'correctness' (ὀρθότης), and possesses full knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of what things truly are (601d4-602a1). Plato gives a metaphysical account of this relationship between the good, knowledge, and the truth in the central books of the *Republic*: the Form of the Good is

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[428] *Resp.* 6.505e-505a, 7.519c.

[429] Sheffield (2017) 126. For this interpretation, see also Kosman (2010) 355, Lear (2006) 107ff and Gerson (2016). On the close relationship between *to kalon* and *to agathon* in the *Symposium*, see Dover (1980) 136, Price (1997) 16, White (1989) 149–57, Ferrari (1992) 266, Reeve (1992) 102, and Sheffield (2006a) 96. Note however that the two notions remain distinct in the *Republic*, 5.475e9-476a4.

what gives essence and intelligibility to everything that exists (αἰτίαν δ' ἐπιστήμης οὖσαν καὶ ἀληθείας, 6.508e3); the dialectician cannot know the essence (*ousia*) of anything before grasping the first principle of everything (τὴν τοῦ παντὸς ἀρχήν, 6.511b7), that is, *to megiston mathêma*. We can thus assume that, if at the bottom of Diotima's ladder of lover, the novice lover falls in love with the aesthetical beauty of the body, he is led to understand throughout the ascent, particularly when he looks back at the ocean of beauty (210d4-5), that what is actually *kalon* in that body is what is *agathon*, namely, what allows it to perform well (*kalôs*) its proper function (*ergon*). In other words, the lover is led to understand the *ergon* and the *ousia* of what he, in the first place, appreciated as just 'beautiful' and sexually appealing.

4. Lower and higher mysteries

Another issue is the precise relationship between the two sections usually labelled as the 'lower' (207a5-209e4), and 'higher' mysteries (209e5-212c3).

a. A tentative account

If *to kalon* is eventually the essence (*ousia*), the search for this notion, undertaken in the higher mysteries under the direction of a teacher (cf. ὁ ἡγούμενος, 210a7, παιδαγωγηθῇ, 210e3), and about which Plato gives so few details, may correspond, as Hunter suggests, to the dialectical inquiry in which Socrates engages his interlocutors in many dialogues.[430] Of course we can think of the investigation about *to kalon* carried out in the *Hippias Major*, a dialogue which looks like a practical, though limited, implementation of Diotima's research programme.[431] Yet since searching for the fine may amount to understanding the good and the essence (*ousia*), Diotima may have more generally inspired all the Socratic inquiries into the common nature of a group of objects, or notions. In the *Theaetetus*, for example, Socrates is asking for the concept that unifies the many fine sciences (καλαὶ ἐπιστῆμαι, *Tht*. 146e8-10) which Theaetetus mentioned at the start of the dialogue; and Socrates famously assures his young

[430] Hunter (2004a) 93-4.

[431] See esp. the initial question (τί ἐστι τὸ καλόν; 286d1-2), the search for the fine in many practices (περὶ τῶν καλῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων, 287b6-7), and the reference to Hippias' fine pieces of knowledge (ἃ σὺ κάλλιστα ἐπίστασαι, 285b8-d3).

interlocutor that, just like Diotima's lover, he is pregnant with knowledge and can give birth to the answer by himself (ὠδίνειν τι κυοῦντα ἔνδον, *Tht*. 151b7-c2).

If this interpretation is correct, Diotima's higher mysteries should not be taken as a description of the natural behaviour that *erôs* prompts in lovers: as already said, Diotima indicates in several places that her lover is subject to strict guidance (cf. ὁ ἡγούμενος, 210a7, παιδαγωγηθῇ, 210e3), (s)he is constrained (ἀναγκασθῇ, 210c3) to climb from one rung to another, just as the unchained prisoner, in the Allegory of the Cave, is forced to look at the light of the fire, and to answer the question about the essence (*ousia*) of things (ἀναγκάζοι ἐρωτῶν ἀποκρίνεσθαι ὅτι ἔστιν, *Resp*. 7.515d5).[432] Like the way out of the cave, Diotima's ascent does not describe what people spontaneously do, but what they should do, under the enlightened conduct of an expert educator, and what only the best skilled can achieve — arguably the philosophic nature (ἡ φιλόσοφος φύσις, *Resp.* 3.410e1).[433]

As a result, we might wonder in what sense the higher mysteries provide a 'true', or 'genuine' account of *erôs*. Plato's answer I suggest is complex. At the start of his encomium, no doubt, Socrates vows to tell only the truth about *erôs*: unlike the previous speakers, he will not ascribe to the god qualities which do not actually belong to him (198d5-199a3). But he also makes clear that the chief purpose of his encomium is not to tell the *whole* truth[434]:

> Ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ ὑπ᾽ ἀβελτερίας ᾤμην δεῖν (i) τἀληθῆ λέγειν περὶ ἑκάστου τοῦ ἐγκωμιαζομένου, καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ὑπάρχειν, (ii) ἐξ αὐτῶν δὲ τούτων τὰ κάλλιστα ἐκλεγομένους ὡς εὐπρεπέστατα τιθέναι. (*Smp*. 198d3-6)

To be sure, a good start (i) is to give a fair and naturalistic picture of the subject to be praised, that is, to tell the *whole* truth about it. But this is only the foundation of the encomium (τοῦτο μὲν ὑπάρχειν). The encomium as such (ii) consists in 'selecting', within this naturalistic picture, some features that are likely to show that *erôs* is praiseworthy (τὰ κάλλιστα ἐκλεγομένους), and 'to arrange them in the most attractive way possible' (ὡς εὐπρεπέστατα τιθέναι). We can map this plan to the structure of Diotima's discourse.

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[432] See also 515c6 (ἀναγκάζοιτο) and 515e8 (ἐξελκύσειεν).

[433] On this notion, see Dixsaut (2001).

[434] As Nightingale (1993) 127-30 seems to assume.

(i) As long as Diotima claims to describe plainly *erôs* (ὁποῖός τίς, ὁποῖός τίς, 199c3-206a16, see above p. 161) she gives a rather complete and naturalistic picture revealing features which are not particularly praiseworthy, such as being son of Penia, not being a god, being a sorcerer and a sophist, or lacking the good and the fine (see esp. 203c6-d3).

(ii) The encomium properly speaking starts when Diotima displays the *erga* of *erôs* (206b1-212c3, see above p. 161ff): by focusing on *erôs*' potential to lead human beings to a divine state of immortality, she selects (cf. ἐκλέγεσθαι) one particular characteristic of *erôs* (reproduction) which seems especially conducive to praise. She then leaves aside many bad things that *erôs* can also bring about, as poets have long recognized: pain, folly, crime, etc.[435] From 208c1 onward, as we saw, Diotima carries on with selecting (ἐκλέγεσθαι), within the vast field of reproductive activities, the kind of reproduction which is most conducive to virtue and happiness: reproduction of the soul (208c1-212a7). Within this final part, a first subsection (the 'lower mysteries', 208c1-209e4), focuses on the benefits of *erôs* among the most illustrious human beings: heroes, poets, educators. Those men, however, are past figures of excellence whose existence is attested (historically or mythically): all the virtuous deeds Diotima refers to in this section are supposed to have been achieved and to be well known by the audience. We may debate whether Diotima is right in claiming that Homer's poems and Solon's laws are characteristic products of *erôs*; but we cannot deny that Homer wrote poems, that Solon wrote laws, and that, thereby, they transmitted to posterity a testimony of their virtue — however genuine (ἀληθής) this virtue should be viewed. Until the end of the lower mysteries, Diotima provides an erotic interpretation of natural, historical or mythological *data*.

By contrast, the higher mysteries, which are conspicuously devoid of any natural, historical or mythological reference, reveal how *erôs could* provide (in the future) the highest kind of benefit, how it could lead an elite class of people, much more select than past heroes, poets and lawgivers (i.e. the philosophic natures[436]) to give birth to true virtue and to achieve the highest possible form of immortality. In this final and prospective account, Diotima carries on with selecting (ἐκλέγεσθαι) the virtues of *erôs*, by focussing on one particular feature (its potential to know the fine) which certainly belongs to the nature of *erôs*, but which has been insufficiently exploited by human

[435] See above p. 19.

[436] See above p. 169.

beings up to Plato's time, including the best poets and lawgivers. Diotima's final picture is thus true and natural insofar as it exploits some potentialities that truly or naturally belong to *erôs*; but it is not true in that it provides a full and naturalistic account of what *erôs* has achieved in the world and in human beings thus far.

To summarize, (1) the ascent of the higher mysteries is not a description of what *erôs* does but a prescription of how to use it with a particular educational purpose: understanding the Form of *to kalon*; (2) this ascent thus requires the constant help of an educator, a guide who leads the student through the right procedure (ἐὰν ὀρθῶς ἡγῆται ὁ ἡγούμενος, 210a6-7).[437] With those two points in mind, me might be able to disprove two influential criticisms levelled at Diotima's love ascent.

b. Vlastos' criticism

According to Vlastos, 'the cardinal flaw in Plato's theory' is that it ignores the true nature of love (*erôs* or *philia*). By nature, love is focused on an individual subject, and values him or her as a whole (including his or her flaws), but Diotima's lover only values the fine qualities of the individual: he takes the individual not as an end, but as an image of the fine, thus using the beloved as an instrument in order to reach the Form of the Fine (cf. ὥσπερ ἐπαναβασμοῖς χρώμενον, 211c3).[438] The gist of this criticism, taken over by Nussbaum, is that Diotima's higher mysteries do not provide a naturalistic picture of *erôs*.[439]

This criticism has already been opposed by commentators who argue that Diotima's depiction is more naturalistic than Vlastos and Nussbaum claimed. Sheffield, for example, is convinced by Diotima's demonstration that the final goal of *erôs* is *eudaimonia*: no surprise, therefore, that 'in our aspiration towards happiness we need to look beyond individuals'.[440] Nehamas reads Diotima's theory 'not just as an inspired (and inspiring) flight of the imagination but also as something we can actually believe', since 'wherever love and beauty are present there is also the effort to understand what

[437] The point has already been made by Hunter (2004a) 93.

[438] Vlastos (1981) 31f.

[439] See Nussbaum (1986) 167, 197.

[440] Sheffield (2006a) 162; for her whole response to Vlastos, see 155-63.

we love or, what comes to the same thing, to understand why we love it'; in his view, there is indeed a 'forward-looking element' in *erôs*.'[441]

Vlastos' criticism, however, can also be addressed by arguing, as I did, that Diotima does not intend to provide a naturalistic picture of *erôs* in the passage. Diotima's higher mysteries do not claim to be 'true' by providing a naturalistic account of the workings of *erôs* — but rather by showing how an educator can exploit *one* true feature of *erôs* (its attraction towards the fine) in order to achieve a purpose which has nothing to do with what lovers spontaneously look for. Vlastos' and Nussbaum's criticisms seem to be based on a confusion between the two meanings of 'being true' that we tried to distinguish. Diotima, Socrates, and Plato would presumably have agreed with Vlastos and Nussbaum that, left to his or her own devices, a lover may never go beyond the love for *one* body (210a7-8) or *one* soul (210b8-c3). However, depicting only what *erôs* commonly does would not bring Diotima very far in terms of praising the god as he deserves (ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι, 177c3), that is, showing that he can lead to the highest form of virtue and happiness. Diotima's response is that *erôs* does have this power, but since her conception of virtue and happiness is highly demanding and involves a kind of education which has not been implemented so far (dialectic inquiry and the acquisition of philosophical knowledge), *erôs* must be used in a way that must necessarily depart from our common erotic experiences. To Diotima's ears, Vlastos' and Nussbaum's puzzlement might thus not have sounded as a criticism, but rather as a compliment addressed to her encomiastic strategy.

c. Nehamas' criticism

Although Nehamas argues against Vlastos' charge, he levels his own criticism at Diotima's theory:

> Unlike Plato, I don't believe that the lover's beautiful *logoi* necessarily result in the creation of virtue and for that reason, although I do agree that they result in the creation of more beauty, I think that they contain an element of ineliminable risk. But, like him, I am convinced that beauty is a spur to creation. And, instead of seeing it as an infallible guide, I prefer to think of it somewhat as Stendhal did: beauty, the object of love, is 'only a promise of happiness', not always fulfilled. (Nehamas 2007: 14)

[441] Nehamas (2007) 1 and 10.

Diotima would arguably have agreed with Stendhal too, since her claim is not, as Nehamas assumes, to describe what 'necessarily results' from the lover's beautiful *logoi*, but what results from the best of them — the *logoi* that Socrates cautiously selected in the lower mysteries: the discourses of educators, poets, and lawgivers. Furthermore, the higher mysteries show that such *logoi* can convey *true* virtue only at the end of a painful educative programme and under the direction of an educator. The 'infallible guide' in the ascent, is surely not 'beauty' itself, as Nehamas assumes; it is, as Diotima makes it clear, an educator in the flesh (ὁ ἡγούμενος, 210a7), who is certainly aware that beauty is 'only a promise of happiness' but who also knows how to present beautiful objects in such a way that they can lead to happiness (the philosophical understanding of the fine). Nehamas' criticism may be based both on a misreading of the text and on an assumption similar to Vlastos' and Nussbaum's: he seems to expect the higher mysteries to yield a naturalistic description of the workings of *erôs*, whereas these mysteries are only a depiction of the workings of *erôs properly* conducted (cf. ἐὰν ὀρθῶς ἡγῆται ὁ ἡγούμενος, 210a2).

We can finally grasp better the combination between higher and lower mysteries. What opposes the production of *aretê* in the two passages is thus surely the motivation of the lovers, as Sheffield puts it: φιλοτιμία (208c2) vs φιλοσοφία (210d6);[442] but it may also be more fundamentally a traditional vs a novel way of producing *aretê*. This may be clearly indicated by Diotima's warning to Socrates, at the outset of the higher mysteries:

> Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἴσως, ὦ Σώκρατες, κἂν σὺ μυηθείης· τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά, ὧν ἕνεκα καὶ ταῦτα ἔστιν, ἐάν τις ὀρθῶς μετίῃ, οὐκ οἶδ' εἰ οἷός τ' ἂν εἴης. (*Smp*. 209e5-210a2)

Vlastos might be right when he says that Plato here signals the limit reached by the philosophy of the historical Socrates,[443] but the passage may more importantly point to the novelty of Diotima's higher mysteries: Plato makes clear that what the priestess is about to lay down is a way of using *erôs* which has not been attempted so far, and which, as a result, may be difficult for Socrates (and Plato's reader) both to understand (as an audience) and to experience properly (as lovers and students).[444]

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[442] See Sheffield (2006a) 79, 89, 91, 95.

[443] Vlastos (1981) 21 n. 58; see also Markus (1971) 134.

[444] On Diotima's mysteries, see also Sheffield (2001a), Ferrari (1992) 254-60, and Patterson (1991).

II. Solving problems

Diotima does not only provide an encomium of *erôs* which is original in itself; she also closely draws on the former speeches by showing that *erôs* can be conducive to the kind of virtues and goods each of them advertised: military courage (Phaedrus), wisdom (Pausanias), harmonious balance (Eryximachus); but, unlike them, she manages to show that *erôs* can achieve this through a mechanism which is properly erotic.

A. Response to Phaedrus

As we saw, the gist of Phaedrus' encomium consisted, at the end, in offering an original interpretation of three heroic deeds (179b4-180b5). In so doing, Phaedrus managed to argue that *erôs* was responsible for leading not only us but the best of us to virtue and happiness. Diotima's encomium reminds us of these three heroic examples, explicitly or implicitly; and thanks to her novel view of *erôs*, she shows in a more convincing way how all these deeds can be viewed as erotically inspired.

1. Alcestis and Achilles

a. Common points

The most explicit echoes of Phaedrus' theory can be found at the start of the lower mysteries, when Diotima explains how lovers, who fundamentally strive for immortality, can reach their aim by giving birth to memorable offspring of virtue (208c2-209a4). *Erôs* there is said to lead to various goods: it inspires φιλοτιμία (208c3, cf. Phaedrus: 178d2, e6), thus prompting heroes to perform ἀρετή (208d6-7, cf. 179a8, d2, 180a8, b7) by sacrificing themselves (ὑπεραποθνήσκειν, ἐπαποθνήσκειν, 208d2-4, cf. 179b4, 180a1). This finally leads to a form of εὐδαιμονία (205d2-3, 208e4, cf. 180b7), which consists in enjoying divine favours (212a6, cf.179d1-2, 180a2-b8), and achieving a longer — or even eternal life (ἀθάνατος, 208c6, 208d7-e1, 212a7, cf. 179c6-7, 180b5); Diotima cites Alcestis and Patroclus as typical examples for this theory (208d2-3, cf. Phaedrus: 179b6, 180a4), thus making it clear that she is reminding us of what Phaedrus said.

b. Differences

Through this pattern of word echoes, Diotima primarily points to the differences between her and Phaedrus' accounts: although her *erôs* leads to similar goods (φιλοτιμία, ἀρετή, εὐδαιμονία, ἀθανασία), it does it through a different process. In Phaedrus' account, *erôs* is directed towards a person — it has a singular motivation which is obviously the acquisition of particular benefits from the beloved (sexual gratification) or from the lover (esteem and protection), and these benefits are not heroic in themselves. Therefore, Phaedrus viewed *erôs* as an emotion that could prompt to *philotimia* and to the various goods resulting from this ambition: performing the fine (ἐπὶ δὲ τοῖς καλοῖς φιλοτιμίαν, 178d2) and acquiring divine privileges (long life, immortality); but *erôs* led to these benefits vicariously, since the final goal of the lover was not to acquire these objects. The surrogate *philotimia* inspired by *erôs* in the army of lovers and even in Alcestis had thus to be distinguished from *philotimia* as such, which motivates those who, like Achilles, are viewed as virtuous by nature.

According to Diotima, *erôs* desires nothing else but the fine, and *timê* is one of the fine objects (*ta kala*) which arouse *erôs*; glory is a memorable virtue-offspring and can thus lead us to our final (erotic) purpose: immortality. As a result, Diotima's erotic *philotimia* is not a proxy for the genuine one: *philotimia* is by nature erotic; it is one of the direct manifestations (*erga*) of *erôs* and pursues the same goal as *erôs*: the fine and the good. Therefore by prompting us to *philotimia*, *erôs* seeks nothing other than what epic heroes look for: a fine *public* reputation (*timê*) — not just some private recognition and gratification — and immortal glory, Homer's *kleos aphthiton*. Diotima points to that identification between erotic and heroic goals by referring to the object of *erôs* through a poetic hexameter:

> δεινῶς διάκεινται ἔρωτι τοῦ ὀνομαστοὶ γενέσθαι "καὶ κλέος ἐς τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον ἀθάνατον καταθέσθαι" (*Smp*. 208c4-6).[445]

[445] Although not borrowed from a known text, the hexameter refers to a heroic context. Bury (1932) 118 points to similarities with Tyrtaeus (12.31-2), Theognis (245-6), and Simonides (99.1). Bury and Rowe (1998) 188 take it as invented by Socrates or Diotima.

c. Solving Phaedrus' problems

Diotima's different view of *erôs* allows her to account in a more convincing way for the erotic motivations of heroes like Alcestis and Achilles.

i. Alcestis

Phaedrus failed to show how Alcestis actually acted as a lover: since her *erôs* was supposed to be directed towards one person (Admetus), it was unclear how this emotion could have prompted her decision to die, that is, to be irrevocably separated from the object of her love. Diotima's view of *erôs* as the desire, not necessarily for a fine person, but for the fine as such and, ultimately, for immortality, allows her to better demonstrate the erotic motivation of Alcestis' self-sacrifice: through this deed, Alcestis turns out to have satisfied (διαπράξασθαι) her *erôs*: not by having sexual intercourse with Admetus, but by consorting with the fine *timê*, and by giving birth to an immortal offspring (κλέος ἐς τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον ἀθάνατον, 208c5-6).

ii. Achilles

Diotima also provides a better account of the erotic motives of Achilles' *aristeia*. On Phaedrus' account, since genuine *philotimia* had to be distinguished from the surrogate *philotimia* prompted by *erôs*, Achilles, the paradigm of the 'best by nature' could not be viewed as an *erastês*. To be sure, by characterizing him as an *erômenos*, Phaedrus managed to salvage his heroism: his courage was not directly supported by *erôs*, and the hero still acted for the sake of *to kalon*. But this account led to problems. (1) It was unclear why the divine in the particular form of *Erôs* had to appeal to the virtuous person (the genuine *philotimos*), more than any other fine or divine object; Phaedrus eventually failed to demonstrate that *erôs* was *especially* conducive to the best performance of virtue. (2) Phaedrus' account led to the paradoxical view that *erôs* should be conceived as the object of a desire (i.e. Achilles' affection for his *erastês*, cf. ἀγαπᾷ, 180b2), whereas *erôs* is by definition desire itself.

(1) Now that, with Diotima, the objects of *erôs* are of a piece with those of genuine (heroic) *philotimia* (public glory and immortality), Achilles can be viewed as an *erastês* without losing his heroic credentials. Someone who is best by nature (ὁ ἄριστος φύσει,

179a8, that is, a hero genuinely attached to the fine and the good) can act through *erôs*, since *erôs* is nothing else than an appreciation of the fine and a striving towards the good. As a result, *erôs* is no longer conceived as one among many other fine and divine objects that can appeal to the virtuous person: it is the only passion that is aroused by *all* the many fine things (including *timê*), and with such an intensity that it can prompt to extreme deeds like self-sacrifices. Just as Diotima revealed that *philotimia* is, by nature, erotic, she now shows that what Phaedrus viewed in Achilles as a mere reverence or affection (*agapê*) for the fine and the divine, is nothing else than *erôs*.

(2) As a result, too, *erôs* is no longer viewed as the object of desire. Diotima reproaches Agathon for depicting *Erôs* as the fine thing (τὸ καλόν), which is the object of desire (τὸ ἐρώμενον), whereas *erôs*, in her view, is the desire (τὸ ἐρῶν) that tends to the fine (204c1-6). This reproach also applies to the ultimate consequence of Phaedrus' theory.

iii. Closing the debate

By correcting Phaedrus' account, Diotima can provide a final answer to the question whether and how erotic motivations should be ascribed to Achilles' *aristeia*. The issue was explicitly raised by Phaedrus' argument with Aeschylus, but, as we suggested, it referred to a more general question, maybe already debated in Plato's time or before: should we consider as truly virtuous some heroic deeds which are fuelled by *erôs*? Is a hero still a hero when (s)he acts through *erôs*? Such a question was bound to arise, once the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus came to be eroticized — maybe first by Aeschylus — in an attempt to adapt the Homeric code of honour to the modern ethics of *paiderastia*. In light of this question, as we saw, Phaedrus' criticism of Aeschylus, who depicted Achilles as an *erastês*, made reasonable sense. As long as *erôs* is commonly conceived as a passion attached to a particular person, a conception shared by Phaedrus but also Aeschylus and Homer, a hero acting through *erôs* does not act for the sake of *to kalon*. Diotima takes over the question, and, by showing that *erôs* is not primarily attached to a fine person, but to the fine (τὸ καλόν) itself, she can argue that Achilles acted both as a lover *and* as a hero.

Diotima's approach is thus in some respects less revisionist than Phaedrus'. When postulating a personal love relationship between Achilles and Patroclus, Phaedrus departed from Homer's account; and when claiming that, in this relationship, Achilles was the *erômenos*, he departed from Aeschylus' adaptation of Homer. Diotima does not

blatantly contradict the previous accounts, neither the Homeric, nor the Aeschylean one. By defining *erôs* not as an interpersonal relationship but as an emotion directly instantiated by *philotimia*, Diotima does not need to introduce in the heroes an emotion which is not depicted in Homer (interpersonal love). She rather picks up an emotion which is familiar in the epic poem (Achilles' characteristic susceptibility in matters of honour) and shows how it can be explained in terms of *erôs*. Her account also remains in line with Aeschylus' characterization of Achilles as an *erastês*, although she shows that Achilles was in love in a quite different way than in the tragic drama. Whereas Phaedrus' *epideixis* consisted in contradicting Homer and Aeschylus, Diotima proves right two poets who apparently contradicted each other.

2. Orpheus

Unlike Alcestis and Achilles, Orpheus is not explicitly mentioned by Diotima, but several passages of her speech echo the characteristic features Phaedrus ascribed to Orpheus. Phaedrus depicted the hero as a poet and musician (κιθαρῳδός) who used his cunning intelligence (διαμηχανᾶσθαι) to resuscitate his beloved (ἐξ Ἅιδου ἀνεῖναι πάλιν τὴν ψυχήν) and stay alive (ζῶν εἰσιέναι εἰς Ἅιδου, 179c7-d7). Diotima depicts *Erôs* as a schemer (ἐπίβουλος, δεινὸς γόης καὶ φαρμακεὺς καὶ σοφιστής) who 'keeps weaving devices' (ἀεί τινας πλέκων μηχανάς, 203d6), and uses his resources to live and come to life again (θάλλει τε καὶ ζῇ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ (...) πάλιν δὲ ἀναβιώσκεται, 203e2-3). Later on, once Diotima has revealed that producing immortal offspring is the purpose of *erôs*, poetic discourses are cited as a prime example of such products:

> Καὶ πᾶς ἂν δέξαιτο ἑαυτῷ τοιούτους παῖδας μᾶλλον γεγονέναι ἢ τοὺς ἀνθρωπίνους, καὶ εἰς Ὅμηρον ἀποβλέψας καὶ Ἡσίοδον καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους ποιητὰς τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ζηλῶν, οἷα ἔκγονα ἑαυτῶν καταλείπουσιν, ἃ ἐκείνοις ἀθάνατον κλέος καὶ μνήμην παρέχεται αὐτὰ τοιαῦτα ὄντα· (*Smp*. 209c7-d4)

Diotima here indirectly sheds a new light on Orpheus' achievements. Phaedrus assumed that, if one is really in love *with* someone, one must be ready to die *for* him or her; this led him to view Orpheus as a weak lover and a failing hero: being a *kitharôdos* and finding *mêkhanai* in order to live longer pointed to a lack of commitment to the *erôs* relationship. In Diotima's broader view of *erôs*, finding devices that allow us to live longer is the very object of *erôs*, and artistic products such as Homer's poems or Orpheus' songs are immortal virtue-offspring as much as Alcestis' and Achilles' self-

sacrifices. As we saw, they are even more valued than brave deeds, since they are products of wisdom (φρόνησις, 209a3) and lead to a firmer form of immortality. Thanks to her re-definition of *erôs*, Diotima can now show how Orpheus' love for Eurydice was a manifestation of virtue, and she can solve a problem that appeared in Phaedrus' account: the unfair dismissal of Orpheus as a poor lover and a poor hero. Of the three heroes discussed by Phaedrus, Orpheus was obviously the more in love; and since Phaedrus assumed that 'being virtuous' directly depended on 'being in love', it seemed logical that, against what he claimed, Orpheus surpassed Alcestis and Achilles also with respect to virtue. Diotima's account of *erôs* dispels the paradox: in her view Orpheus produced true manifestations of virtue which did surpass Alcestis' and Achilles' brave deeds.

By correcting Phaedrus' view, Diotima again seems to take up the traditional account of the myth. She agrees with all the poets that Orpheus was an outstanding lover who performed truly heroic actions. This is not to say that she does not improve on the tradition that she rehabilitates. In light of her theory, the final purpose of Orpheus was not, as the myth reports, to satisfy his *erôs* for Eurydice, nor to prolong Eurydice's and his (mortal) lives: Orpheus went to Hades and sang his poems in order to reach immortal glory. On this account, Eurydice was just the beautiful soul that allowed Orpheus to give vent to his erotic desire, namely, his *philotimia*.[446]

3. Diotima and the poetic tradition: giving an account

We finally get a better sense of the way Diotima draws on the traditions that Phaedrus himself reformulated. Phaedrus' *epideixis* consisted in distorting quite bluntly the myths: in the case of Achilles and Alcestis, he argued for interpersonal erotic motives which poets usually did not recognize, and he downplayed the erotic and heroic nature of Orpheus' *katabasis* which poets commonly viewed as the exemplar of heroic deeds inspired by *erôs*.

Diotima's rejuvenation of the tradition is more subtle: she shows that, in the heroic myth where *erôs* reportedly did not play any role (Achilles, Alcestis), some emotions which are traditionally ascribed to the heroes (*philotimia*, *agapê*) should be viewed as erotic,

[446] Or, if we take ἐν καλῷ as 'at the right time' (cf. above p. 166) we could say that rescuing Eurydice from Hades was for Orpheus the good opportunity to compose his outstanding poems.

provided we give a broader meaning to *erôs*: not just desire for a fine person (interpersonal *erôs*) but desire for the fine in itself and for immortality (*erôs* 'broadly speaking'). She also shows that, in the stories where *erôs* explicitly played an important part (Orpheus' myth, or Aeschylus' version of Achilles' myth), *erôs* did have a crucial function; but that this function can be properly recognized and understood only in light of her novel definition of *erôs*. While Phaedrus intended to revise the literal account of the heroic narratives, Diotima intends to explain them by giving a new meaning to *erôs*.

Diotima herself might point explicitly to this explanatory, rather than revisionary, approach to the tradition when, at the start of the lower mysteries, she explains Achilles' and Alcestis' self-sacrifices in erotic terms, that is, in light of *erôs for immortality*. Then she claims to dispel the 'irrationality', or 'unreasonableness' (ἀλογία) that seems to characterize such a violent passion:

> Καὶ ἥ, ὥσπερ οἱ τέλεοι σοφισταί, εὖ ἴσθι, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες· ἐπεί γε καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰ ἐθέλεις εἰς τὴν φιλοτιμίαν βλέψαι, θαυμάζοις ἂν τῆς ἀλογίας περὶ ἃ ἐγὼ εἴρηκα εἰ μὴ ἐννοεῖς, ἐνθυμηθεὶς ὡς δεινῶς διάκεινται ἔρωτι τοῦ ὀνομαστοὶ γενέσθαι "καὶ κλέος ἐς τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον ἀθάνατον καταθέσθαι", καὶ ὑπὲρ τούτου κινδύνους τε κινδυνεύειν ἕτοιμοί εἰσι πάντας ἔτι μᾶλλον ἢ ὑπὲρ τῶν παίδων. (*Smp.* 208c1-d2)

περὶ ἃ ἐγὼ εἴρηκα refers back to the extreme dangers (including self-sacrifices) that all living beings, starting from the beasts, are ready to incur in order to save their progeny and immortalize themselves (207a6-c1).[447] Diotima now explains that, if we do not detect such a strong erotic motivation in *philotimia*, the most outstanding deeds performed through *philotimia* (self-sacrifices) would make no sense at all. Τῆς ἀλογίας suggests that the (erotic) explanation Diotima gives to *philotimia* amounts to giving an account (*logon didonai*) of this emotion.

Logon didonai is the task that Socrates assigns to the dialectician in the *Republic* (7.533c2) and the *Statesman* (285d4-286a5). In the *Gorgias* (463e5-465a7), the art of flattery (e.g. cookery and rhetoric) is characterized as an ἄλογον πρᾶγμα (465a6) since it ignores what is best for us, but only pretends (προσποιεῖται, 464d4) to know it, and 'has no account to give (οὐκ ἔχει λόγον οὐδένα) of the real nature (φύσιν) of the things it applies, so that it cannot tell the cause (αἰτίαν) of any of them' (465a3-5).

[447] As Rowe (1998) 188 and Brisson (2007) 213, n. 447 explain the phrase.

Diotima herself has just referred to this procedure in her depiction of *erôs* a few pages earlier. In order to explain what an intermediary (μεταξύ) is, she took correct opinion (ἡ ὀρθὴ δόξα) as an example: this, she said, is neither ignorance (ἀμαθία) nor full knowledge (ἐπιστήμη, σοφία, φρόνησις), since it hits on the truth (τὸ γὰρ τοῦ ὄντος τυγχάνον), but can give no reason for what it claims (ἄνευ τοῦ ἔχειν λόγον δοῦναι, *Smp*. 202a2-9).[448] Furthermore, in her encomium, Diotima has already given a practical example of what *logon didonai* means, when insisting that, in order to get a full understanding of the nature of *erôs*, one should identify its final purpose (*telos*). As long as Socrates viewed *erôs* as being *of the fine things* (τῶν καλῶν), he could not understand the final purpose that one pursues through the possession of the fine; it is only when Diotima suggested that *erôs* also aimed at the good that he could perceive the final purpose of *erôs* (reaching happiness). At that stage of the argument, Diotima said:

> ἀλλὰ τέλος δοκεῖ ἔχειν ἡ ἀπόκρισις. (*Smp*. 204d8-205a3)

By these words, Diotima meant not only that she and Socrates reached the end (τέλος) of the inquiry, but also that they managed to do so by finding the final purpose (τέλος) of *erôs*. Through the word ἀλογία (208c3) Diotima might thus point to the fact that, by being unaware of the very (erotic) definition and purpose (τέλος) of *philotimia*, by assuming, like Sarpedon, that *philotimia* aims at nothing more than some benefits to be enjoyed in the course of our life, Phaedrus had only an opinion (*doxa*) about this emotion.[449] By understanding that *philotimia* shares the very purpose (*telos*) of *erôs* (achieving a kind of immortality), one can move from *doxa* to *epistêmê*, since one can make sense of and account for (*logon didonai*) the extreme dangers run by all those who, through *philotimia*, die for someone (*huperapothnêskein*), including the best heroes.

Similarly, Diotima's theory casts a new light on Orpheus' *erôs*. It appears now that, in order to account for the hero's outstanding deeds (the risks he ran and the poetic songs he performed in Hades), the common view that he was just in love with Eurydice looks unsatisfactory: this does not explain how this lover stands out from ordinary lovers.

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[448] On δόξα ὀρθή/ἀληθής, see also Pl. *Tim*. 51d3-e6, *Tht.* 200e4-210b3, *Resp.* 6.506c6-9, 10.602a3-9, *Meno* 97a6-98c7.

[449] See Sarpedon's lesson to Glaucon at *Il*. 12.310-21 (cf. p. 42) and Phaedrus' view of *philotimia* in the army of lovers.

Diotima's theory rather indicates that, in such erotic passions, there must be something stronger than just love for a fine person.

If Diotima intends to dispel the *alogia* of traditional stories by revealing the *telos* of *erôs*, Socrates might be directly referring to this project when, at the start of the account, he characterizes the priestess as speaking ὥσπερ οἱ τέλεοι σοφισταί (208c1). In the lower mysteries, as we saw, Diotima does not talk yet of the ideal form of virtue that philosophers are expected to produce in the higher mysteries: she instead gives an account of the famous actions which are reported by the tradition and displayed by educators as typical examples of virtues. These educators include Homer and Hesiod, of course (cf. 209d1), but also the sophists, who use poetical accounts in order to illustrate their moral lessons: familiar examples are Prodicus' fable of Heracles in Xenophon (*Mem*. 2.1), to which Phaedrus alluded at the start of the dialogue (177b2-4), or the myth of Prometheus, as Protagoras recounts and adapts it in Plato (*Prot*. 320c7-324d1). Diotima's contribution in the lower mysteries is to show that, contrary to the interpretation provided by these traditional educators, the final purpose (τέλος) of the deeds reported in the stories on which they base their teaching is erotic. Just as Diotima gave a full explanation (*logon didonai*) of *erôs* by revealing its *telos*, she dispels the *alogia* that characterizes the mythical accounts as they are reported by poets and sophists by showing that the *telos* of the heroic deeds is in line with the *telos* of *erôs*: producing immortal children. Socrates may be punning here, as he and the other symposiasts do throughout the dialogue.[450] But the joke is serious, as often in Plato. Socrates might mean that, by revealing the final goal (τέλος) of *erôs*, Diotima can speak as an achieved or 'completed' (τέλεος) sophist: although still drawing on the kinds of heroic exempla the sophists and their pupils (e.g. Phaedrus) use to refer to, she alone is able to give a full (erotic) account of these stories.

Thanks to a further wordplay on τέλος / τέλεος, Diotima herself characterizes her final erotic ascent as a mystery initiation (τελετή):

> Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἴσως, ὦ Σώκρατες, κἂν σὺ μυηθείης· τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά, ὧν ἕνεκα καὶ ταῦτα ἔστιν, ἐάν τις ὀρθῶς μετίῃ, οὐκ οἶδ᾽ εἰ οἷός τ᾽ ἂν εἴης. (*Smp*. 209e5-210a2)

[450] See, e.g., his initial distortion of the proverb (Ἀγάθων᾽ ἐπὶ δαῖτας ἴασιν αὐτόματοι ἀγαθοί, 174b4), or Aristodemus' Παυσανίου δὲ παυσαμένου (185c4).

τὰ τέλεα, in light of the immediate textual context (μυηθείης, καὶ ἐποπτικά), sounds like an unambiguous reference to initiation rites (τελεταί). But in light of the following purpose clause (ὧν ἕνεκα καὶ ταῦτα ἔστιν), and of Socrates' previous pun on τέλος (purpose, 205a3) / τέλεος (achieved, 208c1), Diotima's lessons appear to be *telea* insofar as they provide a completed demonstration of the virtues of *erôs* (i.e. a proper encomium, ἀξίως ὑμνῆσαι, 177c3): they reveal the final educational purposes of *erôs*, i.e. not achieving immortal glory by indulging in *philotimia*, but contemplating *to kalon* by practising *philosophia*. In this final explanatory frame, as we saw, poets and educators who produce *kaloi logoi* do not do so in order to achieve poetic or political fame anymore, but in order to get a better grasp of *to kalon* in the practices and the laws they talk about (210c3-5), and to understand the final purpose (*to agathon*) of these notions (see above p. 165ff). The higher mysteries thus provide the final revision of the poetic tradition initiated by Phaedrus. This new account is not in contradiction with the poetic tradition, as Phaedrus' revision was: it is instead a teleological reinterpretation of it. More than any previous speaker, Diotima makes it clear that offering a proper encomium to *erôs* requires revealing its proper *telos*.

Conclusion

We saw how Diotima improves on Phaedrus' account: she confirms that the performances of virtue that Phaedrus viewed as erotic (Achilles and Alcestis) were actually prompted by *erôs*, but through another — more erotic — mechanism than the one described by Phaedrus; she also shows how, in the Orpheus myth, heroic actions dismissed by Phaedrus as unworthy of a lover and a hero were genuine heroic manifestations of virtue, and were directly prompted by *erôs*. In so doing Diotima reveals more convincingly than Phaedrus the link between *erôs* and human excellence. She also goes back to a more traditional version of the myths she draws on; but she does so at the cost of a re-definition of *erôs*, that reveals its final purpose and therefore allows her to 'give an account' of its workings.

B. Response to Pausanias

1. Similarities

Diotima's lower mysteries (208e1-209e4) sound like a distinct echo of Pausanias' encomium: *erôs* in the soul, directed towards males, is distinguished from, and more valued than, *erôs* in the body, which is rather directed towards females (208e1-209a3, cf. Pausanias: 181b2-3, 181c2-3); fine lovers are looking for fine souls to educate (ἐπιχειρεῖ παιδεύειν, 209c1-2, cf. 181c7-d1 etc.) by producing φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν (209a3-4), a literal echo of Pausanias' definition of virtue (cf. 184d7-e1). As in Pausanias' model, emphasis is laid on political wisdom:

> πολὺ δὲ μεγίστη, ἔφη, καὶ καλλίστη τῆς φρονήσεως ἡ περὶ τὰ τῶν πόλεών τε καὶ οἰκήσεων διακόσμησις, ᾗ δὴ ὄνομά ἐστι σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη. (*Smp*. 209a5-7)

As paradigmatic cases for such wisdom, Diotima mentions Lycurgus and Solon, 'honoured among both Greeks and Barbarians' (209d4-e2), who are the fathers of the complex *nomos* on *paiderastia* in Sparta and Athens that Pausanias claimed to describe, and which he also recognized as prevailing in the Greek world and beyond (cf. 182a7-d5). As in Pausanias' speech, *erôs* for the soul seals strong friendships between *erastês* and *erômenos* (κοινωνίαν ... καὶ φιλίαν βεβαιοτέραν, 209c5-6; cf. φιλίας ἰσχυρὰς καὶ κοινωνίας, 182c3). The education to which *erôs* is conducive is also called *philosophia*: *erôs* is philosopher (φιλοσοφῶν διὰ παντὸς τοῦ βίου, 203d7,[451] ἀναγκαῖον Ἔρωτα φιλόσοφον εἶναι, 204b4), and the two notions of *philogumnastia* and *philosophia* are recognized as typical manifestations of *erôs* (ἢ κατὰ χρηματισμὸν ἢ κατὰ φιλογυμναστίαν, 205d4-5; cf. καὶ ἥ γε φιλοσοφία καὶ ἡ φιλογυμναστία, 182c1).

The higher mysteries are the culmination of the training in *philosophia* that Diotima seems to borrow from Pausanias. At the end of the ascent, the lover produces 'many beautiful and imposing discourses and thoughts in ungrudging *philosophia*':

> πολλοὺς καὶ καλοὺς λόγους καὶ μεγαλοπρεπεῖς τίκτῃ καὶ διανοήματα ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ ἀφθόνῳ. (*Smp*. 210d4-6).

This sounds also like an echo of the φρονήματα μεγάλα (182c2) harboured by the democratic lovers, Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Diotima calls the whole of her higher

[451] First reappearances of φιλοσοφ- since Pausanias.

mysteries (i.e. the education programme devoted to the *erôs* in the soul) τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν (211b5-6), and τὸ ὀρθῶς ἐπὶ τὰ ἐρωτικὰ ἰέναι (211b7-c1), while Pausanias advocated a right form of *erôs* (ὀρθῶς ... ἐρᾶν, 181a4-5) attached to the soul and dedicated to education (παιδεραστία, 181c7-d1, 184c8). In the course of Diotima's higher mysteries, one of the tasks of the *erastês* is to produce discourses which make the young better:

> τίκτειν λόγους τοιούτους καὶ ζητεῖν, οἵτινες ποιήσουσι βελτίους τοὺς νέους. (*Smp*. 210c1-3)

This amounts to satisfying the expectations of Pausanias' noble *erômenos* towards his noble *erastês* (cf. ἀμείνων ἔσεσθαι, 184c5; ὡς ἀμείνων ἐσόμενος, 185a6, ὁ δὲ δεόμενος εἰς παίδευσιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν κτᾶσθαι, 184e1-2).

2. Differences

Behind these apparent similarities, at least three important differences must be noticed.

(1) *to kalon*: Diotima's view of this notion is broader than Pausanias'.

(a) In Pausanias' account, *to kalon* appears only as an object of knowledge, not of *erôs*: it is the right way of behaving (πρᾶξις ... καλή, 180e4-5; καλῶς ... πραττόμενον καὶ ὀρθῶς, 181a3-4), particularly in matters of love (181a4-6) and discourse (180c4-5, 181a1, etc.) — speaking well (διαλέγεσθαι ... καλῶς, 181a1-3) is a skill that Pausanias obviously displays in his *epideixis*, and which he presumably takes to be one of the highest subjects of his *philosophia* (cf. above). Pausanias however never mentions *to kalon* as such as an erotic object: Pausanias' *erôs* is attracted to human individuals (παῖδες, 181b3, c4, e1; γυναῖκες, 181b3, e6; σώματα and ψυχαί, 181b4), never by the abstract notion of the fine. For Diotima, the fine is the object of knowledge *and of erôs*: she insists that when we fall in love with various objects, including παῖδες, γυναῖκες, σώματα and ψυχαί, we are actually aroused by the fine that shines in them; she understands the notion in both an epistemic and an erotic sense.

(b) Diotima's *kalon* also covers a larger set of objects. Pausanias focuses on the fine in laws and practices. As such, Pausanias himself, the fine orator and educator who prefers souls to bodies and has a claim to legal expertise, looks to be a direct characterization of Diotima's lover who, at the start of the higher mysteries, falls in love with a soul,

produces fine discourses designed to educate and, as a result, is driven to contemplate what is fine in laws and practices (θεάσασθαι τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν) and then led to despise bodily charms (ἵνα τὸ περὶ τὸ σῶμα καλὸν σμικρόν τι ἡγήσηται εἶναι, 210c5-6). As we saw, the gist of Pausanias' project consists in nothing other than understanding that there is something fine and akin (συγγενές) behind the manifold set of laws at Athens. Nothing indicates however that Pausanias understands, nor is in love with, the other kinds of fine objects Diotima mentions in the lower part of the scale (fine bodies), let alone in the higher part (sciences, the sea of beauty, knowledge of the fine, the fine itself).

(2) **Procreation**. If Pausanias is quite clear about what may appeal to *erôs* (boys or women, bodies or souls), he is less explicit about the final purpose of the lover. Yet, the only indications he gives do not leave much room for doubt: the lover is waiting for sex (διαπράξασθαι, 181b5, etc.), and the beloved will satisfy him by sexual gratifications (ὑπουργεῖν, 184d7; χαρίζεσθαι, 182b3, etc.). In Diotima's speech, the final purpose of the lover is not to have sex, but to procreate, to give birth to immortal children of various sorts, including when he acts as an educator (209c1-3, 210c1-3).

(3) **Education**. Both Diotima and Pausanias refer to two pairs of notions: educator vs student, and *erastês* vs *erômenos*; but they understand in different manners these two pairs of concepts, as well as the way they overlap or combine with each other. For Pausanias, the two notions in each couple are distinct, and there is a perfect match between educator and *erastês* on the one hand, student and *erômenos* on the other hand. Therefore, *philosophia*, the 'quest for knowledge', is understood as the proper activity of the *erômenos*. Pausanias makes that clear when he talks of the two laws that each member of the couple (*erastês* and *erômenos*) should follow on his part: the educator-*erastês* contributes to *philosophia* (ὁ μὲν δυνάμενος εἰς φρόνησιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετὴν συμβάλλεσθαι, 184d7-e1) by providing pieces of knowledge desired by the *erômenos* (ὁ δὲ δεόμενος εἰς παίδευσιν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σοφίαν κτᾶσθαι, 187e1-2), but he is not experiencing this desire himself; he already knows. Therefore although the *erômenos* feels desire for knowledge (*philosophia*), this desire is not *erôs*: it is a mere need, or wish (δεόμενος).

In Diotima's encomium, the couple student / educator does not match the couple *erômenos* / *erastês* so neatly.

(1) There seems to be a clear match in the lower mysteries, when the lover is looking for a fine soul to educate in order to find an outlet for his *erôs*: the fine soul (ψυχῇ καλῇ καὶ γενναίᾳ καὶ εὐφυεῖ) can surely be viewed here as the *erômenos*: it is desired by the *erastês*, even if the final object of his *erôs* is to produce immortal discourses; the *erastês* is the educator (ἐπιχειρεῖ παιδεύειν); and education is provided by the discourses on virtue (λόγων περὶ ἀρετῆς), that is, the fine and immortal children that the educator begets in the soul of his beloved (καλλιόνων καὶ ἀθανατωτέρων παίδων, 209a5-c7).

(2) The couple *paiderastês* - student reappears in the higher mysteries, at the second rung of Diotima's scale, when the lover of a soul produces educative discourse (τίκτειν λόγους τοιούτους καὶ ζητεῖν, οἵτινες ποιήσουσι βελτίους τοὺς νέους, 210c1-2). However the overarching purpose of this process is no longer to educate the youth to whom these discourses are addressed — presumably an *erômenos* of a traditional type, who only feels a need (δεόμενος) for education. The focus is on educating the *erastês* himself (ἵνα ἀναγκασθῇ αὖ θεάσασθαι τὸ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι καὶ τοῖς νόμοις καλόν etc., 210c3-4).[452] Being an educator in love with a soul (i.e. a traditional *paiderastês*) is only one way for Diotima's lover to understand the nature of the fine, that is, to achieve what, at the end of the ascent will be referred to as φιλοσοφία (210d6). By calling this higher education programme τὸ ὀρθῶς παιδεραστεῖν (211b5-6), Diotima might also stress her disagreement with Pausanias, who championed the Athenian *paiderastia*: proper education, she argues, is the education of the lover, not of the beloved; acting as a teacher is for the lover only a way to learn what is fine in laws and habits, as, in fact, Pausanias' own *epideixis* itself revealed, without him realising. *Philosophia* is now understood as *erôs*, no longer as a mere need (δεόμενος), for knowledge; it is the proper task of the lover, not of the beloved; and it is no more the counterpart of *paiderastia*, the desire for knowledge that the youth satisfied in exchange for the bodily charms desired by the *paiderastês*. For Diotima, *philosophia* and *paiderastia* are of a piece, both if we take *paiderastia* in its traditional and in its novel (ὀρθῶς) meaning: the traditional kind of *paiderastia* undertaken by the lover of the soul at the start of the higher mysteries is nothing else than an exercise in *philosophia* (love for understanding *to kalon* in laws and practices); and this *philosophia* is nothing other than the right form of *paiderastia*, which benefits the lover, not the beloved.

[452] This shift has been well noted by Sheffield (2006a) 218 n. 10.

(3) Now that the traditional educator is understood as a student, Diotima introduces a teacher of a new kind, who plays a discrete but crucial role (ὁ ἡγούμενος, 210a7): he or she turns into lovers of *to kalon* the traditional lovers of body and soul mentioned in the lower mysteries, who seek immortality through *philotimia*, and who, when they meet fine souls, act strictly as educators. This new type of teacher is no more an *erastês* nor an *erômenos*: (s)he is, like Xenophon's Socrates, a 'procurer' (προαγωγός, Xen. *Smp*. 4.61-4) who arranges the various intercourses between the *erastês* (the student) and his *erômenon*: *to kalon*. As Hunter puts it, Diotima's guide 'turns Pausanias's ideal couple into a triangle'.[453]

Therefore, throughout her speech Diotima progressively departs from Pausanias' model of *paiderastia*: it finally turns out that, on her view, *paiderastia* is *philosophia*; the *erastês* is the (real) student; the *erômenos/on* is no more a student but the various instantiations of the fine; and the overarching educator is neither the *erastês* nor the *erômenos*, but the one who arranges the intercourse between the two.[454]

3. Solving problems

As we saw, Pausanias gave three original features to his ideal *paiderastia*, which were key to his project of praising *erôs* properly: (a) the lover is in love with the soul; (b) the student embarks on a lifelong learning — *philosophia*; (c) the relationship between *erastês* and *erômenos* is of a piece with the strong links of *koinônia* and *philia* cementing the body of citizens in a democratic society. On each point, however, Pausanias' model raised questions which were left unanswered: (a) what kind of erotic gratification does the *erastês* draw from the soul he is in love with? (b) what is the *erômenos* going to learn throughout his life? (c) why is *erôs* actually more efficient for the cohesion of the society than the traditional links of *koinônia* and *philia*?

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[453] Hunter (2004a) 82.

[454] Coming late to the party, Alcibiades is unaware of the transformation to which Diotima and Socrates have subjected Pausanias' model. This might explain the misgivings and frustrations expressed in his speech: he approaches Socrates as if the philosopher were still committed to the idealized, but still traditional, form of *paiderastia* advocated by Pausanias. With Diotima's lesson in mind, the reader can easily understand that Alcibiades' attempt to draw from Socrates the fine pieces of knowledge he perceives in his soul (τὰ ἐντὸς ἀγάλματα, 216e6) is doomed to fail. Cf. Nightingale (1993) 124-7 and Hunter (2004a) 106-7.

Diotima takes over the key features of Pausanias' noble *erôs*, but thanks to her particular insights into the nature and the workings of *erôs*, she can solve the problems brought about by Pausanias' model of *paiderastia.*

a. *Erôs* for the soul

First, Diotima's new understanding of *erôs* and of its relation to *to kalon* allows her to envisage a proper erotic gratification for the loving soul. The educator is not just in love with a virtuous soul, as in Pausanias' account, but with a fine one (ἂν ἐντύχῃ ψυχῇ καλῇ καὶ γενναίᾳ καὶ εὐφυεῖ, 209b5-6): there is something in the soul (τὸ καλόν) that appeals to him just as there is in the body (τὰ σώματα τὰ καλά, 209b4-5). To be sure, a soul is not fine (καλή) in the same way as a body is: it is fine insofar as it is virtuous (cf. καὶ γενναίᾳ καὶ εὐφυεῖ); καλή however points to the fact that the virtue in the soul plays a characteristic erotic role, similar to the role beauty plays in a body: it is the fine object in which the lover finds the outlet for his desire to procreate (cf. περιὼν τὸ καλὸν ἐν ᾧ ἂν γεννήσειεν, 209b3). All teachers know how pleasant it is to supervise students who are responsive and quick to learn; such an educative intercourse is often the occasion for the teachers themselves to further understand (κατανοῆσαι) fine things, and to deliver lessons which are finer (καλλιόνων, 209c6) than those addressed to a less clever audience. In Diotima's model, the advantage of such fine offspring is that it is also more immortal (καὶ ἀθανατωτέρων παίδων, 209c7), and therefore more suited to providing the lover with what he is ultimately seeking for (immortality).

Diotima can thus supply what was lacking in Pausanias' *erôs* for the soul: an object (the fine and procreation); an intercourse (educating a soul is nothing else than enjoying, i.e. understanding *to kalon* and procreating children of sorts), and a pleasure (in finding an outlet for the seed carried by the lover). Diotima can provide a properly erotic account of these elements, because, unlike Pausanias who merely opposed the *erôs* for the soul to the *erôs* for the body, she views the former as analogous to the latter: within her scale, *erôs* for the soul is in continuity with bodily *erôs*. It thus has similar goals, workings, and pleasures. The scale model, in addition, explains why the *erôs* for the soul is superior to the *erôs* for the body, how it improves on it.

b. The lifelong education

Pausanias also failed to explain why the *erastês* should educate his *erômenos* over a lifelong relationship. Like Diotima, he viewed *paiderastia* as designed to satisfy a desire for knowledge in the student (*philosophia*). But his view of *sophia* apparently did not go beyond the traditional wisdom that the Athenian youth was supposed to acquire before reaching adulthood, in the limited time-frame of the traditional *paiderastia*. In Diotima's model, the student is no more an *erômenos* 'asking for' (δεόμενος, 184e1) traditional lessons in virtue, rhetoric, and political commonsense, but the *erastês* of a notion (*to kalon*) which covers a wide range of objects, not just the fine laws and customs that Pausanias focuses on; and the highest instantiation of the fine (its Form) can only be grasped after a long and demanding propaedeutic. If we are right to equate Diotima's love ascent towards the Form of the Fine with the dialectical ascent towards the Form of the Good in *Republic* 7, even the best citizens (the philosophical natures) do not reach the term of the curriculum before age 50 (*Resp*. 6.540a4). On this account, it makes good sense for the *erastês* to remain in love throughout his life (διὰ βίου μένει, 183e5-6).

c. *Erôs* and political *philia*

In the light of Book 8 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, we argued that the common view of the time was probably that erotic *philiai* are not strong nor reliable, because, at least on Aristotle's account, they are not based on virtue (κατ' ἀρετήν), but on pleasure (καθ' ἡδονήν, *Eth. Nic.* 8.1156a16-19, 1156b7-19). Pausanias appeared to challenge this view by suggesting that some erotic *philiai* are based on virtue, and, being fuelled by a stronger passion than the other kinds of friendships, they turn out to be, paradoxically, the strongest and the most stable forms of *philiai*. The problem with Pausanias' argument was that it did not account for the pleasure and fickleness which are essential to erotic passion, and which lead Aristotle to regard erotic *philiai* with suspicion. Pausanias just said that lover and beloved, while being in love, are linked by a strong and stable *philia*, but he did not explain how this strength and this stability are compatible with what *erôs* essentially is. Although the speaker claimed that the most stable sorts of *philia* are based on virtue *and erôs*, it was unclear what role *erôs* actually played in these affections. Pausanias' erotic *philia* eventually seemed to coincide with the Aristotelian non-erotic form of friendship, based on virtue alone. A question thus

implicitly raised by Pausanias' model was: can a strong and firm *philia* based on *aretê* also be based on *erôs*, that is, on a powerful and a fickle passion tending towards pleasure? Through his inability to depict such a link, Pausanias led us to conclude that this was impossible.

Diotima shows that it is possible, when she speaks of the strong links forged by the 'beautiful children' engendered by the lover in the soul of his beloved:

> Ἁπτόμενος γὰρ οἶμαι τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ὁμιλῶν αὐτῷ, ἃ πάλαι ἐκύει τίκτει καὶ γεννᾷ, καὶ παρὼν καὶ ἀπὼν μεμνημένος, καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν συνεκτρέφει κοινῇ μετ᾽ ἐκείνου, ὥστε πολὺ μείζω κοινωνίαν τῆς τῶν παίδων πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἴσχουσι καὶ φιλίαν βεβαιοτέραν, ἅτε καλλιόνων καὶ ἀθανατωτέρων παίδων κεκοινωνηκότες. (*Smp*. 209c2-7)

The links of *koinônia* and *philia* described here are stronger than in other kinds of friendship, as they are similar to those binding a husband and his wife over their children. They are also based on virtue, since the offspring sealing them is a prime example of the 'wisdom and the rest of virtue' brought forward by poets and inventive craftsmen (φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν, 209a3-4). They are, at the same time, based on *erôs*, since the offspring is the very product of *erôs*: *philia* has been created through the intense passion that the lover felt for his beloved, it is the direct output of the erotic intercourse experienced between two souls.[455]

Moreover, this account makes allowance for the instability of erotic passion: *erôs* itself and the erotic intercourse are not supposed to be stable and to last a whole life: what lasts is the offspring of *erôs* — it is in this particular sense that, in Diotima's view, strong and stable *philiai* can be the product of *erôs*. Diotima's procreative model of *erôs* thus reveals how *erôs*, although being a fleeting passion, is uniquely conducive to the strongest and most stable forms of *philia*.

For all that, Diotima does not confuse, as Pausanias did, *philia* and *erôs*: in her model, the erotic relationship corresponds to the limited period when the offspring is produced, that is, presumably when the youth is still sexually attractive — in his body or in his soul — either in the frame of the traditional *paiderastia* (209a1-e4), or at the rung of the love for the soul in Diotima's higher mysteries (210b6-c3). Diotima's μείζων κοινωνία and φιλία βεβαιοτέρα (209c5-6) are clear echoes of Pausanias' φιλίαι ἰσχυραὶ καὶ

[455] We argued above how Diotima conceived this intercourse between souls as properly sexual.

κοινωνίαι (182c3), φιλία βέβαιος (182c6), and γενναία φιλία (184b4-5), but they are viewed as surviving or succeeding the *erôs* relationship, not coinciding with it. Diotima's implicit response to Pausanias is thus: to be sure, *erôs* can be viewed as essential to the best forms of *philia* based on *aretê*; but it is not identical to such a *philia*: instead, it produces what forms its basis, i.e. some 'virtue-offspring'.

4. Diotima and the tradition of *paiderastia*

Again, Diotima's account seems less at variance with the tradition of the time than the theory put forward by the previous speakers.

(1) Love for the soul does not appear as a puzzling, unmotivated emotion: it proves to be of a piece with the desire to educate that any teacher may feel, even in 5th century democratic Athens.

(2) In the lifelong education designed in the higher mysteries, the student is no longer viewed as an *erômenos*. As an *erastês*, he is not liable to the attacks that traditional educators or comic poets could have raised against Pausanias' long life *paiderastia*, where an adult male was led to assume the submissive role of a *paidika*.

(3) By conceiving the strong and lasting *philiai* as following the *erôs* relationship, not coincident with it, Diotima remains in line with the more traditional view that strong civic friendships can arise from a good erotic relationship experienced in the traditional time frame of *paiderastia*, but should come *after* it.[456] Diotima's original contribution to the model is to explain how *erôs* is responsible for the characteristic strength and stability of such *philiai*. On her account, these affections are not, as one could think, a relic of the former relationship — a dispassionate or weak form of *erôs*; they are built on a common affection towards common offspring of virtue produced thanks to a noble erotic relationship. Just as she did with the erotic relationship, Diotima turns the erotic *philia* into a triangle: it is no more a simple affection binding a former *erastês* and a former *erômenos*; the bond is secured by a common offspring between the two *philoi*.

Whereas Pausanias implicitly put forward drastic reforms to the Athenian code on *paiderastia*, Diotima, in the lower mysteries, rather gives an account (*logon didonai*) of it: instead of introducing new erotic behaviours, such as a life-long erotic relationship

[456] Cf. Dover (1978) 203, Calame (1999) 95, see above n. 329.

between *erastês* and *erômenos*, she gives an erotic explanation of behaviours which were not previously understood as erotic, such as the teacher's desire to educate (cf. 1), the student's desire to learn (2), and the steady *philia* that binds former *erastai* and *eromenoi* (3). Of course, the higher mysteries propose an original use of *erôs* and *paiderastia* (intended to understand the Form of the Fine), but this view does not run counter to the common prejudices attached to the preservation of virtue in the *erômenos* at the time: nothing in what *erastês* and *erômenos* do in Diotima's ascent towards the contemplation of the fine outwardly challenges the sexual code of conduct in 5th century Athens.

C. Response to Eryximachus

Eryximachus' most obvious contribution to the debate was the insight, allegedly inspired from medical science, that, contrary to what Pausanias claimed, *erôs* extends far beyond the human realm:

> ὅτι δὲ οὐ μόνον ἐστὶν ἐπὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τοὺς καλοὺς ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλλα πολλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις, τοῖς τε σώμασι τῶν πάντων ζῴων καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῇ γῇ φυομένοις καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι, καθεωρακέναι μοι δοκῶ ἐκ τῆς ἰατρικῆς, τῆς ἡμετέρας τέχνης, ὡς μέγας καὶ θαυμαστὸς καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν ὁ θεὸς τείνει καὶ κατ' ἀνθρώπινα καὶ κατὰ θεῖα πράγματα. (*Smp*. 186a3-b2)

Eryximachus' *erôs* is universal in two respects: (1) it is directed towards many objects (πρὸς ἄλλα πολλά), not just human beings; (2) it is experienced by more creatures than human beings (ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις): *erôs* is in everything that exists (ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι).

1. Similarities

Diotima seems to draw on Eryximachus' claim that *erôs* is universal:

(1) ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις. In her view, *erôs* is not felt only by human beings but by many creatures (πάντα τὰ θηρία ... καὶ τὰ πεζὰ καὶ τὰ πτηνά, 207a8-9; cf. Eryximachus: τῶν πάντων ζῴων, 186a5), and the fact that even the whole business of bodily growth and regeneration (γένεσις) is to be viewed as an erotic process (207d1-e1) is in line with the physician's view that *erôs* also applies to plants (τοῖς ἐν τῇ γῇ φυομένοις, 186a6).

(2) πρὸς ἄλλα πολλά. In Diotima's view, *erôs* is directed towards a wide variety of objects: not only souls and bodies, as Pausanias claimed, but also, as the higher mysteries show, activities, laws, sciences, and an abstract notion — the Form of the Fine — which is characterized as a divine entity (αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλόν, 211e3).

This leads Diotima to achieve her erotic ascent in a way very similar to Eryximachus, who argued that religious sacrifices (αἱ θυσίαι) and mantic art (μαντική, 188b6, 188c7-d1) set up a good *erôs* between men and gods (φιλίας θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων, 188d1; φίλους εἶναι καὶ τοῖς κρείττοσιν ἡμῶν θεοῖς, 188d9). With Diotima, what *erôs* is finally responsible for is a communion between the human and the divine (ἀνθρώπου ... συνόντος αὐτῷ ... θεοφιλεῖ γενέσθαι, 212a1-6).[457] Relating the human to the divine is the essential function of her *erôs*, characterized as a δαίμων (cf. ἑρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον θεοῖς τὰ παρ᾽ ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώποις τὰ παρὰ θεῶν, 202e3-4), and as in Eryximachus' encomium, sacrifices and mantic art are associated with this function:

> διὰ τούτου καὶ ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τελετὰς καὶ τὰς ἐπῳδὰς καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν (*Smp*. 202e7-203a1).

The very character of Diotima and her performance in the dialogue are a direct enactment of this daimonic role of *erôs*: her final lesson is presented as a divine initiation (τὰ δὲ τέλεα καὶ ἐποπτικά, 210a1, cf. τελετὰς, 202e8), her name (Μαντινικὴ Διοτίμα, 201d2) sounds like a pun meaning 'honoured of Zeus' or 'honouring Zeus, from Divination-City'.[458] When she came to Athens, she made sacrifices (θυσαμένοις) and forestalled a *loimos*, or a *nosos* (201d4), that is, the kind of calamities that Eryximachus viewed as caused by the bad *erôs* (cf. οἵ τε γὰρ λοιμοὶ φιλοῦσι γίγνεσθαι ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων, 188b1; τὸ νοσοῦν, 186b5; ἄνευ νόσου, 187e5).[459] Diotima is also divinely inspired in that she manages to guess what each particular speaker would say at Agathon's table some twenty-five years later, and can respond to them word for word in advance. By putting his theory in the mouth of a cosmic healer and a seer, Socrates further insists that his theory is in close dialogue with Eryximachus'.[460]

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[457] On this similarity between the two speeches, see Friedländer (1969) 17.

[458] See Dover (1980) 137, Hunter (2004a) 81 and Brisson (2007) 30 n. 2.

[459] Mantic art (μαντική) is a clear point of contact between Eryximachus' and Socrates' bantering exchanges; cf. 198a5-7: did Socrates prophesy well (μαντικῶς ἃ νυνδὴ ἔλεγον) about his embarrassment when it would be his turn to talk?

[460] Let us note again that Eryximachus introduced his proposal (177a2-3) through the voice of Melanippe 'the Wise', another woman well-versed in both divine and natural sciences, who, like

(3) The fine. Diotima's view of *to kalon* is also reminiscent of Eryximachus' noble *erôs* (τὸν καλόν ... ἔρωτα, 186c7-d1; ὁ καλός, 187d7), which is everywhere (ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι, 186a6-7), celestial (οὐράνιος, 187d7) and characterized as a state of good balance and harmony (ἁρμονία, 187a7-b7). On her account, *to kalon* also inheres in all sorts of objects, from the bodies to the Form; the Form, which can be grasped only at the top of the philosophical ladder, can easily be taken as residing in the metaphysical sky (οὐρανός) Socrates refers to in the *Republic* (6.508a4, 7.516a8). It is also hard to resist identifying Eryximachus himself, the champion of medical art (τέχνη, 186b1-3) who also claims to give an account of how *all* the sciences (ἐπιστῆμαι, 186c6 187c5, 188b5), especially medicine, can bring about the fine *erôs*, with the lover of Diotima's ascent who attempts to see the fine in the various branches of knowledge (ἐπὶ τὰς ἐπιστήμας ἀγαγεῖν, ἵνα ἴδῃ αὖ ἐπιστημῶν κάλλος, 210c6-7). In Diotima's ladder, this kind of lover succeeds the lover of practices and laws, who, in the dialogue, is embodied by Pausanias, Eryximachus' predecessor in the rhetorical contest. Eryximachus' view of what is fine in musical science — a good 'fitting together' (ἁρμονία, συμφωνία) devoid of διαφέρεσθαι — seems in line with Diotima's view of *to kalon*: one of the few indications she gives about this notion is that it is 'fitting' (τὸ δὲ καλὸν ἁρμόττον, 206d1-2).[461]

2. Differences

Behind these similarities, there is an obvious difference: for Diotima, the fine, along with eternal happiness (ἀθανασία, εὐδαιμονία), is the object of *erôs* (*erôs* tends towards τὸ ἁρμόττον, 206d2), whereas for Eryximachus, the good *erôs* is identified with the fine (*erôs* is ἁρμονία, 188a4), and its object is the opposite properties (τὰ ἔχθιστα, τὰ ἐναντιώτατα, 186d5-7). Eryximachus' view that *erôs* is a god (θεός, 186b1) and is fine himself (ὁ καλὸς ἔρως, 186c7-d1, 187d7) makes no sense in the light of Diotima's theory: even though *erôs* enables us to reach a state of *theophilia* by contemplating the Form of the Fine, *erôs* himself is a *daimôn* who is neither *kalos* nor *agathos*, but in lack of these goods (202d2). In Diotima's model, when the apprentice philosopher has

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Diotima, is primarily concerned about motherhood. See Kannicht (2004) 525-36, with Biga (2010).

[461] Rightly brought out by Cooksey (2010) 76.

grasped the notion of the fine (κατανοῆσαι), in any of its instantiations, (s)he is not in love with it anymore. This explains why, for the ascent to remain erotic, the fine must always be difficult to grasp: once the fine has been understood, and arguably a good communion (κοινωνία) has been established between the mind of the student and the notion to be learnt, *erôs* cannot be sustained if the student does not move to an upper level in order to grasp a novel, still unknown, instantiation of the fine. Diotima does not even suggest that once the final knowledge of *to kalon* is achieved, the *theophilia* enjoyed by the lover (212a6) should be viewed as an erotic relationship between men and gods, like the φιλίαι θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων (188d1) that Eryximachus depicted at the end of his encomium as the highest form of *erôs*. Being the son of Poros *and Penia* (203c5), *Erôs* is himself full of contradictions: always in lack (ἐνδείᾳ) of its object, but full of devices (ἐπίβουλος, πόριμος); neither rich nor poor (οὔτε ἀπορεῖ Ἔρως ποτὲ οὔτε πλουτεῖ); neither immortal nor mortal (οὔτε ὡς ἀθάνατος πέφυκεν οὔτε ὡς θνητός), now living, now dying (τοτὲ μὲν τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας θάλλει τε καὶ ζῇ, ὅταν εὐπορήσῃ, τοτὲ δὲ ἀποθνῄσκει, 203c5-e5). As a result *erôs* is full of tension (ἴτης καὶ σύντονος, 203d5). Diotima's *erôs* thus not only connects opposite things, including the human and the divine, as Eryximachus' *erôs* did: it is itself essentially characterized by the Heraclitean unity of opposites that Eryximachus dismissed in his discussion about musical *harmonia*. As a response to Eryximachus' polemic with Heraclitus, Diotima reintegrates into *erôs* some aspects of the erotic passion (desire and tension) that the doctor had deliberately dismissed in order to put his *erôs* in line with his medical view of *harmonia*.

In sum, although Diotima follows Eryximachus in saying that both *erôs* and the fine are everywhere, she does not confuse these two kinds of universality with each other, as the doctor did: the fine can surely be found in a wide range of objects, including inanimate things; but *erôs* requires a sensitive — if not intellectual — appreciation of the fine, and an emotional response to it, and can therefore only be found in living organic creatures: Diotima's lovers range from philosophers to beasts (τὰ θηρία, 207a8) but they do not include Eryximachus' raw physical elements or abstract notions like the hot and the cold, the high and the low; all the more so, because the final goal of lovers is to prolong their lives: only living beings can be subject to mortality and aspire to immortality (202d13-e1).

This finally allows us to understand the discrepancy between the two accounts of the erotic relationship between men and gods (188b6-d9 vs 211d8-212a7). Eryximachus

viewed men and gods as two very distinct entities, just like the hot and the cold, or the low and high; the good *erôs* (state) between these two elements consisted, in line of a traditional (e.g. Hesiodic) view, in a fair sharing of benefits and privileges between these two groups, so that men would not encroach on gods, nor attempt to harm them. Therefore the good *erôs*-desire, at least in humans, amounted to abstaining from religious *hubris* or *pleonexia* (cf. τῷ κοσμίῳ Ἔρωτι χαρίζηται, 188c3-4). On Eryximachus' view, humans must refrain from the desire to become gods, or like gods; and erotic techniques like sacrifices and mantic skills are intended to highlight and enforce the boundary between men and gods, and to make sure that men do not transgress it.

In Diotima's view, *erôs*, which tends to the fine and the divine, is what essentially connects mortal creatures with immortal ones:[462] although men and gods are separate entities, *erôs* allows men to participate in the divine and, at the end of the erotic ascent, to merge with the divine Form (συνόντος) and become immortal (ἀθανάτῳ, 212a7). Men thus become *philoi* to the gods (θεοφιλεῖ, 212a6) for reasons quite opposite to those given by Eryximachus: because, through *erôs*, they become like gods. And the role of erotic techniques such as sacrifices, mantic art, or most of all the right form of *paiderastia* (i.e. dialectic) is to allow humans to cross the traditional boundaries that usually keep them separated from the divine.

3. Solving problems

We saw that Eryximachus, because of his encomiastic agenda (linking *erôs* to the supreme good) and his medical background (the supreme good is the healthy balance), was logically led to dismiss or to distort the role of desire and pleasure in his depiction of the good *erôs*, so much so that it was finally unclear what erotic feature finally remained in this picture. Diotima, thanks to her view of *erôs*, can still show how *erôs* is linked to harmony and the good balance, but she can reintegrate in her encomium the erotic features omitted by Eryximachus.

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[462] Cf. τοῦτο ἐν θνητῷ ὄντι τῷ ζῴῳ ἀθάνατον ἔνεστιν, ἡ κύησις καὶ ἡ γέννησις, 206c7-8; ἡ θνητὴ φύσις ζητεῖ κατὰ τὸ δυνατὸν ἀεί τε εἶναι καὶ ἀθάνατος, 207d1-2; Ταύτῃ τῇ μηχανῇ ... θνητὸν ἀθανασίας μετέχει, 208b2-3.

a. Desire

We saw why, on Eryximachus' account, desire was necessarily absent from the good *erôs* defined as a perfect state of balance, his good *erôs* par excellence, perfectly instantiated in the 'pure' music (the structure of harmony and rhythms). Such a good state was, by definition, neither in lack, nor in tension: it was devoid of desire. Now that, with Diotima, *erôs* is no longer confused with the fine state but rather appeals to it, it is essentially desire and tension, and this desiring aspect is what makes it praiseworthy: *erôs* is the best means to reach the fine and the divine.

To be sure, we saw that Eryximachus conceived his good *erôs* as a good desire too: as the attraction of opposite elements that precedes and prefigures the good *erôs*-state. This view made quite good sense at the start of his speech, as long as the desire was viewed as belonging to a complex organism: e.g., a body made of much dry matter and too little wet, suffering from this imbalance, and thus desiring to have more of what it was lacking, namely the wet. But we found it harder to follow Eryximachus when he eventually pushed the medical model further; once he had defined the good *erôs* as a *state* of connection between opposites (the dry and the wet), the good desire was no more conceived as a desire *of the body* (or the organism) for the wet, but as the desire of the dry itself to mix with the wet: the opposites themselves were feeling *erôs* for each other, and it was unclear then how any *erôs* could arise between two *absolute* opposites, such as physical primary elements. If a thirsty body desires the wet, it is only inasmuch as it has some kinship with the wet: thirst could not arise in a completely desiccated (i.e. dead) body; thirst is rather our desire to acquire more of an element that we already possess, although at an insufficient level.

On this point, Aristophanes' encomium has already addressed an implicit criticism to the doctor. His view of *erôs* as the search for our lost halves (τοῦ ὅλου οὖν τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ καὶ διώξει ἔρως ὄνομα, 192e10) has revealed that, even if the object of *erôs* is necessarily different from its subject (the lover), it cannot be completely alien to him or her: in order to feel *erôs*, lovers must recognize in their beloveds something which, in some way, belongs to themselves.

Diotima takes over this criticism by showing that lovers, even if they do not desire their own selves, as Aristophanes claimed (205d10-e7), nevertheless desire something which is akin to them. *Erôs*, to be sure, is neither good nor fine (201c4-5), but he is not bad or ignoble either (202b1-5). Thus when lovers desire the good and the fine, they do not

desire what is symmetrically opposed to them: *Erôs* would not desire the fine if he were not son of a genuine god (Poros), and therefore 'a schemer after the fine and good' (ἐπίβουλός ἐστι τοῖς καλοῖς καὶ τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς, 203d4-5). As Socrates reminds us in the *Meno* (80d5-81e2), we cannot look for something of which we are completely unaware. Although *Erôs* does not possess *sophia* (knowledge of the good and the fine), he would not desire anything were he completely ignorant of it (οὐδ᾽ αὖ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς φιλοσοφοῦσιν οὐδ᾽ ἐπιθυμοῦσι σοφοὶ γενέσθαι, 204a2-4; cf. ἐπόθησεν τὸ εἰδέναι, *Meno* 86c4). *Erôs* is surely prompted by our feeling or awareness that we lack something; but this very feeling or awareness implies that we have already a share in what we desire, however we may understand this 'share': spontaneous attraction towards beautiful things (*Symposium*), or pre-natal but now forgotten knowledge (*Meno*). Thus, in order to experience *erôs* for something (wisdom, goodness), one cannot be in strict opposition to it: one must be, as Diotima claims, between fine things and their opposites (μεταξὺ τούτων ἀμφοτέρων, 204b1-2). Socrates' lover thus does not desire to become the opposite of what he is, like Eryximachus' fine lovers: he rather seeks to develop and fully possess something in which he already has a share. He intends to realize a potential which is constitutive of his nature. In Diotima's view, Eryximachus' good *erôs*-desire, i.e. the attraction between elements naturally opposed (ἔχθιστα τὰ ἐναντιώτατα, 186d6-7) is not *erôs*. She instead follows the common assumption (and Eryximachus' view of the bad *erôs*), that *erôs* is a kind of *pleonexia*: a desire to have more of what the lover does not fully possess, but which (s)he already has an essential kinship with, or a share in.

Diotima thus seems to respond to Eryximachus about erotic desire on two fronts: (1) she criticizes Eryximachus' good *erôs*-state by showing that one cannot provide any view of *erôs* without taking into account tension and desire; (2) she also criticizes his good *erôs*-desire by showing that *erôs* cannot connect the lover to what is symmetrically opposed to him or her; *erôs* is rather desire to have more — not desire to be frustrated. She manages to integrate these two features in her encomium since, in her view, the peak of human excellence is not to achieve a healthy balance within the body and between the body and its environment: humans are rather driven by a strong desire to achieve immortality.

b. Pleasure

As a consequence, we also understand better how erotic pleasure, which was dismissed in Eryximachus' encomium, can be recognized as praiseworthy in Diotima's model of *erôs*. Eryximachus' good *erôs*-state, being deprived of desire, was also necessarily devoid of pleasure. His good *erôs*-desire, being conceived as the attraction of the opposite for the opposite, was hardly compatible with pleasure as it is logically conceived: how can the frustration and negation of the very nature of something bring pleasure to it?

The doctor, to be sure, provided a realistic view of pleasure when he discussed the delights of music and food (187e2-6); but, as we saw, pleasure, in that passage, was associated with the reappearance of the bad *erôs*, just after the discussion of *harmonia* in music: it was viewed as conducive to ἀκολασία (187e3), a notion similar to πλεονεξία (188b4) in Eryximachus' speech. As befits a medical prescription, Eryximachus' account took pleasure as potentially detrimental to the healthy balance of the whole.

With Diotima, of course, *pleonexia* or *akolasia* are no longer a worry as soon as *erôs* is used properly (*orthôs*), that is, with a view to knowing *to kalon* and becoming virtuous. We will never acquire too much of knowledge of the fine, just as we will never produce too much true virtue; the finer the *erôs* is, the more intense the pleasure must be — at the top of the ladder, the lover is elated with pure joy (211d3-212a2) and Diotima does not appoint any doctor here to check that the lover will harvest his pleasure without intemperance (ὅπως ἂν τὴν μὲν ἡδονὴν αὐτοῦ καρπώσηται, ἀκολασίαν δὲ μηδεμίαν ἐμποιήσῃ, 187e2-3), lest this would bring him some disease (ὥστ' ἄνευ νόσου τὴν ἡδονὴν καρπώσασθαι, 187e5-6).

Furthermore, pleasure is essential to Diotima's view of happiness, since lovers can reach immortality by seeking the pleasurable release of their seeds or their children: the lover 'melts with joy' (εὐφραινόμενον διαχεῖται) when (s)he approaches the fine object that can release him or her from a great pain (διὰ τὸ μεγάλης ὠδῖνος ἀπολύειν, 206d3-e1).

On Diotima's account, both desire and pleasure are integral to the highest benefits of *erôs*: there is no reason to refrain or dismiss them since the more intense they are, the more conducive they are to reaching some goods (producing immortal children of virtue and knowing the Forms) which, contrary to physical pleasures, nobody should be afraid to experience in excess. When reaching these divine goods we cannot threaten gods: we

can only please them. In Diotima's *erôs*, the strong desire of *erôs* must be correctly (ὀρθῶς) directed, not cautiously checked. Whereas the doctor just proposed to moderate pleasures, Diotima proposes to enjoy, without moderation, the right sort of pleasures.

In sum, Diotima confirms Eryximachus' view that *erôs* connects us to the fine and the divine, but she manages to show how two essential features of *erôs* are responsible for this connection: desire and pleasure.

4. Diotima and the Hippocratic tradition

Diotima's *erôs* is not only more realistic: just as with Phaedrus and Pausanias, it also proves to be more in line with the traditional strand of wisdom on which the earlier speaker was drawing — in this case, the medical tradition. The Hippocratics, as we saw, always recognized desire and pleasure as being essential features of *erôs*. Furthermore, by defining the workings of *erôs* as a form of procreation, Diotima can also integrate in her speech a notion on which Eryximachus is conspicuously silent, but which, for the Hippocratics, appears to be the most interesting feature of *erôs*: as we saw, the most exhaustive medical analysis of sex and *erôs* is provided by a treatise on generation (Περὶ γονῆς, see p. 147).

But of course Diotima's view of desire, pleasure and generation is far broader than in the Hippocratic treatises: although she speaks as a physician, she provides a metaphysical account of the processes that doctors understood in a purely physical sense. She explains how a notion (*erôs*) that doctors conceived only on one level (bodies), and with a view to one particular sort of goodness (physical health), has a much broader scope: it includes souls and allows us to reach knowledge and immortality; thereby she implicitly claims to give a fuller account (*logon didonai*) of that notion than the tradition she is drawing on.

Conclusion

Through a complex pattern of word-echoes, Diotima shows that her *erôs* is, as in the previous encomia, conducive to particular kinds of goodness: military virtue, wisdom, the fine and the divine. However, she shows how *erôs* can lead to these goods in a truly *erotic* way. She reveals what is actually erotic in our courage, our quest for happiness, or our relation to the fine and the divine.

Let us remember that, according to the reading proposed in the first chapter, Phaedrus through the voice of Eryximachus, challenged the speakers (1) to link *erôs* to a superior form of virtue and happiness; (2) to provide a rational argument for the case, as a *prose* encomium should do (καταλογάδην συγγράφειν, 177b3). It turns out now that each of the first three speakers achieved the first task: all the encomia, as we saw, claimed that *erôs* is outstandingly conducive to a particular form of human excellence; but they failed to meet the second challenge. Socrates manages to succeed in both tasks: it is in this respect that his praise caps the other ones.

CONCLUSION

Recapitulation

The initial purpose of this study was to rehabilitate three discourses which unjustly do not enjoy a good reputation among commentators. As a preliminary, we had to understand what kind of challenge was issued to the speakers in the prologue (177a2-d5): not just praising *erôs* but producing a proper encomium which demonstrates that erotic passion is the best way to reach the pinnacle of human virtue and happiness. This helped us defuse three criticisms often levelled at these encomia. (1) The line of argumentation is stronger than appears at first sight: some claims that may sound over-sophisticated, inconsistent, or disingenuous, prove to be required by the need to meet the specific challenge. (2) The views of *erôs* put forward in each discourse are not conventional: although each speaker champions a traditional field of expertise, each draws an unexpected link between *erôs* and a particular kind of benefit; what is traditional in these discourses is rather the kind of benefits to which *erôs* is related. (3) In order to show that *erôs* is most conducive to what he views as the highest form of virtue and happiness, each speaker is led to provide a picture of *erôs* which is at odds, in some way, with the nature of *erôs*: they all end up arguing that *erôs* leads to heroic courage and immortality (Phaedrus), political success and democratic stability (Pausanias), or harmonious balance and friendship with the divine (Eryximachus), through a mechanism which is in some way un-erotic. Those distortions, I argued, should not be dismissed as mere naivety on the part of the speakers; they are determined by the necessity to show that *erôs* is good. As such, they constitute genuine philosophical contributions to the dialogue, since they raise a philosophical problem: is it possible both to praise *erôs* and to say truly what it is? Can one show that *erôs* is conducive to the highest benefits without ignoring one of its essential features? For the previous speakers, this double requirement proves to be a genuine 'double bind', a dilemma impossible to escape.

Diotima, I finally argued, shows that the dilemma can be escaped, thus solving the problems raised by the earlier speakers. Through a pattern of word echoes, her encomium of *erôs* manages to show that *erôs* can be conducive to the kinds of goods advertised by the previous speakers without ignoring what *erôs* essentially is; the

mechanism whereby her *erôs* leads to immortality, political virtue, or the fine harmony, are truly erotic, as they involve all the features that the previous speakers deliberately ignored, at some point: desire, pleasure, sexual intercourse, and reproduction.

Diotima and the former speakers

I thus conclude, following the view of many previous commentators, that Diotima's speech constitutes a significant break in the dialogue, and caps the previous discourses by providing a more convincing, i.e. more recognizable, account of *erôs*. I hope however to have contributed at least two insights to this traditional reading.

(1) I showed that Diotima can be viewed as not just improving on the previous views, but solving problems raised by them. This explains why Plato felt the need to propose failing encomia of *erôs* before a successful one: if the function of Diotima is to solve problems, Plato needs to suggest the problems first, and to explain where they come from.

(2) This reading may also shed a new light on precisely how Diotima breaks with the previous speeches. She does not do so, as is often assumed, by providing a novel and non-conventional view of *erôs*. In many respects, as we saw, the view of *erôs* proposed by the first speakers is much more paradoxical that Diotima's picture, where *erôs* is endowed with all its expected features: desire, pleasure, sexual intercourse, reproduction. The originality of Diotima's view of *erôs* is that it is much wider than in the previous theories, and this wide view allows her to give a proper account (*logon didonai*) of inherited notions which the others did not bother to explain, and which were not traditionally explained in terms of *erôs*: *philotimia* (Phaedrus), *philosophia* (Pausanias), or *theophilia* (Eryximachus). Diotima thereby reveals both that *erôs* has a larger extension than usually assumed, and that the previous speakers — as well as the traditions they drew on — talked about various notions without fully understanding them.

If Diotima gives an account where the former speakers merely made claims, we can read the rhetorical contest reported in the *Symposium* as a genuine Platonic dialogue. When Socrates talks with the wise men of Athens, he always has them acknowledge that they do not have a proper account of what they initially claimed. Plato also depicts this familiar type of discussion in the *Symposium*, in the two short dialogical inquiries

that Socrates manages to conduct with Agathon, despite Phaedrus' ban on dialectic (194d1-8): first Socrates has the tragic poet recognize that he cannot explain why he did not fear to display his wisdom the other day before a vast audience, but is afraid to do so now (194a8-c10); second, he prompts him to acknowledge that he does not know precisely the nature of *erôs* (199c3-201c9). Through the voice of Diotima, Socrates prolongs and extends to the former speakers this dialectical exchange which he cannot carry on in a formal way with his table companion. Diotima's speech can thus be viewed as more 'Platonic' or more 'philosophical' than the former ones not merely because, as it has long been noted, it conveys an ontology and an epistemology very close to the theory of the Forms propounded in the *Phaedo* or the *Republic*; Diotima also manages to perform two tasks which Plato characterizes elsewhere as characteristic of the philosopher: knowing both the good and the truth about an object (cf. *Resp*. 6.508e3), and giving a account (*Resp.* 7. 533c2, *Plt.* 285d4-286a5).

Contest over wisdom: knowing the good or inventing it?

I also hope to have shed light on the kind of wisdom competition displayed in the *Symposium*. First, the confrontation between the first speakers and Diotima should not be viewed simply as a conflict between tradition and philosophy: as we saw, each speaker, from Phaedrus onward, covertly subverts the tradition he claims to advocate by proposing a novel view of *erôs*. Second, what is at stake in this debate is less 'who knows what *erôs* is?' than 'who knows how *erôs* relates to the good?' and, eventually, 'who knows the good'? Each of the first three speakers proposes a different and novel vision of *erôs* primarily because he holds a particular vision of the good. Eryximachus, for example, cannot be suspected of being unaware that *erôs* is a desire tending towards pleasure — this is the standard view of *erôs* in the medical literature; the doctor is rather pushed by strategic reasons to ignore these features in his depiction of the *good erôs*: they are incompatible with his conception of what is supremely good for human beings — health. What his dismissal of pleasure and desire eventually reveals is not his ignorance of *erôs* but rather an inability to understand how beneficial desire and pleasure can be for achieving virtue and happiness. Plato's final purpose may thus be to prompt his reader to wonder how compatible with praising *erôs* are the various ideals of excellence that were promoted by the various educators and *sophoi* in classical Athens. To what kind of virtuous and happy life is *erôs* best conducive? Is it the honoured life

of the Homeric heroes (Phaedrus)? Or democratic citizenship (Pausanias)? Or the healthy life (Eryximachus)? Or is it Diotima's 'ungrudging love for wisdom' (φιλοσοφία ἄφθονος, 210d6), which leads to contemplate the form of beauty and to give birth to true virtue?

Plato's answer is that none of the ideals conveyed by the first three speeches allows us to fully enjoy fully the potentialities of *erôs*. If our goal is to reach the standards of the Homeric heroes — acquiring the highest military honours during our life and, after death, being granted eternal enjoyment on the Isles of the Blessed — we should not take *erôs* as the primary motivation of our action; *erôs* can help only those who are unable to produce 'true virtue' and who will therefore never reach the kinds of bliss designed for the heroes. If our final purpose is to become a good orator and live in a stable democratic society, why should we postulate the existence of an *erôs* in the soul, and give *erôs* the principal and long-standing function that Pausanias assigns to it in education and social life? The time limited *paiderastia*, where the *erastês* provides his traditional intellectual and moral knowledge in exchange for the sexual favours of the youth, is quite sufficient to acquire the education necessary for political success. And the traditional bonds of *philia* between souls, based on *aretê* and not on *erôs*, are quite sufficient to secure the stability of the democratic society. Finally, if our final goal in life is to be healthy, we cannot genuinely praise *erôs* for what it is (a desire tending to pleasure) since both desire and pleasure are suspicious and must be checked with regard to health.

The failure of the first speakers to offer at the same time a dignified and a realistic encomium of *erôs* eventually explains the state of affairs that Phaedrus indignantly recalls at the start of the dialogue (177a5-c3): if no *sophos* has offered a dignified encomium of *erôs* to date, it is because no ideal of virtue and happiness promoted by the current *sophoi* allows humans to recognize and fully enjoy all the aspects of *erôs*. Although the first speakers try to make up for this injustice, they fail to do that convincingly because they still assume that *erôs* can be valued only with respect to one of these traditional ideas of the good to which they remain attached.

Conversely if Diotima is the only one who can deliver a proper encomium of *erôs*, it may not be primarily, as we have been assuming so far, because she holds a better and more comprehensive view of *erôs* (cf. Chapter 5). It might be rather because she holds a novel view of virtue and happiness, a view that may allow enjoyment of *erôs* without

frustrating any of the essential features of this emotion that conventional moralists necessarily have to dismiss.

Research prospects

I did not have time to explore this hypothesis in the limits of this study, but this will need to be done if I want to make full sense of the reasons why Diotima's encomium caps the former ones and manages to solve the problems they raised. Let us just signpost here the main points of this prospective argument. It already appeared that Diotima holds a wide view of the good, that encompasses all the views advocated separately in the first three speeches, e.g. *athanasia* (Phaedrus), *philosophia* (Pausanias), *theophilia* (Eryximachus). At closer inspection, though, Diotima also holds a *different* conception of each of these notions that she seems to borrow from the former speakers, and from the traditions they draw on themselves. She does not view immortality as the eternal life of pleasures granted to Achilles by the gods: Diotima's immortality is reached by giving birth to virtuous offspring and, ideally, through the intellectual contact with the Form of the Fine. Her view of *philosophia* has nothing to do with Pausanias' mundane training in poetry and rhetoric, nor with his political discernment based on received assumptions about the right and the wrong; rather it consists in seeking a new definition of what is fine and right, and these notions are arguably much more sophisticated than those transmitted by Solon and Lycurgus, whom Diotima pointedly refers to in the lower mysteries, ranking them among those who produce virtue through *philotimia*, not through *philosophia*. The 'god' with which Diotima's lover become *philos* (cf. θεοφιλεῖ, 212a6) is the Form (αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλόν, 211e3); whereas when Eryximachus talks of the *koinônia* and *philia* that humans should seal with the gods through mantic art and sacrifices (188b6-d3), the divinities he has in mind are presumably the anthropomorphic gods of the Hesiodic pantheon, who control the natural elements; or, if the doctor holds a naturalistic view of the divine, they might be the elements themselves; in any case, Eryximachus does not view god as the abstract Form of the Fine. As a result the kinds of happiness that humans can reach through each kind of *theophilia* are much different: a peaceful ordinary life, free from diseases and climate disturbances (Eryximachus); the joy of contemplating the Form of the Fine and the production of true virtue (Diotima). Unlike the kinds of virtue and happiness promoted by the first speakers, those promised at the end of Diotima's love ascent are

completely unfamiliar to the citizens of 5th century Athens. Even Socrates may not know what contemplating the Form of the Fine and producing true virtue looks like (cf. *Resp.* 6.506c1-2); maybe as an indication that nobody has already achieved such an exploit, Plato gives no information about the nature of *to kalon* and the 'true virtue' mentioned at the end of the ascent. Diotima's goods, contrary to those that the previous speakers claimed to know, remain to be invented. Therefore, if Diotima opposes the first speakers as innovation opposes tradition, it might be concerning the conception of the good, much more than concerning the conception of *erôs*.

On the one hand, this might be viewed as a weak point for Diotima's theory: is not that bliss promised at the end of the ascent just a mirage? Who can testify that the erotic ascent really works? And is there even one human being able to go through such a painstaking philosophical training? On the other hand, the novel and undecided nature of Diotima's virtue and happy life is the strong point of her encomium: it is because her view of the good is of a new kind that she can make allowance for some features of *erôs* that have been frustrated by the traditional morals so far. In so doing, Diotima also endows her educative programme with some erotic appeal. In the context of a Greek symposion, she does not just display her wisdom about *erôs* or the good: like all the previous speakers, she speaks as an educator who offers her audience (particularly Agathon) a particular ideal of excellence to seek, and, to that end, a particular educational programme (*paideia*) to follow. Her speech, like the previous ones, is not just a demonstration (*epideixis*); it is and educative offer (*epangelma*). Plato indicates that Diotima's *epangelma* supersedes the others by showing that, however hazardous and difficult to reach is the excellence promised at the end of the ascent, her *paideia* and the excellence it aims at are the only ones which will allow us to enjoy all the aspects of *erôs*, without hindrance. 'Jouir sans entraves': this is after all not a bad slogan for advertising a higher education programme — it is presumably more likely to make young prospective students prick up the ears than 'win medals', 'enjoy political freedom' or 'stay healthy'.

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