

## Gender and Inscribed Epigram: Herennia Procula and the Thespian Eros

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**SUMMARY:** A marble statue base found at Thespieae preserves an elegiac couplet about Praxiteles' Eros signed by one Herennia Procula (*BCH* [1926] 404–6). This poet, who is absent from surveys of ancient women writers, is here identified as a member of a wealthy Roman family resident at Thessalonica (*IG X* 2.1 no. 70). The couplet, which was probably composed for a copy of the Eros statue made to replace the original removed by Nero, makes sophisticated allusion to a series of epigrams about Praxiteles' Cnidian Aphrodite, but with a key variation that points to the nature of the worship of Eros at Thespieae. Plutarch's *Amatorius*, set during the celebration of the Thespian Erotidia, provides important parallels to show that the Praxitelean Eros had by the early Flavian period become an object of veneration for women hoping for happy and sexually fulfilling marriages.

THE FAMOUS WOMEN POETS OF THE EARLY HELLENISTIC PERIOD—Erinna, Moero, Anyte, and Nossis—were all involved in the writing of epigrams. The innovations made by these women to the practice of epigrammatic composition contributed directly and fundamentally to the development of epigram as a literary genre, written to circulate as text rather than as a visible part of a monument. Verse inscriptions carved on stone were in the early period of Greek culture always anonymous, and from the fourth century B.C. to late antiquity the overwhelming majority remained so. As a result, the voice heard in inscribed verse was unmarked and so gendered male. By publishing epigrams under their own names and often with content that reflected the interests of their gender, women epigrammatists made an important contribution to the new literary character of epigram: if the voice in an epigram was marked as that of a woman, it had then to be heard as a personal voice, not an anonymous or generic one.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the details see Gutzwiller 1997 and 1998: 53–88. Erinna's two epitaphs for her friend Baucis (*AP* 7.710, 712) and her poem on a portrait of Agatharchis (6.352) signal

These early Hellenistic women may have composed other poems, now lost, that were inscribed upon dedicatory objects and grave monuments,<sup>2</sup> and the great number of anonymous verse inscriptions surviving from the Hellenistic and Roman periods quite possibly represent the work of many unknown female poets. One of them has now come to light in the person of one Herennia Procula, who signed a couplet engraved on a marble statue base found at Thespieae:

οὔτος Ἔρως ἐδίδαξε πόθους. αὐτὴ φάτο Κύπρις·  
 ποῦ σ' ἄρα δὴ σὺν ἐμοὶ δέρξατο Πραξιτέλης;  
 Ἑρηννίας Πρόκλας

This Eros teaches desire. Aphrodite herself said,  
 "Where did Praxiteles see you with me?"  
 By Herennia Procula.

Despite its brevity and apparent triviality, this is no ordinary verse inscription. It comes from the dedicatory site of one of the most famous statues of antiquity, Praxiteles' Thespian Eros, and makes complex and sophisticated reference to the cultural and literary tradition concerning that statue and its equally famous counterpart, the cult statue of Aphrodite at Cnidus.<sup>3</sup> Discovered as long ago as 1891, though not published until 1926,<sup>4</sup> the couplet has attracted little attention from scholars concerned with ancient Thespieae or with Praxiteles, and its existence seems unknown to those interested in an-

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the poet's interest in her young female acquaintances; on the Agatharchis poem as our earliest ecphrastic epigram see Skinner 2001: 207–9, Gutzwiller 2002a: 88–91, and for Erinna's remaking of inscribed epitaph in the *Distaff*, Stehle. Anyte's epitaphs for animals and young women, as well as her playful epigrams on children, suggest a woman's focus on her surroundings; see Barnard, Gutzwiller 1998: 54–74, and for a somewhat different perspective, Greene. Nossis, who proclaims herself a poetic descendant of Sappho (*AP* 7.718), celebrates the beauty and charm of young women in her epigrams on the portraits dedicated in a temple of Aphrodite; see Skinner 1991, Gutzwiller 1998: 74–88.

<sup>2</sup> The story told by Pausanias (10.38.13) about Anyte's participation in the foundation of a sanctuary for Asclepius at Naupactus may be based on a verse inscription that she produced for that site; see Reitzenstein 133, Skinner 2001: 217–18.

<sup>3</sup> Herennia's epigram belongs to the so-called ecphrastic type, which has been the object of recent scholarly interest. On Hellenistic ecphrastic epigrams see Goldhill 1994, Gutzwiller 2002a and 2002b; on ecphrases in Hellenistic poetry more generally, Manakidou; for Callimachus' three iambic poems on statues, Acosta-Hughes 265–303. Steiner presents a stimulating discussion of how statues were used as talking points in earlier Greek culture.

<sup>4</sup> Reported by the excavator Jamot 1891: 660 and first published by Plassart 404–6; see the discussion in Corso 1988–91: 1.27–28.

cient women writers. But since poetic compositions by ancient women are so few, even the smallest of poems becomes precious, and this epigram, when fleshed out with information about its cultural circumstances, offers an opportunity for an illuminating case study of one woman poet from the Greco-Roman period. The first part of this essay is concerned with the historical and archaeological, as I discuss the ancient tradition about Praxiteles' statue, the identity of the epigrammatist, and the possible circumstances for the dedication of the statue base (sections I–II). The second portion is concerned with the literary and cultural, as I examine the tradition of epigram variation practiced by Herennia and evidence for women's worship at Thespieae, in order to explore a gendered reading of the couplet, to hear a woman's comment on desire and the erotic gaze (sections III–V).

## I

Praxiteles' two most famous statues, his Eros at Thespieae and his Aphrodite at Cnidus, were connected through stories about his passion for the hetaira Phryne.<sup>5</sup> Among the most famous and wealthiest of fourth-century courtesans, famed for the beauty of her "unseen" parts (Ath. 13.590f), Phryne served as the model for the Aphrodite statue (Ath. 13.591a), which was the first monumental, three-dimensional female nude in the history of Greek sculpture.<sup>6</sup> Most of the anecdotes about her are connected, either directly or indirectly, with her role as earthly surrogate for Aphrodite. When prosecuted in the Athenian courts on a capital charge, she was acquitted because her advocate Hyperides tore open her garment and exposed her breasts to the jurors in a plea for mercy (Quint. *Inst.* 2.15.9, Plut. *IX orat.* 849e, Ath. 13.590d–e). The tactic was all the more effective because Phryne was said to have normally kept her body concealed in public.<sup>7</sup> According to Athenaeus (13.590f), she removed only her outer garment before letting down her hair and entering the sea at Athenian festivals, in what was clearly a calculated imitation of Aphrodite; Athenaeus then adds that she became the model for Apelles' painting of Aphrodite Rising from the Sea.

<sup>5</sup> I cite the anecdotal tradition about Phryne to illustrate the narrative that forms the basis for the cultural use made of her in the Hellenistic and Roman period, not for its historical veracity; for such an approach to the biography of a courtesan figure see Henry and, with reference to Phryne, Stewart 104, Rosenmeyer 243–48, and McClure 126–36. For full discussion of the sources see Raubitschek.

<sup>6</sup> Recent discussions of the statue in Havelock and in Stewart 97–106. The ancient sources for the two Praxitelean statues can be found in Overbeck 236–43 and Corso 1988–91.

<sup>7</sup> See Davidson 133–34 on the calculated effect of Phryne's "scopic economy." For discussion of the trial see Cooper, McClure 132–36.

Praxiteles' Eros was depicted as a nude adolescent, standing, winged but lacking a bow. While the artist modeled the Cnidian Aphrodite on Phryne's physical appearance, he was said to have modeled the Eros on the desire he felt for her in his heart. Praxiteles then gave the statue to Phryne as payment for her favors, and she in turn dedicated it in her hometown of Thespieae.<sup>8</sup> An ancient cult of Eros in aniconic form, probably associated with Hesiod's view of a primeval Eros as generative force for the universe (*Th.* 120–22), was reported to have existed from early times at Thespieae (Paus. 9.27.1),<sup>9</sup> but even if this story is reliable, it seems probable that Phryne's gift was offered as an *ex voto* rather than as a cult statue, like the Cnidia. Certainly, the benefaction proved advantageous for the Thespians in the centuries to come. Under the period of Roman domination, as we are told, Praxiteles' Eros became the only reason for tourists to visit Thespieae (Cic. *Ver.* 4.4, 135; Strabo 9.2.25), thus rivaling the attraction provided by his Aphrodite at Cnidus (Plin. *Nat.* 36.20). By the second century B.C., the Thespians were celebrating a festival called the Erotidia, held every four years in association with an earlier established festival, the Mouseia, that honored the Muses of nearby Mt. Helicon.<sup>10</sup> Both athletic and musical competitions were held at these celebrations, which continued to attract Panhellenic visitors until the third century A.D. The statue of Eros was removed to Rome perhaps as late as the reign of Caligula.<sup>11</sup> It was

<sup>8</sup> According to Athenaeus (13.591b), the sculptor promised Phryne her choice of the Eros statue or the Satyr set up in the street of the Tripods, while in Pausanias (1.20.1–2) she is said to have tricked Praxiteles into revealing that the Eros and the Satyr were his favorite statues by having her servant claim that his workshop was on fire.

<sup>9</sup> See Fasce 113–30. Schachter 1981: 217 questions whether Eros received cult veneration at Thespieae before Phryne's dedication, a position now supported by Breitenberger, who denies any connection to Hesiod's cosmogony.

<sup>10</sup> For the Erotidia see Fasce 18–20, 45–50, Schachter 1981: 216–19, and for the Mouseia, Schachter 1986: 147–79, who (157–58) dates the expansion of the cult of the Muses under the public protection of Thespieae to the early fourth century B.C. The contests associated with the Mouseia go back at least to the third century and are perhaps earlier; see Schachter 1986: 163–64. The festival to the Muses underwent an important reorganization in the second half of the third century B.C., although the exact date is disputed; see Feyel 88–123, Schachter 1986: 163–66, and Knoepfler 1996.

<sup>11</sup> Pausanias (9.27.3) places the removal in the reign of a Gaius, who is assumed to be Caligula. The wording of Strabo (9.2.25) about the previous popularity of tourist visits to Thespieae does not seem to me to give firm evidence for the removal of the statue in an earlier period. But Corso 1988–91: 1.27, 68 argues that Strabo's comment indicates the removal of the statue before 29 B.C. and cites the Herennia couplet, which he dates to the first century B.C., to support this interpretation of Strabo; in a later article (1997–98: 76) he speaks of an "early imperial" date for Herennia's poem. Knoepfler 1997 argues (*contra* Cic. *Ver.* 4.4) that Mummius removed the statue to Athens in 146 B.C. and that it was then restored by Sulla.

then returned to Thespieae by Claudius, only to be removed once more by Nero, who placed it in the Porticus of Octavia where it was destroyed by fire, probably in 80 A.D. (Paus. 9.27.3; Plin. *Nat.* 36.22). In the middle of the second century, Pausanias viewed at Thespieae an imitation made by the Athenian sculptor Menodorus, set up to replace the lost original.<sup>12</sup>

Herennia's couplet was apparently inscribed beneath a copy of Praxiteles' statue, and there are reasons to look favorably on the suggestion that it was attached to the replacement made by Menodorus.<sup>13</sup> The slab on which it was engraved (.2 meters in height, .59 meters in length, .80 meters in depth) had joints for two clamps at the unbroken end, and Plassart declared it part of a monument shaped as an arc. The shape suggests a group of statues arranged on a semicircular base, like an earlier group of the nine Muses on a similar base found in their nearby cult site under Helicon.<sup>14</sup> Two relatively late sources, Pausanias (9.27.5) and Alciphron (*Epist.* 4.1), report that a statue of Aphrodite and one of Phryne herself, both by Praxiteles, were part of the display at Thespieae. Alciphron indicates that the figure of Phryne was between the statues of Eros and Aphrodite, and coins from Thespieae with two female figures, of Domitianic date, have been taken as evidence that the Phryne image was smaller than the Aphrodite and somewhat beneath her.<sup>15</sup> But whether or not we accept the attribution of the Phryne statue to Praxiteles,<sup>16</sup> it is not unreasonable to suppose that after the removal of Praxiteles' Eros to Rome, the Thespians erected a copy of it that was closely grouped with the statues of Aphrodite and Phryne, the other characters in the famous story of the statue's origin. The assumption that Herennia's couplet was composed for a copy of the Eros that was accompanied by an Aphrodite fits well with the fictional

<sup>12</sup> It was not an exact copy, as Julianus *Or.* 2.54.b–c Hertlein reports that gilding added to the wings ruined the realistic effect produced by Praxiteles' statue.

<sup>13</sup> Plassart 406; cf. Raubitschek 899, Corso 1988–91: 1.27.

<sup>14</sup> Peek 1953: 611; the text can be found in *SEG* 13.344, with inscriptions from what were perhaps two other groups of Muses, 13.345–46, and in Vottéro 104–9. Statue groups representing the Muses are attested at the site from the early fourth century (Paus. 9.30.1); see Schachter 1986: 157. A group consisting of Agrippa with the infant Agrippina, Julia with Gaius and Lucius, and Livia was also set up in an arc, probably between 16 and 13 B.C.; see Rose 13–14, 149–51, who comments on the use of this form for Thespian monuments (151).

<sup>15</sup> For the coin type see Delivourias 64, no. 538, and for a speculative reconstruction of the Aphrodite attributed to Praxiteles based on the coin evidence see Corso 1988–91: 2.60–75 and 1997–98: 69.

<sup>16</sup> Skepticism is warranted: Paus. 5.17.3 attributed a Hermes that he saw at Olympia to Praxiteles, but the Hermes and infant Dionysus found there is now believed to be Hellenistic in date; see Ridgway 14.

speech act in the epigram, in which Aphrodite is reacting as a first-time viewer to the Thespian representation of Eros.

## II

But who was Herennia Procula, and why did she sign her epigram? In publishing the couplet, Plassart stated that the author was unknown, and those very few later scholars aware of the inscription have, as far as I know, simply accepted this assertion.<sup>17</sup> But the volume of *Inscriptiones graecae* devoted to Macedonian epigraphic material and published in 1972 contains an inscription, bearing the date 66/7 A.D., that was erected by one Herennia Procula. Engraved on a marble column found near the Serapeum in Thessalonica, the inscription reads as follows (*IG X 2.1* no. 70; Pl. 4; sublinear dots omitted):

Ἑρεννία Πρόκλα | τὴν ἐπανγγελίαν | Μ Ἑρεννίου Πρόκλου | τοῦ πατρὸς  
ἐαυτῆς | τοῖς συνκλίταις ἀνέ- | στησεν κίονας δ' | σὺν ἐπικράν[οις] καὶ |  
σπείραις [καὶ τ]ὴν | φλιάν · ἱερα[τεύ]ον- | τος Λεω{ι}νίδ[ου τ]οῦ |  
Λυσανίου.

Herennia Procula, fulfilling the promise of her father M. Herennius Proculus, has set up for the banqueters four columns with capitals and bases as well as the lintel, in the priesthood of Leonidas, the son of Lysanias.

Although the name Herennius is fairly common throughout Italy and the Roman world, I have found no other example of this *gentilicium* combined with the cognomen Proculus or Procula.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the date of the Macedonian inscription fits neatly with the final removal of Praxiteles' Eros to Rome. While certainty is not possible, there results a high likelihood that this inhabitant of Thessalonica is the same Herennia Procula who composed an epigram for a copy of Praxiteles' Eros at Thespieae. If this is correct, then her couplet is to be dated to the reign of Nero or to the early Flavian period.

Herennia Procula was a member of a locally prominent family of Roman citizens resident in a wealthy provincial capital of the Greek East.<sup>19</sup> Herennii begin to appear in the Greek East in the early part of the first century B.C.,

<sup>17</sup> Plassart 405; cf. Lausberg 244, Corso 1988–91: 1.27.

<sup>18</sup> Proculus/a is, however, one of the most common *cognomina*; see Kajanto 29–30. On the formation of women's names in Latin see Kajava.

<sup>19</sup> The Herennii were of plebeian stock, their name Oscan in origin; see Münzer 661–62. The branch of the family from Samnium and Campania, among whom the *praenomen* Marcus is common, is probably the most ancient, and Herennii are attested as local office holders in this part of Italy during the Republic. Among the most prominent known members are one C. Herennius, who appears as a patron of the young Marius in 115 B.C.

and just after the end of the Republic two Herennii, both with the *praenomen* Marcus, appear in the inscriptional record at Thessalonica.<sup>20</sup> The family had probably acquired lands in the area and undoubtedly profited from the lucrative trade that passed through the city and its port. Persons of the *gens Herennia* continue to appear in the inscriptional record at Thessalonica, as prominent members of the community, through the third century A.D. By the time of our inscription, the Herennii had become active participants in civic culture, as is shown by the involvement of M. Herennius Proculus, Herennia's father, and other male Herennii, in a religious guild for Theos Hypsistos. Two inscriptions from the same site and from the same general period (*IG X 2.1* no. 68, 69) show that the *συγκλίται* for whom Herennia set up four columns, apparently in a banqueting hall, were members of a local association devoted to this deity.<sup>21</sup> The Highest God was important in Macedonia, apparently identified as the national and royal form of Zeus.<sup>22</sup> Since ritual banquets, called *κλισίαι*, were common in the worship of Serapis, who was regularly considered to stand for Zeus (less commonly for Theos Hypsistos), it seems likely that the location of the inscribed column in the vicinity of the Serapeum points to a cultic association between the banqueters and the cult of the Egyptian deities.<sup>23</sup> M. Herennius Proculus, clearly a man of some wealth and per-

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(Plut. *Mar.* 5), and a M. Herennius, who rose to the consulship in 93 B.C. For prosopographical study of the Herennii see Deniaux 1973, especially 192–96, and 1979, although she does not discuss the group resident at Thessalonica.

<sup>20</sup> M. Herennius Kyn- (?) in *IG X 2.1* no. 124 (42–32 B.C.), and M. Herennius Philonicus in no. 113 (23/2 B.C.), who made a thank offering in the Serapeum. Even earlier, about 100 B.C., a “Marcus Herennius, son of Marcus, a Roman” appears as a victor in boxing at the Heracleia in Chalcis (*IG XII.9* no. 952, III.col I.1). In the Augustan age, coinage documents a M. Herennius serving as a municipal magistrate at Dyrrachium in Epirus and a C. Herennius at Pella in Macedonia; see Deniaux 1979: 625 n. 14. For discussion of Roman emigration to Macedonia in this era see Wilson 150–51.

<sup>21</sup> Among the *συγκλίται* listed there are two with the same *gentilicium*, M. Herennius Zosimus (nos. 68.36 and 69.24) and M. Herennius Romanus (no. 68.37). A similar list of banqueters for Theos Hypsistos is known from Pydna; see Cormack. For a list of inscriptions referring to Theos Hypsistos and Zeus Hypsistos see Mitchell 128–47.

<sup>22</sup> A deity called the “highest Zeus” is mentioned in an inscription from Thessalonica of the second/third century A.D. (*IG X 2.1* no. 62). Nock argues that Theos Hypsistos was originally the Zeus of mountain tops, often brought into association with supreme deities of other cultures; he also discusses the inscriptional evidence for banqueting in his honor in Egypt. Even Mitchell, who argues for Jewish influence in the cult of Theos Hypsistos throughout the Mediterranean, admits that the Macedonian examples have “local roots” (126).

<sup>23</sup> On the ritual banquets of the Sarapiastai see Vidman 137, Merkelbach 165–66. For the identification of Serapis as Zeus consult the list in Bricault 1996: 101–5, 125–27; for

haps a powerful local *patronus*, acted as a benefactor for this Thessalonican worship of the Highest God, and his daughter Herennia, presumably after his death, met an obligation he had made to provide the funds for four columns in a construction project involving the association.<sup>24</sup> In making financial gifts for building projects in her community, Herennia was following a pattern of benefactions on the part of wealthy men and women resident in the Greek East; the purpose of such acts was, at least in part, the promotion of elite families through public display. That Herennia assumed this role of maintaining the *euergetism* of the family suggests that she was her father's principal heir,<sup>25</sup> and since she was fulfilling a commitment made by M. Herennius Proculus, he was, in all likelihood, recently deceased. What more can be known about Herennia Procula and her interest in composing inscriptional verse for the Thespian Eros must be gleaned by examining the cultural circumstances of her day.

Given the prominence of her family, Herennia probably received a good education and was well versed in Greek literature. Emily Hemelrijk, who discusses the parallel example of imperial women in the West, has emphasized that those who composed Latin verse were usually participating in an activity common among their family members and friends.<sup>26</sup> Much of the literature produced during this period was recited or circulated informally for entertainment within a group of social acquaintances; epigram, which lent itself to personal topics and witty turns of phrase, was a popular form. The poets of Macedon seem to have had a particular interest in epigrammatic

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the Hypsistos Serapis known from Panóias, Portugal, see Vidman no. 758 and Alföldy 194–96, 230–34 with n. 132. In Thessalonica in the second century A.D. an association of *συγκλίται* was devoted to the worship of Anubis (*IG X 2.1* no. 58); see Dunand 3.181–82.

<sup>24</sup> Herennia's gift can be paralleled elsewhere. For a woman who donated 52 marble columns for a building project in Smyrna in 124 A.D. see Petzl no. 697.27–30 with Migeotte 209; for a woman who contributed columns, a pediment, and screen to the construction of a new Iseum in Hadrianic Athens, as well as dedicating an Aphrodite statue and repairing the cult statue of Isis, see *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 4771 = Vidman no. 16, with Walker. On promises to pay in solicitations for public benefactions see Migeotte 320–21. The building program in Thessalonica was perhaps repair work after an earthquake of 61 A.D.; see Sen. Q. *Nat.* 6.1.13, 7.28.3.

<sup>25</sup> Van Bremen 51 argues that lack of brothers was one reason for the imposition of liturgies on Roman women in the Greek East. For women and benefactions, primarily civic ones, see Gauthier 74–75, MacMullen, van Bremen, and Dixon 106–12; examples of honorific inscriptions for benefactresses are given in Lefkowitz and Fant 158–61.

<sup>26</sup> Hemelrijk 52–53, 147–53, 182, and, on the education of Roman women, 17–96.



composition. Posidippus, one of the most important epigrammatists of the early Hellenistic period, was from Macedonian Pella, and the newly discovered collection of his epigrams, written on a papyrus of the late third century B.C.,<sup>27</sup> highlights the Macedonian heritage of his Ptolemaic patrons. In addition, the great majority of early imperial Greek epigrams known from the manuscript tradition descend to us from the *Garland* of Philip, who, like Herennia, was a native of Thessalonica. Not surprisingly, among the post-Meleagrian poets included in his anthology, dating no later than Nero, are several from Macedonia, including the prolific Antipater, who was also a Thessalonican.<sup>28</sup> Philip seems to allude to the importance of this Macedonian contingent in his proem, where his imagery involves a parallel between the home of the Muses in Boeotia near Thespieae and their home at Pieria in Macedonia (AP 4.2.1–4 = 1.1–4 GP):

ἀνθεά σοι δρέψας Ἑλικώνια καὶ κλυτοδένδρου  
 Πιερίης κείρας πρωτοφύτους κάλυκας  
 καὶ σελίδος νεαρῆς θερίσας στάχυν, ἀντανέπλεξα  
 τοῖς Μελεαγρείοις ὡς ἵκελον στεφάνοις.

Plucking flowers of Helicon for you and cutting the first  
 buds from Pieria of the famous forests  
 and harvesting grain from a new page, I have woven  
 in rivalry a garland like those of Meleager.

Far from being vaguely metaphorical,<sup>29</sup> these lines indicate that Philip had collected the “flowers” of epigrammatic poetry produced both in central Greece and in Macedonia and had added selections from other recent epigram books. The epigrams in Philip’s *Garland* represent, then, the type of short verse that Herennia would have heard and read during her formative years in Thessalonica.

<sup>27</sup> On the date of *P.Mil. Vogl.* VIII 309 see Bastianini–Gallazzi 17.

<sup>28</sup> In AP 9.428 Antipater claims that Thessalonica, “the mother of all Macedonia,” has sent him to L. Calpurnius Piso to sing of his successful campaign in Thrace (11 B.C.), and the poet is called Thessalonican in the lemmata to numerous epigrams. Among other poets from Philip’s *Garland*, Epigonus and Macedonius are made sons of Thessalonica by the lemmatist, while Adaeus and Parmenion are labeled Macedonian. Other, less certain possibilities are Antiphanes, alternately said to be Macedonian or Megalopolitan, and Antistius, who was identified by Cichorius 360–61 as C. Antistius Vetus, said by Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.38.2) to be one of the great men of Macedon. Ancient and Byzantine poets of Macedon have been collected with discussion by Tzanes, although Herennia is unknown to him.

<sup>29</sup> Gow–Page 1968: 2.330 criticize Philip for repeating himself thrice over, because they fail to understand the point of the geographical allusions.

For a more exact parallel to Herennia's inscribed couplet, we should look away from the literary record to the phenomenon of author's signatures on stone. Such signatures, first documented in the fourth century B.C., were always quite rare, but there are sporadic examples in the Hellenistic period and the practice becomes somewhat more common in the imperial era.<sup>30</sup> I discuss here two examples, both of which reveal something about the cultural phenomenon of author's signatures in Macedonia and central Greece during the Hellenistic and early Roman eras.

The first is a ten-line epigram commemorating the gift of a *temenos* to Osiris as a place for his holy coffin, on behalf of one Phylacides and his son (*IG X 2.1* no. 108). The inscription, dated to the years before the end of the second century B.C., was found in the Serapeum at Thessalonica and is signed by Damaeus. The poem becomes even more interesting for our purposes because the editor has convincingly identified this poet with a "[J]amaios, son of Hegesandros, a Macedonian from Thessalonica," who is listed as a poetic victor in the category of "prosodion" at the Thespian Mouseia; the inscription bearing his name has been dated to the period 195–45 B.C.<sup>31</sup> The inscrip-tional link between these two poetic activities on the part of Damaeus indicates that a person commissioned to compose an epigram for an important religious gift was probably someone of recognized talent, perhaps even a professional poet. It also provides a Hellenistic precedent for a resident of Thessalonica participating in the rich literary life centered at Thespieae.

Given the rarity of such author's signatures, it is undoubtedly significant that Herennia's couplet finds its closest parallel near Thespieae, in a series of epigrams found in the grove sacred to the Muses under Mt. Helicon, my sec-

<sup>30</sup> No one, to my knowledge, has attempted to collect all such signatures or to examine their function(s). We may note, however, that the name may be written over or under the poem, indicated within the text, or spelled out acrostically. Most often the author's name appears alone in the genitive case, but sometimes a noun such as ἔπη is added or the nominative is accompanied by a verb such as ἔγραψε. On the various forms of these signatures see Wilhelm 239 n. 48 = 1972: 316 n. 48. For examples through the fourth century B.C. see Hansen 283 with the discussion in Gutzwiller 1998: 48; for a list of signatures on the grave epitaphs in Peek 1955 see Page 1981: 120 n. 2; and for signed inscriptions from the Greek East see Merkelbach-Stauber 02/06/20 (acrostically), 03/02/37, 06/02/27, 09/05/17 (internal), 12/03/01 (acrostically), 12/03/03, 13/04/01. Four Greek hymns connected with Isis, inscribed at a temple site in the Fayum and dated no later than the early first century B.C., bear the signature of Isidorus; see Vanderlip. For the signatures to poems on the Colossus of Memnon see Bernand.

<sup>31</sup> Edson ad *IG X 2.1* no. 108.11. The Thespian inscription was published by Jamot 1895: 335–36, no. 10; for the date of the festival at which Damaeus performed see Roesch 190. Text and discussion of the epigram by Damaeus in Tzanes 73–77.

ond example.<sup>32</sup> The epigrams, followed by the name of Honestus in the genitive case, have been found on a semicircular base for statues of the nine Muses (10–18 *GP*) that also bears the inscription “the Thespians for the Heliconian Muses.”<sup>33</sup> The same Honestus signed an inscription added to a statue of the mythical singer Thamyris (20 *GP*), a private dedication originally set up in the third century B.C.,<sup>34</sup> and composed another for an image of an Augusta (21 *GP*) who can boast of “two divinely sceptered Caesars” and is celebrated as a “chorus mate” of the Muses. The identity of this Augusta is disputed, but all the probable candidates—Augustus’ daughter Julia, Livia, or Antonia Minor—provide a date for Honestus’ signatures in the earlier Julio-Claudian era.<sup>35</sup> It appears that the Thespians felt the need for a refurbishing of the monuments in the sacred grove during the period when the imperial family began to be honored in association with the celebration of the local festivals.<sup>36</sup>

Since the name Honestus is extremely rare, this poet is almost certainly identical with the Corinthian epigrammatist of the same name known from Philip’s *Garland*.<sup>37</sup> Among the ten epigrams in the collection that may be attributed to Honestus from Corinth are two on Theban topics (3, 6 *GP*), one on the invention of satyr drama at Sicyon (8 *GP*), one praising as “sister

<sup>32</sup> The sanctuary of the Muses, in a valley about six km. west of Thespieae, was excavated by the French in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Among the structures found there were a monumental altar, at least one portico, and a theater. See Roux, Fossey 134–65.

<sup>33</sup> The name ΟΝΕΣΤΟΥ survives, in whole or part, beneath six of the epigrams for the Muses, but it is generally assumed that all nine were originally signed by him. On the form of the name see Robert 1946: 13 n. 6. The texts in Gow-Page 1968 lack the supplements to the epigrams on Erato and Clio (15–16 *GP*) provided by Peek 1953: 624–27 from reexamination of the stones, and Peek also shows that the order of the poems on the Muses accepted by Gow-Page is incorrect. A tenth epigram on a Muse signed by Honestus (19 *GP*) is apparently from another statue group.

<sup>34</sup> SEG 15.320; see Roesch 140–42, Schachter 1986: 159–60.

<sup>35</sup> Jamot 1902: 154, 299–301 first advanced the possibility of Julia, who appears in a family statue group at the same site and who would not have been so honored after 2 B.C. Arguments in favor of Livia, who became an Augusta in the Tiberian era, are provided by Peek 1953: 631–34, Gow-Page 1968: 2.308–9, and Jones 249–55; for other honors offered Livia at Thespieae see Schachter 1986: 175. Cichorius 362–65 proposed Antonia Minor, who was apparently the patroness of the epigrammatist Crinagoras, and based on this identity dated the inscription to 37 A.D.; but see Hemelrijk 110–11 for counterarguments.

<sup>36</sup> For other statues of prominent Romans see Schachter 1986: 161 n. 3, and for the association of the imperial family with the *agônes* see Schachter 1981: 219 n. 2.

<sup>37</sup> See Gow-Page 1968: 2.301. *AP* 7.274 is ascribed to another Honestus, from Byzantium.

streams" the springs of Peirene in Corinth and Hippocrene on Helicon (4 *GP*), and another poem on Helicon as a destination for poets (5 *GP*). Honestus' range of topics is, then, closely connected with central Greece, including Helicon, and Werner Peek has shown that his couplets on the Muses show a certain poetic refinement, being characterized by antithetical constructions and some play with the etymology of the Muses' names.<sup>38</sup> Particularly interesting is the poem on Clio, who was perhaps depicted holding a scroll: "Charm (χάρις) inhabits the books of Hesiod. Seeing my name in them, I, Clio, gaze upon many lovely things."<sup>39</sup> In typical Hellenistic fashion, the poet here confounds Clio's roles as deity of inspiration, a subject in Hesiod's poetry (*Th.* 77), and reader of that poetry. The epigram on Thamyris is also a charming play with paradox, since the "speechless" poet, punished for challenging the Muses by being deprived of musical ability, speaks to the viewer to point out that his lyre is now silent but his ears still listen to the Muses. One of the anthologized epigrams (5 *GP*) equates the physical labor of climbing Mt. Helicon to drink from its waters with the mental labor required to write good verse, and another (9 *GP*) advocates moderate drinking in what may be a statement locating Honestus' poetic style between the extremes of the austere, Callimachean water drinkers and more passionate consumers of abundant wine. We can conclude, then, that Honestus was an educated man steeped in the traditions of his region and knowledgeable about the poetic trends of the broader Greco-Roman world; a poet of at least moderate talent, he was locally renowned and sufficiently connected to Roman interests to find a place in Philip's anthology. Since his epigrams were placed on a publicly dedicated monument, his act must have been sanctioned or commissioned by the Thespians, either because of his wealth and social position or because of his reputation as a poet.

The epigrams by Honestus in the vale of the Muses clearly provide a precedent for Herennia's inscription at nearby Thespieae. In each case the epigrams seem to have been incised on a semicircular base for a statuary group, the names of both poets appear in the genitive case beneath the poems, and both sets of verses were apparently inscribed during a period of renewal for an important Thespian cult. In addition, Honestus and Herennia are both non-Thespians, natives of other Greek cities who also have ties to the Roman world,<sup>40</sup> and, as the next section will make clear, both allude to the cultural

<sup>38</sup> Peek 1953: 619–27.

<sup>39</sup> Peek 1953: 624–26 = *SEG* 13.344.

<sup>40</sup> For Roman interest in Thespieae and its festival see Robert 1946: 5–14 and Schachter 1986: 161–62.

and literary traditions about the statues or deities they commemorate. Herennia may have been given the opportunity to compose and sign this couplet because of benefactions made to the Thespians and the worship of Eros there, but the parallel examples of Damaeus and Honestus strongly suggest that her poetic abilities played some role as well.<sup>41</sup> Other epigrams by Honestus, like the poetry by some of Herennia's Thessalonican predecessors, have come down to us through anthologies; Herennia's other verse, if any existed, did not enjoy such a fate. We would know nothing of this woman as a poet if she had not named herself as author in a prominently displayed inscription.

### III

We turn now to the literary aspects of Herennia's couplet. The editor of the inscription dismissed the poetic qualities of the composition by stating that the epigram "recommends itself more for its brevity than for its originality."<sup>42</sup> But this is to misunderstand the artistic uses of epigram variation, which became a favored mode of composition from at least the end of the second century B.C. As I have argued elsewhere, epigram was in some ways the most characteristic of Hellenistic literary forms, because its ὀλιγοστιχία, as Philip calls it (*AP* 4.2.6), conformed well to an aesthetic preference for miniaturism and intricacy.<sup>43</sup> The purpose of epigram *variation* was to preserve the cultural heritage of the Hellenic past by reworking themes and subjects treated by others; poetic skill was judged by the wit or ingenuity with which the vocabu-

<sup>41</sup> Hemelrijk 146–209 provides an excellent discussion of the barriers that prevented Roman women from composing literature and then gaining recognition for their talent. Clearly wealth and social position were important factors for those who did obtain the opportunity to be heard. Claudia Trophime, who inscribed two epigrams praising Hestia in the prytaneion in Ephesus in 92/3 A.D., was able to promote her own poetic abilities because of the offices she held as priestess of Hestia and also prytanis in Ephesus (Merkelbach-Stauber 03/02/37); for the prominence of her family and its connection to the Hestia cult see van Bremen 87–89. Julia Balbilla, who composed four epigrams inscribed on one of the Memnon colossi in Egypt in 130 A.D., was the granddaughter of the last king of Commagene and was traveling in the company of the Emperor Hadrian and his wife (*PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 650); discussion in Cichorius 394–98, Bernand 19–21, 80–98, Hemelrijk 118–19, 164–70. A Caecilia Trebulla, who had earlier signed three iambic poems inscribed on the Colossus, is otherwise unknown; see Bernand 17–18, 187–91. The undatable Damo who wrote yet another epigram on the monument is likewise unknown; see Bernand 178–80. On women's choice of the less valued genres of short elegy and epigram see Hemelrijk 173–74, 181.

<sup>42</sup> Plassart 405.

<sup>43</sup> Gutzwiller 1998: 3–4.

lary and themes of earlier epigrams were reemployed rather than by originality of topic.<sup>44</sup> By these standards, Herennia's couplet succeeds admirably.

The pentameter of Herennia's couplet, in which Aphrodite asks, "Where did Praxiteles see you with me?" (ποῦ σ' ἄρα δὴ σὺν ἐμοὶ δέρξατο Πραξιτέλης;), clearly alludes to a series of epigrams from the *Greek Anthology* in which Aphrodite reacts to her first view of Praxiteles' statue at Cnidus. During the Hellenistic period Praxiteles' Cnidia was displayed in a round open-air shrine, which provided opportunities for visitors to gaze upon the statue from various angles and distances.<sup>45</sup> A dialogue called *Amores* attributed to Lucian is set during a visit of three men to the shrine on Cnidus, all of whom are astounded and erotically aroused by the beauty of the statue, although the man who prefers boys only when he gets a glimpse of the goddess's backside. The epigrams on the Cnidia deflect this viewing experience to Aphrodite herself, and all seem to descend from an anonymous couplet that is the simplest of the group (*AP* 16.162):<sup>46</sup>

Ἄ Κύπρις τὰν Κύπριν ἐνὶ Κνίδῳ εἶπεν ἰδοῦσα·  
 "Φεῦ, φεῦ· ποῦ γυμνὴν εἶδέ με Πραξιτέλης;"

The Cyprian upon seeing the Cyprian in Cnidus said,  
 "Alas, where did Praxiteles see me naked?"

Aphrodite's question here compliments the sculptor by confirming the accuracy of his depiction, just as the repetition in Ἄ Κύπρις τὰν Κύπριν suggests that Praxiteles has captured the essence of the goddess in his nude form.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> On the technique of epigram variation see Tarán, Laurens 65–96, Gutzwiller 1998: 227–36.

<sup>45</sup> The open setting of the statue in its *aedicula* is mentioned by Plin. *Nat.* 36.21 (*tota aperitur, ut conspici possit undique effigies deae*) and [Lucian] *Amores* 13–14. The archaeological evidence for a round temple containing a podium for a statue, probably dating to the second century B.C., can be found in the excavations reports of Love 1970: 154–55, 1972a: 70–76, 1972b: 402–5, and 1973: 419–24; see too Havelock 60–61 with fig. 15.

<sup>46</sup> See Page 1981: 385, who assigns this epigram to a "Hellenistic poet," and Lausberg 243. Other epigrams that clearly concern the Cnidia are *AP* 16.159–63, 165–66, 168; *AP* 16.167, by Antipater of Sidon, deals with both the Cnidian Aphrodite and the Thespian Eros. A fragmentary inscription of the third/second century B.C., found in what appears to be the sanctuary of Aphrodite Euploia on Cnidus, seems to contain the name Praxiteles and the word γυμ[νήν]; see Love 1972a: 72–73. Corso 1988–91: 1.24–25 speculates that it belonged to a private dedication of a small-scale Cnidian Aphrodite, but whether that is correct or not, the inscription seems to confirm the importance of the goddess's nudity to the inscriptional or epigrammatic tradition from at least the middle Hellenistic period.

<sup>47</sup> On the paradox of Aphrodite as both observer and observed see Lausberg 242.

Another epigram shows that Aphrodite is to be imagined asking her question as she emerges from the sea around her shrine on Cnidus ("Plato" AP 16.160):

ἡ Παφίη Κυθήρεια δι' οἴδατος ἐς Κνίδον ἦλθε  
 βουλομένη κατιδεῖν εἰκόνα τὴν ἰδίην.  
 πάντῃ δ' ἀθρήσασα περισκέπτῳ ἐνὶ χώρῳ  
 φθέγγετο· "Ποῦ γυμνὴν εἶδέ με Πραξιτέλης;"  
 Πραξιτέλης οὐκ εἶδεν, ἃ μὴ θέμις, ἀλλ' ὁ σίδηρος  
 ἔξεσεν, οἶαν' Ἀρης ἤθελε, τὴν Παφίην.

Paphian Cytherea came through the sea to Cnidus  
 wishing to gaze upon her own image.  
 When she had looked from all angles in her open shrine  
 she said, "Where did Praxiteles see me naked?"  
 Praxiteles did not see what is not right to see, but the iron  
 chiseled the Paphian as Ares wished her to be.

If we accept the third couplet as an original part of the poem,<sup>48</sup> the epigrammatist here answers the goddess to explain that Praxiteles needed no knowledge of her nude body since his iron chisel, as the embodiment of her divine lover, produced the image. By denying that Praxiteles saw "what is not right," the poet points to the anxiety that must have been felt by male viewers, who were typically titillated by their unobstructed gaze of the goddess's body.<sup>49</sup> In the mythical tradition mortal men who gazed upon the nude Aphrodite were endangered, particularly with the threat of impotence. In another epigram Aphrodite places Praxiteles precisely in the company of such mythical figures (AP 16.168):

γυμνὴν εἶδε Πάρις με, καὶ Ἀγχίσης, καὶ Ἄδωνις·  
 τοὺς τρεῖς οἶδα μόνους· Πραξιτέλης δὲ πόθεν;

Paris saw me naked, as did Anchises and Adonis.  
 I know only those three. From where did Praxiteles see me?

<sup>48</sup> Editors generally follow Jacobs 4.345–46, who believed that the last couplet was a later addition; the translation by Ausonius (*Ep.* 62 Green) consists, however, of all six lines. For the falsity of the ascription to Plato see Page 1981: 180–81, 385.

<sup>49</sup> Osborne 81–85 shows how the anecdotal tradition genders the viewer male. Stewart 97–104 suggests that the statue's novel form was Praxiteles' response to the problem of erecting a nude Aphrodite: "Praxiteles was the first Western sculptor to get beyond the supposition that the (male) spectator necessarily plays active subject to the female body's passive object, which is simply taken over and possessed by his desire" (104). Havelock has argued, however, that Aphrodite's nudity was sexualized as shocking only in the late Hellenistic period when, as she believes, the association with the mortal Phryne was first conceived.

How could Praxiteles have depicted Aphrodite so accurately unless he had seen her? And if he did lay eyes upon her unclothed in order to represent her essential form in his cult statue, was not that an act of sacrilege? The existence of the nude Aphrodite in a cult setting posed, then, a kind of paradox, since her nudity conveyed precisely what she was—an embodiment of realized desire—and yet the titillating view produced anxiety because of the power of the nude goddess, or of the sexual experience she represents. With this in mind, we should note that Herennia, while signaling an intertextual relationship with the Cnidia epigrams through ποῦ and Πραξιτέλης, has substituted for the famed nudity of the Cnidian Aphrodite the goddess's association with Eros (replacing γυμνήν ... με with σ' ... σὸν ἐμοί). It is a marked variation that, as we will see, has important implications for the worship of Eros at Thespieae.

How might Herennia have come to know this epigram series? The poems on the Cnidian Aphrodite clearly found their way into anthologies at some point in time, and some of them may have been published as a thematic series in antiquity, although their current order can be traced no further back than Planudes.<sup>50</sup> But in all likelihood at least some of the epigrams on Praxiteles' Aphrodite were originally composed to accompany miniature copies of the Cnidian, which are known in good number.<sup>51</sup> Small-scale copies of statues were set up during the Hellenistic period as private donations in sanctuaries and, from at least the second century B.C., in private dwellings. Some individuals who acquired or donated such copies may have desired an accompanying inscription alluding to the cultural significance of the image, and many of the ecphrastic epigrams in the *Anthology* perhaps originally served such a purpose. For instance, an epigram by Lucian *seems* a purely literary variation on the theme of whether Praxiteles saw Aphrodite unclothed (AP 16.163):

τὴν Παφίην γυμνήν οὐδεὶς ᾔδεν· εἰ δέ τις εἶδεν,  
οὗτος ὁ τὴν γυμνήν στησάμενος Παφίην.

No one saw the Paphian nude. But if anyone ever did,  
it was the man who here set up the nude Paphian.

<sup>50</sup> A parallel for allusion within an epigram series is provided by six poems on Myron's *Cow* composed by Antipater of Sidon, which probably formed a series in his own epigram book; see Gutzwiller 1998: 245–50.

<sup>51</sup> On these see Havelock 64–67, who argues that copying of the Cnidia did not begin until the late second century B.C. For a more general discussion of ancient miniatures and their use, religious and decorative, see Bartman.



But it is followed immediately in Planudes by a dedication of an Aphrodite statue also attributed to Lucian, and I suspect that the two epigrams were composed as a pair to celebrate a miniature Cnidia (AP 16.164):

σοὶ μορφῆς ἀνέθηκα τῆς περικαλλὲς ἄγαλμα,  
Κύπρι, τῆς μορφῆς φέρτερον οὐδὲν ἔχων.

I have dedicated to you a very beautiful image of your form,  
Cypris, since I have nothing better than your form.<sup>52</sup>

Herennia's couplet, though set up in a public space and in connection with a public cult practice, represents a similar phenomenon: it was inscribed beneath a replica of a famous statue and echoes earlier epigrams, perhaps known both from anthologies and from inscriptions accompanying other images.

To complicate further this connection to both manuscripts and inscriptions, Herennia's couplet also makes allusion not only to the epigrammatic tradition about the Cnidia but also to literary and inscriptional epigrams on Praxiteles' Eros. The topic was addressed in epigram as early as the third century B.C., as is shown by a quatrain attributed to Leonidas of Tarentum (AP 16.206 = 89 HE):

Θεσπιέες τὸν Ἔρωτα μόνον θεὸν ἐν Κυthereίῃς  
ἄζοντ', οὐχ ἑτέρου γραπτὸν ἀπ' ἀρχετύπου,  
ἀλλ' ὃν Πραξιτέλης ἔγνω θεόν, ὃν περὶ Φρύνης  
δεκόμενος σφετέρων λύτρον ἔδωκε πόθων.

Thespians venerate only that Eros as god in Cytherea's temple,  
the Eros shaped from no other mold but the one  
Praxiteles knew as a god, the one he saw around Phryne  
and gave as payment for his own desires.

Here Leonidas neatly blends god and statue by explaining the nature of this Eros in terms of what had become the foundational myth or aetiology for his cult, namely, his creation from, and in the form of, Praxiteles' passion for Phryne. The θεόν in the first line is repeated in the same position in the third line, connecting the god worshiped by the Thespians with the one "known" by Praxiteles. Correspondence between the couplets creates a further parallel between the place where the Thespians worship Eros—"in Cytherea's

<sup>52</sup> A parallel comes from Ephesus where a private dwelling of the second or third century A.D. has yielded an ecphrastic epigram about an Aphrodite Anadyomene, a form that originated with Apelles' painting but was reproduced in numerous small statues, as well as a second verse inscription offering a prayer to the goddess; see Merkelbach-Stauber 03/02/39–40.

temple”<sup>53</sup>—and the place where the sculptor saw Eros—“around Phryne.” So in Leonidas’ clever association of the two, the Eros that Praxiteles “saw” (δερχόμενος) hovering about Phryne merges with the Eros worshiped in the company of Aphrodite. Whether Herennia knew this particular epigram or not, her couplet, in which Aphrodite asks, “Where did Praxiteles see (δέρξατο) you with me?” was clearly composed within the same epigrammatic tradition. In the Leonidas poem her question had already been answered: Praxiteles saw Eros about Phryne, Aphrodite’s earthly surrogate.

Another epigram about Eros is anachronistically attributed to Simonides in the *Anthology* and to Praxiteles himself in Athenaeus (13.591a), who reports that the sculptor inscribed it on the base of the Eros statue that was “beneath the stage of the theater,” apparently the one at Thespiae (AP 16.204):<sup>54</sup>

Πραξιτέλης ὃν ἔπασχε διηκρίβωσεν Ἐρωτα  
 ἐξ ἰδίης ἔλκων ἀρχέτυπον κραδίης,  
 Φρόνη μισθὸν ἐμεῖο διδοὺς ἐμέ. φίλτρα δὲ τίκτω  
 οὐκέτι τοξεύων, ἀλλ’ ἀτενιζόμενος.

Praxiteles made an exact image of that Eros he felt,  
 drawing the figure from his own heart,  
 and he gave me as payment for myself to Phryne. I produce desire,  
 not now with my bow, but by an intense gaze.

Even though the claim to authorship by Praxiteles is unlikely, it does appear that in Athenaeus’ day a stone bearing this inscription and believed to have served as the base of the Praxitelean Eros before its removal to Rome was

<sup>53</sup> Editors have been concerned with the apparent contradiction in the first line of Leonidas’ epigram, which has been understood to say Eros is the only god worshiped in Aphrodite’s temple, and as a result the old emendation ἐκ Κυθερείης has been widely accepted (as in Gow-Page 1965). With this emendation Leonidas’ opening statement comes to convey the same sort of information about the Thespian cult that we find in Pausanias: “The Thespians have honored Eros above all gods from earliest times” (9.27.1 θεῶν δὲ οἱ Θεσπιεῖς τιμῶσιν Ἐρωτα μάλιστα ἐξ ἀρχῆς). But reading the transmitted text so ignores the importance of the article τόν, which, acting here as a demonstrative, looks forward to the series of modifiers in the rest of the epigram. Leonidas’ point is that the only Eros the Thespians worship in Aphrodite’s temple is the one created by Praxiteles’ love for Phryne.

<sup>54</sup> Rosenmeyer 254 with n. 38 takes this as the theater at Athens and then must assume that the statue given to Phryne was a different one; cf. Knoepfler 1997: 30–31, who argues that the statue was transferred to Athens for a while, and McClure 130. But others have understood the theater to be at Thespiae; see Raubitschek 899, Corso 1988–91: 1.42, who accepts the attribution to the sculptor.

prominently displayed at the principal site of the musical *agônes* celebrated at the Erotidia. If so, and if Herennia's couplet was indeed composed for the base of Menodorus' replica, then the epigram quoted above was the functional predecessor for her inscription. Similarity of vocabulary and phrasing—ἀρχετύπου, ἀρχέτυπον; λύτρον ἔδωκε, μισθὸν διδούς—shows that the Leonidas epigram and the poem ascribed to Praxiteles belong to the same literary/cultural tradition, but the second epigram states more clearly that Praxiteles' Eros was modeled, and accurately, on the sculptor's own erotic *pathos* (ὃν ἔπασχε).<sup>55</sup> This point, I suggest, was essential to the cultural importance of the statue and its dedication at Thespieae. While there were many temples to Aphrodite as goddess of sex and reproduction, the worship of Eros, as an embodiment of erotic longing whether fulfilled or not, was almost unique to Thespieae.<sup>56</sup> The epigram ascribed to Praxiteles was probably inscribed sometime during the Hellenistic period in visual proximity to the statue itself in order to represent to visitors the statue's core meaning as revealed through its aetiology, to explain how Praxiteles' experience of creating his Eros was related to their experience of viewing it, since it was for this experience that tourists made a pilgrimage to an otherwise undistinguished community to gaze upon a single sculpted image.

The stories about Praxiteles' sculpting of the Cnidian Aphrodite and the Thespian Eros are clearly rooted in the theories of perception and artistic creativity that were developing from the fourth century on. In Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.10.6–8) Socrates asks a sculptor to explain how he produces the appearance of emotion in his sculpted figures. Praxiteles' Eros is not an image of someone in an emotional state, but rather an image of an embodied emotion, of desire itself; as a result, it presents an altogether different artistic problem. Antonio Corso has argued that Praxiteles' creation of a statue of Eros from the *erôs* in his own heart is based on Platonic doctrine of an ideal love.<sup>57</sup> But his approach fails to explain the effect of this Eros on the viewer, since in Platonic thought a statue, as an imitation of corporeal existence, moves the viewer away from the trajectory toward the ideal to the realm of appearances.

<sup>55</sup> Corso 1997–98: 71 has insisted that, according to ancient sources, Praxiteles' Eros had "a sad expression." I have found no such statement in the sources, and his suggestion seems based on this epigram. But ὃν ἔπασχε means simply "which he felt," since in the Hellenistic age πάθος was the standard word for emotion of any sort, and Praxiteles' fame as a sculptor involved, in part, his ability to depict emotion; cf. D.S. 26.1.1: Πραξιτέλης ὁ καταμίξας ἄκρως τοῖς λιθίνοις ἔργοις τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς πάθη.

<sup>56</sup> There was also a cult at Parium on the Propontis, for which Praxiteles made another statue of Eros (Plin. *Nat.* 36.22, Paus. 9.27.1).

<sup>57</sup> Corso 1988–91: 1.41 and 1997–98: 64–65, 69.

It is more likely, to my mind, that the theory behind the production and effect of Praxiteles' Eros is related to the concept of *phantasia*, "visualization" or even "imagination," which had been developed by Aristotle and became a fundamental principle in Stoic thought.<sup>58</sup> For the Stoics a *phantasia* is an "impression in the soul" (D.L. 7.50 τύπωσις ἐν ψυχῇ) arising from sense perception. Once the person who receives a *phantasia* has given cognitive assent to it, it can then issue forth in the form of a verbal utterance. I assume that some such theory explains Praxiteles' ability to depict his erotic feelings for Phryne in physical form: the sight of her aroused in him a *phantasia*, an impression upon his soul, in the form of an emotion, of desire; upon yielding to it, he gained the capacity to body it forth, not in language, but since he was an sculptor, in marble.<sup>59</sup>

A *phantasia* that issues forth in language, as an ecphrasis or vivid description, may in turn produce in the hearer a corresponding impression, or visualization (a bringing-into-view), of what the speaker describes.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, the Thespian Eros, because it was accurately made from the mold (ἀρχέτυπον) in Praxiteles' heart, a mold made by the impression (τύπωσις) of his *erôs* for Phryne, could in turn produce the feeling of *pothos* in those who observed it. Consequently, the epigram attributed to Praxiteles concludes by revealing that Eros as embodied at Thespiae now produces desire not with his bow but merely by his gaze.<sup>61</sup> The participle ἀτενίζόμενος refers to a fixed and intent gaze, appropriate both for an immobile statue and for Eros himself.<sup>62</sup> The link between Eros' gaze and his love magic (φίλτρα τίκτω) is as old as Ibycus: "Eros,

<sup>58</sup> See the excellent discussion of Robert 1992: 393–97, 416–18. On *phantasia* see Imbert, Watson, and, in Stoic theories of art, Zagdoun 160–70; for a discussion of the concept in relation to art, description, and the reception of both, see Elsner 26–27.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. the conclusion of an epigram on Praxiteles' statue by Tullius Geminus: "I praise the man who gave a god to others and kept the more perfect god in his heart" (AP 6.260.5–6 αἰνέω βροτόν, ὅς γε καὶ ἄλλοις ἰδοὺς θεὸν ἐν σπλάγχχοις εἶχε τελειότερον); see also AP 16.205. Plut. *Amat.* 759c, a text set at the Thespian Erotidia, contains an intriguing comparison of the lover's *phantasia*, or mental image, of the beloved to the images burned into wax in encaustic painting.

<sup>60</sup> Clearly stated in Longinus 15.1, "A *phantasia* as it is commonly called is any concept arising in the mind from somewhere and productive of speech, but the word has come to refer to passages where you seem to see what you say from inspiration and emotion (ὅπ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ πάθους βλέπειν δοκῆς) and to bring the vision before your audience."

<sup>61</sup> In the Thespian setting the reference to the bow would point to another statue set up there, a bronze Eros with a bow by Lysippos (Paus. 9.27.3); see Hermary 880, no. 352.

<sup>62</sup> For the use of the verb with reference to the keen eyesight needed for miniature carvings on gems see Posidippus III.7 Bastianini-Gallazzi. Some scholars have interpreted

again looking at me meltingly under his dark eyelids (τακέρ' ὄμμασι δερκόμενος), tosses me with all sorts of love charms (κηλήμασι παντοδαποῖς) into the boundless nets of Aphrodite" (287 Page 1962). The implication of the epigram is that those who come to view the sculpted god may find their own hearts stamped with his form as their eyes fasten admiringly upon his seductive gaze.

The connection between Herennia's couplet and this epigrammatic tradition concerning Praxiteles' Thespian Eros is clear, if somewhat elliptical. Her opening statement—οὗτος Ἔρως ἐδίδαξε πόθους—may seem excessively trite, simplistic. As early as Euripides, Eros "drips longing from his eyes" (*Hipp.* 525–26 κατ' ὀμμάτων στάζων πόθον) and "teaches the poet" (fr. 663 Nauck ποιητὴν δ' ἄρα Ἔρως διδάσκει, κἄν ἄμουσος ᾗ τὸ πρὶν). Bion later includes in a list of poetic subjects Eros taught him the "desires of the mortals and immortals and the deeds of his mother" (fr. 10.10–11 Gow με δίδασκε θνατῶν ἀθανάτων τε πόθως καὶ ματέρος ἔργα). While working within the general tradition of such poetic references, Herennia seems to allude quite directly to a famous Hellenistic account of young lovers successfully united in marriage, by echoing the words with which Callimachus introduces the Acontius and Cydippe episode in the *Aetia* (fr. 67.1–3 Pfeiffer): αὐτὸς Ἔρως ἐδίδαξεν Ἀκόντιον ... τέχνην ("Eros himself taught Acontius his craft"). In doing so, however, Herennia creates a linguistic ambiguity that links the fabled past with present effect. Is her aorist ἐδίδαξε a true past tense as in Callimachus, so that we understand a reference to the πόθος of Praxiteles for Phryne? Or do we understand the verb as a gnomic aorist conveying the god's abiding power to produce erotic longing? If so, Herennia is allotting the capacity to "teach desire" specifically to "this Eros," the one being viewed, so that the deictic adjective (οὗτος replacing Callimachus' αὐτός) warns about the effect immediately at hand. The ambiguity of the tense links the two experiences, the desire that Eros once taught Praxiteles is the same desire he now teaches the viewer.

In the epigram probably once inscribed beneath the original Praxitelean statue (*AP* 16.204), an anonymous poet whose voice was heard as male (it was ascribed to Simonides or Praxiteles) ventriloquates Eros in the manner

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ἀτενίζομενος here as a passive; so Page 1981: 281 "being stared at" and Rosenmeyer 255 "being gazed upon." But as Benndorf 66–69 pointed out long ago, in the classical and Hellenistic period the verb is intransitive, expressing what is stared at with the dative or a prepositional phrase (e.g., Arist. *Mete.* 343b ἀτενίζουσιν ... εἰς αὐτόν and *Ph.* 192a πρὸς τὸ κακοποιὸν ... ἀτενίζοντι; *Ev. Luc.* 4.20 ἀτενίζοντες αὐτῷ); my own search of the TLG and PHI-7 disks confirms this observation. We may consequently conclude that the verb would here have been understood as a middle, not a passive.

of the “speaking objects” that commonly gave voice to earlier Greek inscriptions. That epigram focuses on male feelings and actions as it moves from Praxiteles, who sculpts the *erôs* he experiences, to the god-as-statue, who reproduces himself in others. The viewer, in experiencing the *erôs* that the statue represents, is invited to identify with the Praxitelean (and therefore male) experience of desiring a woman like Phryne. But Herennia genders the viewing of the statue differently. The voice she ventriloquates—that of Aphrodite—is female, just as she marks her own authorial voice as female by the signature. As in the Cnidia poems, Aphrodite here too poses as a viewer, observing the statue of Eros beside that of herself, and comments on the phenomenon—the past tense verb *φάτο* indicating that the speaker is not the Aphrodite statue but the goddess herself on some prior occasion.<sup>63</sup> The presence of the author’s signature takes this play with viewing to another level, as we the readers/viewers are asked to imagine Herennia imagining the goddess seeing the statue group of Aphrodite-cum-Eros. In the Thespian context the statement functions not just as witty play with the literary tradition but also as allusion to contemporary cult practice and the role of women within it.

#### IV

Our most important source for determining the meaning of Herennia’s couplet within Thespian cult is Plutarch’s *Amatorius*, set during the celebration of the Erotidia at Thespieae. The dramatic occasion of the dialogue, probably written toward the end of Plutarch’s life, is about 75 A.D.,<sup>64</sup> so that the events it reports supposedly took place within a decade or so of the final removal of the statue to Rome, the most likely period for the inscription of Herennia’s couplet. The subject of the dialogue, a debate between partisans of pederasty and partisans of love for women, and the events that frame it, all related by Plutarch’s son Autobulus many years after the occasion itself, are designed to illustrate the power of Eros in both theory and practice.<sup>65</sup> Autobulus reports that his father, when he was first married to his mother and a quarrel had

<sup>63</sup> The presence of Aphrodite as not only internal viewer, through her statue, but also as commentator on what she sees, through the epigram, provides a fascinating example of the interaction between internal viewers and reader response that Sharrock has recently explored.

<sup>64</sup> Flacelière 8–10 places composition of the *Amatorius* in the last ten years of Plutarch’s life and argues that he may have died as late as 127. Since the visit to Thespieae took place when Plutarch was first married and before the birth of his son (749b), and since Plutarch’s birth can be placed about 45 A.D., it is reasonable to set the occasion of the dialogue about 75 A.D.

<sup>65</sup> The dialogue has been recognized in recent years as an important source for changing ancient attitudes to sexuality and the position of women. See Foucault 193–210, Goldhill 1995: 144–61. For Plutarch’s views on women see Stadter, esp. 1–12, Pomeroy

broken out between their parents, came to Thespieae to sacrifice to Eros; he stresses that Plutarch brought his new wife to the celebration of the Erotidia because it fell to *her* to make the prayers and sacrifice (749b ἦν ἐκείνης ἡ εὐχὴ καὶ ἡ θυσία). This statement suggests that it was customary, at least for Boeotians (Plutarch was from Chaeronea), for a new bride to engage in worship of Eros at Thespieae and that the troubles within Plutarch's family made this ritual all the more important for the success of his marriage. The dialogue itself, delivered in the nearby sanctuary of the Muses where Plutarch and some friends have withdrawn, is punctuated by a series of events that lead up to another marriage, consecrated by the erotic atmosphere of the Erotidia. A wealthy and beautiful widow named Ismenodora had fallen in love with a handsome ephebe, Bacchon, and was proposing to marry him. In the midst of the debate, it is reported that Ismenodora, overcome by desire, has taken the initiative of kidnapping Bacchon and was now preparing their nuptials. While the story of the citizens' mixed reaction plays out in the town below, Plutarch's party descends from Helicon,<sup>66</sup> and Plutarch delivers his encomium of the god, partially based on the Platonic concept of *erôs* as desire for the beautiful and partially a defense of eroticism within a conjugal relationship.

As others have observed, the framing events in the *Amatorius* are closely integrated with the subject matter under discussion.<sup>67</sup> Ismenodora's desire for Bacchon is a twist on the earlier pederastic pattern celebrated by Plato, in which an adult male has erotic feelings for a handsome youth and the boy gains social benefits from accepting the proper sort of lover.<sup>68</sup> Plutarch grounds his arguments in favor of conjugal love on the same quasi-philosophical bases that were traditionally used to argue for love of boys. By accepting Ismenodora, Bacchon gains social position as well as a loving wife. But for our purposes the important thing to note is the reversal of gender roles, which suggests that the atmosphere surrounding the cult of the Thespian Eros was congenial for women as desiring subjects. Ismenodora assumes the role normally played

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1999b: 33–42, and, for his revisionary approach to marriage as a personal relationship, Patterson. On Plutarch's remaking of Platonic theories of *erôs* see Brenk 1988 and 1995, Crawford, and Rist.

<sup>66</sup> The beginning of their descent—as well as a portion of the discussion—is lost in a lacuna, but Plutarch is clearly suggesting that the visit to the inspired atmosphere of Helicon has clarified the issues in the debate, so that his own encomium of Eros has the aura of the Muses' authority.

<sup>67</sup> E.g., Flacelière 34–36, Goldhill 1995: 145–46.

<sup>68</sup> So Foucault 196–97, although I do not accept his conclusion that Plutarch here creates a unitary conception of love that embraces both love for boys and conjugal love without distinction.



by the adult male *erastês*, and in doing so she avoids the social condemnation that was commonly directed at women who publicly expressed active sexual desire. The running debate about her proposal to Bacchon and abduction, both among Plutarch's friends and the townspeople, indicates the precariousness of her position, but in the end her spotless reputation and her desire for a legitimate union (755d) work to effect acceptance of the marriage.

I submit that the pentameter of Herennia's couplet—ποῦ σ' ἄρα δὴ σὺν ἐμοὶ δέρξατο Πραξιτέλης; "Where did Praxiteles see you with me?"—is illuminated by a statement repeated almost as a leitmotif in the *Amatorius*, namely, that Eros must accompany Aphrodite, meaning that sex is incomplete without romantic feelings. Such phraseology functions as a key motif in the process of undermining the traditional arguments in favor of boy love and advancing the cause of romance within marriage. In the debate section, Protagenes argues, in Platonic fashion, that *erôs* for a boy is a pure love because it attaches to the boy's soul and produces virtue through the force of nonerotic friendship (750d–e). In response, Daphnaeus asks, "How, if, as Protagenes says, there is no sexual intercourse with boys, does Eros exist *when Aphrodite is not present* (πῶς Ἔρως ἔστιν Ἀφροδίτης μὴ παρούσης), since the gods have given him the function of serving and attending her and he shares in such honor and power as she grants him?" (752a–b). Plutarch returns several times to this motif in his own discussion of Eros. First, in defending Eros' stature as a god, he points out that Aphrodite's primary function of procreation is "a secondary task of Eros *when he accompanies Aphrodite*" (Ἔρωτος δὲ πάρεργόν ἐστιν Ἀφροδίτη συμπαρόντος) and that intercourse without love (ἀνέραστος) is like hunger and thirst—it can be satisfied but never achieves a noble end (756e). The work of Aphrodite, *if love is not present* (ἔρωτος μὴ παρόντος)<sup>69</sup>, can be bought for a drachma, and Aphrodite's charms are weak and easily sated *if Eros has not inspired them* (Ἔρωτος μὴ ἐπιπνεύσαντος) (759e–f). In the end, Plutarch declares both sex and love to be necessary to marriage: "Who could be patient with people who revile Aphrodite on the basis that when *she accompanies Eros and is present with him* (Ἔρωτι προσθεμένη καὶ παρούσα) she prevents the existence of friendship?" (768e). On the contrary, "in the case of lawful wives sex is the beginning of friendship, like the sharing of the great mysteries" (768e–69a). The movement of the argument is clear enough: the claim that romantic love can exist only in male-male relationships and that male-female relationships involve nothing but the satisfaction of physical desire (as with hetairas) or procreation (as with wives)—that is, the argument offered in favor of pederasty—is refuted

<sup>69</sup> As completed by Bernardakis; for other possibilities see the apparatus in Hubert.



by the argument that in a conjugal relationship both romantic love and physical congress are essential components for a lasting and happy union. As the dialogue closes with the marriage of Ismenodora and Bacchon, Plutarch declares Eros to *be present* and favorable to the event (771e *χαίρων καὶ παρὼν εὐμενῆς τοῖς πραττομένοις*).

Plutarch was certainly not the first to advocate that marriage should be a source of both emotional and physical satisfaction for men and women.<sup>70</sup> The idea had been developing throughout the Hellenistic period, as is shown by the remains of Stoic treatises on a man's duties toward his wife and children.<sup>71</sup> From the third century B.C. Aphrodite, often in her capacity as Ourania, began to replace Hera as a goddess of marriage, with a greater emphasis on sexuality and mutual desire between spouses.<sup>72</sup> From the same period come expressions of Aphrodite's need for Eros, as in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (3.85–166), where the goddess of sex has to call upon the services of her son in order to effect Medea's desire for Jason. A statuary group of the late second century B.C. from Delos consists of the goddess posed like the Cnidia teasingly warding off the advances of Pan as a small winged Eros peers over her shoulder.<sup>73</sup> Although Eros and Aphrodite are found together in art much earlier, the significance of their coupling may alter in the Hellenistic age to suggest that sex and love should exist as a unit. From the early first century A.D. musical *agônes* at the Erotidia included encomia for Eros,<sup>74</sup> and it is reasonable to suppose that much of Plutarch's *Amatorius* reflects ideas about the god and his relationship to Aphrodite often formulated in these encomia. Such is expressly indicated when Plutarch declares himself to be a choral dancer (753c *χορευτής*) of that "Eros who is concerned with marriage" (τοῦ περὶ γάμον Ἔρωτος).

<sup>70</sup> Konstan surveys the development of erotic mutuality in literature, particularly the novel.

<sup>71</sup> For the Stoic material see Goessler 109–15 with the references for the sources—Antipater, Hierocles, and Musonius—in notes 26–29. The Stoic treatises provided Plutarch with a model only to a limited degree, and Goessler remarks that an important "difference between Plutarch and the Stoics is his natural approval of sexuality in marriage" (112). Crawford even more strongly argues that Plutarch deviates from the *peri gamou* literature: "Plutarch's innovation is to respond directly to the pederastic critique of marriage as unerotic and of women as incapable of friendship, and to make the compatibility of marriage and philosophy turn on this" (288–89).

<sup>72</sup> See Pomeroy 1984: 31–34, who traces this change from Plato's view of the Heavenly Aphrodite as the deity who guided the intellectual development of male lovers.

<sup>73</sup> Delivorrias 128, no. 1353.

<sup>74</sup> SEG 29.452.10 (ca. 20 A.D.); see Roesch 181, Schachter 1986: 173. The *enkomiastai* at Thespiae, who also praised the Muses and prominent Romans, including the imperial family, even formed an association: SEG 3.339 with Roesch 178–82.

Although a variety of cultural forces contributed to the development of “sexual symmetry” in the imperial age, an important one was the spreading worship of Isis, whose central role was as devoted, loving wife to Osiris. Isis was often identified with Aphrodite, and her cult was particularly popular among women.<sup>75</sup> Twice in the *Amatorius* Plutarch connects the Eros at Thespieae with the Egyptian deities as allegorical emblems of the soul’s search for transcendental Beauty (762a, 764a), and then, identifying Aphrodite with the moon and Eros with the sun on the model of Isis and Osiris, he returns to the language of (sexual) union by asserting that the moon needs illumination from the sun, “just as Aphrodite is nothing *without the presence of Eros*” (764d μὴ παρόντος Ἑρωτος).<sup>76</sup> Although these views reflect Plutarch’s own philosophical reinterpretation of Platonism, it is also likely that as early as the Neronian era ideas of mutual love and sexual satisfaction between married partners, as promoted by the Isis cult, had begun to influence the rhetoric of love at Thespieae.<sup>77</sup> Such ideas were surely prevalent as well at Thessalonica, where the Serapeum, the most important cult center for the Egyptian deities on the Greek mainland,<sup>78</sup> perhaps included within its holy precinct the meeting place of an association devoted to Theos Hypsistos supported by the Herennii. It is in this context, in which traditional understanding of Aphrodite and Eros

<sup>75</sup> For identification of Isis with Aphrodite/Venus see Dunand 3.262–63, Heyob 48–50, and Bricault 1996: 16, 94. For the appeal of the Isis cult to women see Dunand 3.261–65, Heyob, and Walters. The Isis aretology, known from several sites including the Serapeum at Thessalonica (*IG X 2.1* no. 254), emphasizes the goddess’s importance for married women. Isis, who “is called deity by women” (ἡ παρὰ γυναῖξι θεὸς καλουμένη), boasts, “I joined woman and man” (ἐγὼ γυναῖκα καὶ ἄνδρα συνήγαγον), “I compelled men to love women” (ἐγὼ στέργεσθαι γυναῖκας ὑπ’ ἀνδρῶν ἡνάγκασα), and “I invented marriage contracts” (ἐγὼ συγγραφὰς γαμικὰς εὔρον).

<sup>76</sup> Brenk 1988: 462 calls attention to the importance of these passages; see too Brenk 1995 and Rist 572–73. In *de Iside et Osiride* Plutarch reinterprets Hesiod’s earliest generation of gods to identify Isis and Osiris with Gaia and Eros (374c), declaring that the goddess “associates always” with the first god “in love of the good and beautiful around him” (ἀεὶ ... συνοῦσαν ἔρωτι τῶν περὶ ἐκείνων ἀγαθῶν καὶ καλῶν), “just as a good woman who has a husband and consorts with him also has passionate yearning for him” (ὥσπερ ... καὶ γυναῖκα χρηστὴν ἔχουσαν ἄνδρα καὶ συνοῦσαν ὅμως ποθεῖν, 375a).

<sup>77</sup> On cults of the Egyptian gods in Boeotia, including Chaeronea and Thespieae, see Vidman 25–32, Dunand 2.29–39, Schachter 1981: 200–205, and Bricault 2001: 10–12.

<sup>78</sup> See Vidman 48–52, Dunand 2.52–60, who calls the cult there “un des plus importants du monde grec, immédiatement après celui de Délos” (59), and Bricault 2001: 26–27. A statue of Aphrodite dressed in a chiton and himation, holding a cornucopia (as Isis often did), and originally accompanied by an Eros was found in the Serapeum at Thessalonica; the inscription of the second century A.D. covers up an earlier one, and the statue itself seems to descend from the Hellenistic period (see Edson ad *IG X 2.1* no. 61).

was undergoing change under the influence of various cultural forces, that we should understand Herennia's interest in the Thespian cult and her remaking of the epigrammatic tradition concerning Praxiteles' Cnidian Aphrodite.

A late source reports that worship of Eros at Thespieae involved both public ceremony and private sacrifice,<sup>79</sup> and it appears that women were particularly involved with the more personal form of worship there. In one of his erotic letters, Philostratus indicates that women of Thespieae commonly sacrificed to Eros at the time they became sexually active, when he says, "You don't seem to me to be a Thespian woman, since if you were you would surely have offered sacrifices to Eros" (47 [42] *δοκεῖς δέ μοι μηδὲ Θεσπιακή τις εἶναι, πάντως γὰρ κἂν τῷ Ἑρωτι ἔθυσες*). Such sacrifice would, no doubt, have often been made by brides, and near the end of the *Amatorius* Plutarch, after praising wives for both their virtue and their physical charms, comments on their worship of the Thespian Eros (769d<sup>80</sup>):

χρηστέῃ δ' ἂν τις γυναικὶ καὶ σώφρονι παραινέσειε τῷ Ἑρωτι θύειν,  
ὅπως εὐμενῆς συνοικουρῇ τῷ γάμῳ καὶ ἡδύσ(μασιν αὐτὴν ἐπικοσμήσῃ  
πᾶσι τοῖς) γυναικείοις, καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἑτέραν ἀπορρυνεῖς ὁ ἀνὴρ  
ἀναγκάζεται τὰς ἐκ τῆς κωμωδίας λέγειν φωνάς "οἶαν ἀδικῶ γυναιχ' ὁ  
δυσδαίμων ἐγώ."

One would advise a good and chaste woman to sacrifice to Eros, so that the god might dwell propitiously within her marriage and \*adorn her with all the allurements that become\* a woman and so that her husband might not be led astray to another, compelled to utter that phrase from the comedy, "Wretched me, what a good woman I've wronged."

In all likelihood, Plutarch here alludes to the contents of typical prayers offered by new brides at Thespieae. Although his own wife's sacrifice to Eros is not overtly mentioned after the opening reference, this paraphrase of a woman's prayer calls to mind her act. As a result, the dialogue, placed in the mouth of their adult son and composed after many years of marriage, becomes a kind of paean to their own marital happiness and suggests the successful working of Eros-cum-Aphrodite in their lives.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Photius *Bibl.* 186.134b–35a.

<sup>80</sup> The text is that of Hubert with the supplement for the lacuna that he suggests in his apparatus.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Flacelière 39. Plutarch's wife Timoxena was an educated woman, who wrote a treatise about love of ornament that he recommends as suitable reading for a new bride (*Conj. praec.* 145a).

## V

As the Plutarch parallel makes clear, Herennia aims to encapsulate in her couplet the meaning of the statue for worshipers of her own day. Our remaining task, then, is to consider what might have been the viewing experience of those who encountered the epigram in its Thespian context. Archaeology has not revealed the location of the Eros statue within the city, and it is not altogether certain whether the temenos in which it was placed was sacred to Eros alone or also, or even primarily, to Aphrodite.<sup>82</sup> The Leonidas epigram, unless emended, indicates that the statue was within an Aphrodite temple, although it may have been resituated later, especially after a copy was substituted for the lost original. Pausanias (9.27.5) reports a temple to Aphrodite Melainis at Thespieae, which seems to have been centrally located near the theater and agora but which was not in the same place as the statues of Eros, Phryne, and Aphrodite. Certainly by the Flavian era sacrifices and prayers were being made to Eros set up as part of a statue group, apparently arranged on a semicircular base. If the Centorelle Eros is modeled on Praxiteles' statue, as has been suggested,<sup>83</sup> then Eros was probably on the viewer's right facing left and Aphrodite probably on the left facing right, with the Phryne statue between them. The parallel of the Honestus inscriptions beneath the statues of the Muses suggests that the base may have contained yet other epigrams, perhaps also by Herennia.

Since we are imagining the physical context for the couplet, we may imagine as well the reactions of viewers, first men and then women. Men were notoriously aroused by the Cnidian Aphrodite, and the Thespian Eros also created desire, though differently: not as a representation of a desirable body but as an embodiment of desire itself. Since the Eros statue impressed erotic longing into the viewer through *his* gaze, the object of desire would not necessarily be determined by Eros' appearance.<sup>84</sup> As the comic poet Alexis commented (fr. 247 Kassel-Austin), artists had difficulty rendering Eros because

<sup>82</sup> Archaeologists commonly assume that Eros was worshiped in his own temple at Thespieae, although no ancient source refers specifically to such a shrine; see Schachter 1981: 216–18.

<sup>83</sup> On the Centorelle Eros see Corso 1997–98: 71–73 with Pl. 13–14; also Hermary 862–63, no. 79. Hermary 862, however, favors the “Farnese-Steinhauser” Eros (no. 78) as the most likely replica type deriving from the Thespian statue.

<sup>84</sup> It is true that in [Lucian] *Amores* 11 (cf. 17) Callicratidas, an *erastês* of boys, longs to view the Thespian Eros rather than the Cnidian Aphrodite, but Praxiteles' statue is not normally treated as an imitation of a physically beautiful *erômenos*, to be possessed, but as a powerful deity.

he was neither man nor god, male nor female, but partook of both. So a man who viewed the Eros, if struck by desire, would not be compelled to direct that desire to the male body seen but might transfer it through some internal process of imagining to a desirable female body, perhaps his wife. Nor is there any reference in our sources to male viewers being aroused by the accompanying Aphrodite statue, and she may have been one of the more chaste versions of the goddess. Hadrian, in making a dedication to Eros at Thespieae, calls her Aphrodite Ourania and asks the god to breathe upon him “modestly” from her side.<sup>85</sup> The Phryne statue, however, may have had a different effect on the male viewer. Phryne was perhaps originally set up in the sacred precinct to honor her benefaction for the city, but over time, as Thespieae developed into a favored place of worship for brides, her presence seems to have become more problematic. Plutarch twice refers to Phryne as a foundational figure in the history of the cult, but both times with some embarrassment. The first time she forms the culmination of a list of hetairas and mistresses of Hellenistic monarchs who are condemned for exploiting the men who desired them. Plutarch’s distaste shows as he refrains from uttering her name, and yet he is obliged to allude to her because she shared the shrine and holy honors of Eros in the town below (753f ἡ δὲ σύνναος ... ἐνταυθοῖ καὶ συνίερος τοῦ Ἑρώτος). Later on (759e–f), in condemning purchased sex because it exists without love, he names Phryne only to refuse to cite her, in *praeteritio* fashion. The illicit temptation that her presence interposed is suggested by Alciphron’s letter, where Phryne proposes to Praxiteles that he have sex with her within the temenos. There’s no danger of sacrilege, she says, since Aphrodite and Eros are their own creation. But the comment is suggestive, as if male viewers might need to be warned away from desirous thoughts by the sacred nature of the site.

What then about the women viewers?<sup>86</sup> The wives who worshiped there prayed, at least according to Plutarch, for Eros to “dwell favorably with their

<sup>85</sup> IG VII.1828 = Page 1981, Hadrian 5 (pp. 565–66) σὺ δ’ αὐτῷ χάριν ἀντὶ τοῦ σαόφρων πνέεις Οὐρανίας ἀπ’ Ἀφροδίτης. Both Bowie 180–81 and Goukowsky suggest that the dedication was inspired by Hadrian’s relationship with Antinous; if so, then the emphasis on chastity and the Heavenly Aphrodite is meant to recall the Platonic ideal of pederasty rather than the sanctity of marital love. But to Hadrian’s act of piety at Thespieae we may juxtapose the comment made by Pausanias (9.27.4) in reporting the final destruction of Praxiteles’ Eros statue in Rome, that Nero was among the most unholy of men because of his violence toward his mother and wives. The implication is that the god preferred destruction of his image to its possession by a potentate who acted so impiously toward women.

<sup>86</sup> For similar speculation about ancient female viewers see Stehle and Day, Clarke.

marriage,” which probably meant that they wished for their own sexual fulfillment through their husbands’ continued erotic interest in them. How, then, would they have reacted to the Phryne statue?<sup>87</sup> Did she represent a threat to their marital happiness? Perhaps for some she did. But she may have offered a welcome precedent for others, those who hoped for opportunities to play a more active role in community life and to determine their own private happiness. As one of the most beautiful hetairas of the fourth century and the reputed model for both painted and sculpted Aphrodites, Phryne became a cultural emblem of the desirable woman, of sexuality as embodied in female form. But in her own act of dedication at Thespiae, she drew attention away from the desire that is based purely on the sight of a beautiful body to a more romanticized version of desire, the longing that dwells in the heart. And it appears that the Thespians, who dedicated a gilded image of her at Delphi (Ath. 13.591b), gave her the sort of recognition more typical in the Hellenistic age for benefactresses from prominent families, since the public display of her statue mirrors the erection of statues honoring orators, poets, and philosophers during the Hellenistic period.<sup>88</sup> She is in a sense, then, the predecessor of the widow Ismenodora, who conveys a woman’s subjectivity through her active expression of desire, though Plutarch is careful to emphasize Ismenodora’s chaste way of life. Yet just as Phryne’s benefactions lived on in history only through the lens of (often hostile) male interpreters, so, Plutarch reports, Ismenodora’s desire for Bacchon aroused intense resentment and even the threat of violent opposition. As Simon Goldhill has pointed out, despite Plutarch’s avowal of sympathy with women’s sexual satisfaction, his representative example, Ismenodora, is never given a voice of her own.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Rosenmeyer 251–52 has shown that in Alciphron’s letter written by Phryne to invite Praxiteles to join her in Thespiae (4.1), Phryne’s subject position is, ambiguously, both that of viewer of the triad and of figure within it. I would further suggest that, in imagining Phryne as viewer of the triad, Alciphron gives her the role of the typical female visitor to the Thespian Eros.

<sup>88</sup> Corso 1997: 132–34 discusses the Thespians’ political reasons for this dedication (see also 123 n. 1 for a full list of the ancient sources for this popular story). According to Callistratus in his *On Courtesans* (Ath. 13.591d), Phryne offered to restore the walls at Thebes if the Thebans would inscribe there, “Whereas Alexander demolished them, Phryne the hetaera restored them.” On Phryne’s euergetism see McClure 160–61, citing the parallel example of Lamia, who gave Sicyon a painted porch (Ath. 13.577c).

<sup>89</sup> Goldhill 1995: 160. Goldhill’s argument is that the *Amatorius* should be viewed as part of a network of texts, including the ancient novels, through which the “desiring male subject is articulated” (161). The Herennia couplet reveals the desiring female subject so often erased from the record of antiquity.

Yet the women viewers of the Thespian Eros would have encountered the words of Herennia Procula, a woman who does manage to express herself, publicly, about the significance of the Eros statue. As a woman who guides others in their viewing of the Praxitelean statue, as a woman who gives voice to the goddess of love and makes a public record of her accomplishment for posterity, Herennia Procula sets herself up as a worthy descendant of Phryne. Of course, in terms of her elite status, inherited wealth, and presumed respectability, she was probably much more in the mold of Ismenodora. But Phryne's dedication of the Eros statue was the symbolic beginning point for an important cultural change that apparently had a real effect on the lives of women centuries in the future. Over the course of time, the coupling of sex with conjugal desire became a culturally accepted ideal, and Thespieae the place where women—as well as men—could pray for the realization of that ideal in their lives. When visitors to Thespieae stood before the new version of the Praxitelean Eros set up in the Neronian or early Flavian era, they were invited by the presence of Herennia's couplet to frame their understanding of that statue in terms of a woman's experience of sexuality.<sup>90</sup>

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