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Teaching Eros

The Rhetoric of Love in the *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne*, the *Roman de la Rose*, and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*

Abstract

The paper brings together three rather unlikely texts, the thirteenth-century Byzantine romance *The Tale of Livistros and Rodamne*, the thirteenth-century Old French *Roman de la Rose* and the fifteenth-century Italian prose romance *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, which are characterized by their lengthy dream narratives in which a first-person narrator is initiated in the art and the mysteries of love. Focusing on a group of instructive speeches contained within or indirectly connected with these dream narratives, this paper examines instruction as an integral component of the initiation process and as a powerful rhetorical tool moving the narrative – and the love story of the protagonist couple – forward. In doing so, the paper also highlights the ideas about love expressed in each of the three romances, the ways that they interconnect and the ways that they differ.

* This article is based on material from my unpublished thesis (Priki, "Dream Narratives").

In the Byzantine romance *The Tale of Livistros and Rodamne* (*Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης*), when the main protagonist, Livistros, encounters the three-faced figure of Emperor Eros in his dream, he exclaims (*L&R* 494-97):[1]

> [...] Τίς ὁ πλάστης
> <καὶ> τὶ τὸ *ξενοχάραγον* τὸ βλέπω, τί ἔναι ἐτοῦτο;
> Τίς νὰ μὲ εἴπῃ τὸ θεωρῶ, τις νὰ μὲ τὸ *ἑρμηνεύσῃ*,
> τίς ἄνθρωπος φιλόκαλος νὰ μὲ τὸ *ἀναδιδάξῃ*;
>
> ([...] Who is the creator
> and what is this strangely drawn creation I see,

1. The text is quoted from the critical edition of the redaction 'alpha' by Panagiotis Agapitos (hereafter abbreviated as *L&R*); numbers refer to lines, not pages. The English translations are by Agapitos' forthcoming verse translation of *Livistros and Rodamne* (*L&R* trans.). I would like to thank Prof. Agapitos for providing me with a copy of his unpublished translation.

what is it really?
Who shall tell me what is it I behold,
who shall interpret it for me,
what friend of beauty shall instruct me about it?)

This passage not only encapsulates the paradoxical and mysterious nature of love as manifested in the figure of Eros, but it also points to a lover's need for interpretation and instruction in matters of love, a theme that is prominent throughout the first part of this romance, in which Livistros and Rodamne, the protagonist couple, are gradually initiated in the mysteries and the art of love before their eventual marital union. The instruction of lovers is, of course, not a peculiar theme of this romance; it is often found in romances and in treatises on the art of love throughout Europe and beyond. This paper aims to explore the rhetoric of love employed in the instructive speeches addressed to neophyte lovers in three texts from three different literary and socio-cultural contexts, namely, the thirteenth-century Byzantine *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne* mentioned above, the thirteenth-century Old French *Roman de la Rose* and the fifteenth-century Italian prose romance *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. These texts explore how the male protagonists, Livistros, Amant and Poliphilo respectively, undergo initiation processes preparing them for their union with their objects of desire, while in the *Livistros and Rodamne* and in the *Hypnerotomachia*, there are analogous processes for the female protagonists, Rodamne and Polia.

The *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne* was probably written in the second half of the thirteenth century, a product of the Laskarid court at Nicaea.[2] Through a masterfully constructed narrative, the anonymous poet tells the story of love between the Latin king Livistros and the Latin princess Rodamne: their falling in love, union, separation and their eventual reunion. The first half of the romance contains four encased dream narratives, in which Eros mediates to create a first bond between the couple. These dreams, combined with Livistros' instruction by his Relative and his subsequent quest to find Rodamne and win her heart, constitute the couple's initiation in the art of love and their mutual falling in love. The romance survives in five manuscripts dating to the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, which transmit three different redactions (α, E, V).[3] For the purposes of this paper, I will be using the text of redaction 'alpha' – transmitted in three manuscripts (Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Scaligeranus 55; Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, Graecus III.AA.9; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Graecus 2910) – which constitutes the

2. For the dating issue, see Agapitos, "Η χρονολογική ακολουθία." For different views, see Cupane 440; *L&R* Lendari 65–71.

3. There are also fragments in other manuscripts covering a period from the early fifteenth to the late seventeenth century. For the manuscript tradition, see: *L&R* 67–93; *L&R* Lendari 56–64.

oldest of the surviving three redactions and the closest to the lost original.

The *Roman de la Rose* is an allegorical love poem which takes the form of a dream narrative. A first-person narrator recounts a past dream in which he comes upon an enclosed garden, enters it and therein meets a great assemblage of allegorical characters, falls in love with a rose, receives instruction in the art of love and strives to conquer his object of desire. Written in thirteenth-century France, it is the work of two poets: Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. Guillaume de Lorris' part comprises the first 4056 lines of the poem and it was written between 1225 and 1240, while Jean de Meun's continuation, dating between 1269 and 1278, is considerably longer consisting of about 17620 lines. The double authorship of the poem and the relationship between its two parts is a much debated issue in *Rose* scholarship, but its investigation is beyond the scope of this study, which will focus only on Guillaume de Lorris' part, where the dreamer's main initiation ritual takes place.[4]

The two aforementioned works are contemporary, both being initially composed in the thirteenth century, whereas *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, as a work of the Italian renaissance, belongs to an entirely different context in terms of form, format and transmission. It is an early printed book (*incunabulum*) – for which there are no extant authorial manuscripts – published in 1499 by Aldus Manutius in Venice.[5] It is considered one of the most accomplished illustrated printed books of the Italian Renaissance, often characterized as proto-emblematic as it is one of the earliest examples in which "images play an intrinsic role in the creation of meaning" (Grove 9), traditionally being considered as one of Andrea Alciato's sources for developing the idea of the *emblem* (Russell 113). *Hypnerotomachia*'s anonymous author has intentionally decided to puzzle his readers concealing his identity with acrostic devices;[6] the name revealed by these acrostics is Francesco Colonna, whose actual historical identity remains an issue for debate.[7] The most widely accepted theory credits the work to Francesco Colonna, a friar from the Veneto area belonging to the Dominican monastery of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, who lived between 1433 and 1527 (Casella e Pozzi; Pozzi e Ciapponi). His case is supported by certain historical documents concerning his life, which fit the dates associated with the composition and publication of the book and with its provenance (Fortini Brown 287–90; Menegazzo, "Per la biografia" e "Francesco Colonna baccelliere"), as well as by the annotations related to Venetian Dominican circles in two

4. The *Rose* survives in about 320 manuscripts and manuscript fragments with dates ranging from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, as well as in many printed editions from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The *Rose* manuscripts are now listed in the joint digitization project of the Sheridan Libraries of Johns Hopkins University and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

5. For the purposes of this paper, only the first Aldine edition (1499) will be taken into consideration; this edition was republished in 1545 by the sons of Aldus as *La Hypnerotomachia di Poliphilo*. The work became very popular in France with five editions translated in French published in Paris: the first in 1546 edited by Jean Martin (reissued in 1553–54 and 1561), an 'alchemical' version from 1600 by Béroalde de Verville (reissued in 1657), an abridged version in 1772 published by Antoine Pallandre, as well as two nineteenth-century versions, one from 1804 edited by Jacques G. Legrand and a second from 1880–83 by Claudius Popelin. There was also an English translation of the major part of Book I in 1592 edited by an R. D. (generally assumed to be Richard Dallington), which was re-edited in 1890 by Andrew Lang.

6. The decorated initials at the beginning of each chapter form the phrase: POLIAM FRATEM FRANCESCVS COLVMNA PERAMAVIT ("Brother Francesco Colonna loved Polia exceedingly"). There is also a phrase encrypted in the first letters of the first three lines of Polia's epitaph at the end of the book: F[rancescus] C[olumna] I[nvenit] or I[nscripsit], meaning "Francesco Colonna invented it" or "wrote it" (Kretzulesco-Quaranta 44; Kent Hieatt and Prescott 295).

7. Other candidates that have been proposed for the authorship of the work are a Roman Francesco Colonna from Praeneste (1453–1517?), Felice Feliciano (1433–79), Ciriaco d'Ancona (1391–1453/55), Niccolò Lelio Cosmico (c. 1420–1500), Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94). For an overview of the authorship debate, see Ariani e Gabriele LXIII–XC; Godwin 69–104.

copies of the 1499 edition, which suggest a close proximity between these circles and the author of the *Hypnerotomachia* (J. C. Russell 204–28).

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili is a prose romance, which, as the title suggests, concerns the love-quest of Poliphilo which takes place in the dream realm. Poliphilo embarks on an oneiric journey, traversing several natural and artificial landscapes containing gardens, ancient ruins, extraordinary buildings, imaginary creatures and allegorical characters in order to be reunited with his beloved Polia, who in his waking life is dead, as revealed by the epitaph at the end of the book. The story is divided into two parts (*Libri*): Book I concerns Poliphilo's dream journey until his union with Polia at the Cytherean Island, while Book II contains Polia's story as an encased narrative within Poliphilo's dream narrative, in which Polia undergoes her own initiation – where dreams, as shorter encased narratives, play a crucial role.

The choice of these three texts was guided by the following considerations: a) their lengthy dream narratives in which a first-person narrator is initiated in the art of love, b) their common internal characteristics that indicate an initiation process, and c) their distinctly different historical and socio-cultural contexts, which makes their comparative study all the more intriguing. In order to conduct this comparative study, I will follow an interdisciplinary approach that is based on three basic parameters: ritual theory, narrative analysis and contextual analysis. Specifically, initiation and instruction will be considered in terms of the 'rite of passage' theory as developed by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner. Moreover, my methodological approach will be a close reading of the texts focusing on their internal narrative features – structure, language, reception of earlier works – while taking into consideration their respective literary and socio-cultural contexts, in an attempt to trace both their common traditions and their cultural differences.

1 Instruction in Rite of Passage Theory

In 1909, Arnold van Gennep published a study in French, in which, assembling material from a number of cultures and historical periods, he discussed "ceremonial patterns which accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another" (van Gennep 10). To define these processes van Gennep

used the term *rites de passage*. His rite of passage theory became particularly influential in the 1960s, when studies on initiation rituals were also becoming a popular topic, especially for anthropologists, psychoanalysts and historians of religion. Van Gennep's theory was later re-evaluated and extended under the term *transformation ritual* by the English anthropologist Victor Turner. Van Gennep's main observation is that the pattern for the rites of passage follows a tripartite processual scheme with three successive but separate stages (van Gennep 10–11): rites of separation (*séparation*), rites of transition (*marge*), and rites of incorporation (*agrégation*). These three stages correspond respectively to the detachment of an individual or group from a previous social setting or cultural condition, an intervening transitional period, and the consummation of the passage. A significant aspect of the rites of passage that should be highlighted here is the role of intermediaries who, acting as facilitators, enable the ritual passage "without violent social disruptions or an abrupt cessation of individual and collective life" (van Gennep 48). Thus, in the case of an initiation process, the role of the intermediary would be taken up by an instructor, who would facilitate the neophyte's gradual advancement through the stages of his initiation.

Recognizing the importance of the transitional phase of the tripartite pattern, that is, the rites of transition, and having associated them with "the territorial passage" through doors, portals, thresholds and frontiers, van Gennep proposed three other terms referring to the aforementioned stages, namely *preliminal*, *liminal* (or threshold), and *postliminal* rites (van Gennep 20–21). The word *liminal* derives from the Latin word LĪMEN, meaning 'threshold, lintel;' to be *in limine* is to be betwixt and between. It points to that moment when an individual is in the process of crossing a boundary, imaginary or actual, and uniting oneself with a new world or obtaining a new state. *Liminality*, that experience of the liminal stage when the individual is in transition from one state to another, and its processual component became the focal point of Victor Turner's redevelopment of the rite of passage theory.

Liminality, for Turner, is an "interstructural situation," a medium between states; *state* is the term he uses to describe "a relatively fixed or stable condition" and it can refer to social status, ecological conditions, or to the physical, mental or emotional condition of an individual or group. Liminality is also essentially "a process, a becoming, and in the case of *rites de passage* even a transformation" (Turner, "Betwixt" 94). In defining liminality, Turner also investigated the at-

tributes of the liminal realm and of the liminal persona, the communication of *sacra*, as well as the relationships between liminal personae. Liminality has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming states and it is frequently likened to death, to invisibility or to being in the womb. Accordingly, the liminal persona is "structurally invisible" as it is "no longer classified and not yet classified," it is "neither this nor that, and yet is both" – it is contingent and paradoxical; a *tabula rasa* "on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status" (Turner, "Betwixt" 96 and *Ritual Process* 103). This ambiguity is also expressed in the set of symbols that represent the liminal persona, externalizing its internal attributes: for example, "logically antithetical processes of death and growth may be represented by the same tokens" (Turner, "Betwixt" 99).

The concept of liminality along with its inherent qualities is not only useful for understanding the ritual processes in the three texts, but also provides a framework for contextualizing the paradoxes expressed therein relating to the experience of love, the ambiguous identity of the characters, and the design of the dream narratives.

Love, or rather erotic desire, is intrinsically liminal, as it occupies the in-between distance between lovers, serving as a bridge connecting and, at the same time, separating individuals. Anne Carson, in her exploration of *eros* in classical literature, views desire as a "three-point circuit:" the desirer (who is present / actual / known) lacks the desired (what is lacking / possible / unknown) and this lack urges the desirer to pursue the desired (Carson 16, 169); therefore, erotic desire is lack.[8] In the three texts under discussion, erotic desire is the focal point of the initiation process, since the in-between distance between desirer and desired coincides with the liminal stage of the process, especially in the cases of the male protagonists; as long as the lover lacks the erotic Other, he remains *in limine* – for example, Livistros lingers outside Silvercastle, Rodamne's space, until their marriage, Amant is left lingering outside the rose-garden unable to access his heart's desire, and Poliphilo in Book II is supposedly dead, lingering in the heavenly realm until the conversion of Polia to the religion of love. Poliphilo's example demonstrates a further level of the liminality of love, namely, its close association with death. It is no coincidence that, traditionally, the god of love shoots his victims with his arrows, delivering fatal wounds that metaphorically express the process of falling in love, as in the cases of Amant, Rodamne and Polia. Moreover, the intense emotional experience of love and, espe-

8. Carson refers to this process as triangulation' and describes it as follows (Carson 16–17): "There are three points of transformation on a circuit of possible relationship, electrified by desire so that they touch not touching. Conjoined they are held apart. The third component plays a paradoxical role for it both connects and separates, marking that two are not one, irradiating the absence whose presence is demanded by eros. When the circuit-points connect, perception leaps. And something becomes visible, on the triangular path where volts are moving, that would not be visible without the three-part structure. The difference between what is and what could be is visible."

cially, of unrequited desire is often represented as destructive with devastating psychological or pathological effects. The interconnections between love, liminality and death are also evident in ritual theory and, especially, in marital and funeral rites.[9]

Dreams could also be defined as liminal states or liminal experiences, as they are generated in between wakefulness and sleep, consciousness and unconsciousness, transcending the boundaries of reality and constantly mutating. The association of liminality and death is also relevant here, in the sense that sleep may be considered as a form of 'little death,' a common notion in many cultures, while dreams can be seen as an indirect route for communication with the divine or the souls of the dead – an idea evident in medieval perceptions of dreaming as well.[10] By considering dreams as liminal, we can endow them with the qualities of that middle state, while the entire process of sleeping – dreaming – waking can be parallelized with the tripartite structure of the rites of passage, that is, the stages of separation – transition – reincorporation. In the cases of literary dreams, such as the ones found in the three texts, this parallelism may be extended to considerations of the narrative structure of a text, in which the dream, almost invariably, is introduced as an encased narrative.[11] Furthermore, liminality may be a characteristic not only pertaining to the structure but also to the content and language of a dream narrative, as well as to the relationship between text and image, wherever this is applicable.[12]

Considering a dream narrative in light of rite of passage theory and of the concept of liminality can also provide us with new insights on its meaning and purpose in a story. Specifically, such an approach allows us to explore the extent to which a dream narrative is used as a vehicle through which a character, the dreamer, undergoes a rite of passage in the form of an inner transformative experience. Due to their liminality, in the three texts, dreams constitute the medium for communication with the god(s) of love and with the inaccessible erotic other, while providing the setting for the initiation rituals. Space constitutes an integral component of these dream narratives with its various transformations signaling the stages of the initiation process toward spiritual and erotic fulfillment. Effectively, dream spaces are designed to be fluid and mutable, their *ekphrastic* descriptions expressing the subjective experience of an ever-changing and ever-expanding liminal space, which is ambiguous and paradoxical.[13] Moreover, instruction in love is closely connected with the dream narratives, since it either precedes them, preparing the

9. Arnold van Gennep draws a connection between the stages of separation and incorporation with the notions of death and resurrection in this way, placing the transitional phase between life and death. He asserts that: "Death, the transition, and resurrection also constitute an element in ceremonies of pregnancy, childbirth, initiation into associations with no agricultural purpose, betrothal, marriage, funerals." Margaret Alexiou in her seminal work has also shown parallels between death and marriage imagery in the Greek ritual laments (*Ritual Lament* 120).

10. Even though the term liminality is relatively recent, the perception of the dream as a threshold and a middle realm or middle state goes as far back as Homer. For an overview of the literary tradition on dreams from the point of view of liminality, see Priki, "Dream Narratives" 25–56.

11. Kathryn L. Lynch (*High Medieval Dream Vision* 46–52) has also suggested that dreams and visions in medieval literature can be examined as liminal phenomena, but discusses the connection not so much as a narrative strategy, but mainly in terms of meaning, where in a visionary's initiatory experience the vision itself is the liminal state, separating the individual from his social context and constitutes a type of spiritual pilgrimage that aims to redefine and transform the visionary.

12. The text/image interaction is particularly relevant in the *Hypnerotomachia*, whose 172 woodcuts have a close relationship with the text and are integral to the meaning-making processes that are at work in the book. For the text/image interaction in the 1499 edition of the book as opposed to its French editions, see Priki, "Crossing." For the implications of this interaction for the dream narrative, as well as for analogous strategies in the miniatures associated with the *Roman de la Rose*, see Priki, "Dream narratives" 70–71, 77, 93–94.

13. For a full-length analysis of the spatial aesthetics of the three texts and related bibliography, see Priki, "Dream Narratives" 115–228.

neophytes[14] for this transformative dream experience, or it is enclosed by them, serving as a guiding force moving the initiation ritual, and the narrative, forward.

In initiation rites, as discussed by Turner, the liminal persona or neophyte may have an instructor as well as fellow neophytes. The relationship between these individuals is of particular importance to this paper, since in the texts under consideration, the instruction of lovers is based on the relationship dynamics between a neophyte and his or her instructor(s). In discussing instruction in initiation rites, Victor Turner points out that there exists a specific and simple "social structure" between its participants: the relationship between instructors and neophytes is authoritarian, characterized by the complete authority of the instructor and the complete submission of the neophyte, while between neophytes the relationship is often egalitarian ("Betwixt" 99). The latter condition points to Turner's concept of *communitas*, a sense of "intense comradeship and egalitarianism" that is often experienced among neophytes, and that occurs spontaneously, concretely and affectively as the result of a shared condition, *e.g.* humiliation or suffering, which takes places during the liminal stage (*Ritual Process* 95–97, 226–27).

In the texts examined in this paper, instruction constitutes a necessary component of the initiation process and it may take many forms. It can be conveyed via speeches, spatial exploration, spectacles (*e.g.* triumphs), or via participation in communal events (*e.g.* dance, feast, games). It can be achieved through the agency of an intermediary, taking up the role of the instructor, as well as through the neophyte's own initiative to observe and contemplate on the visual and verbal stimuli presented to him during his or her initiation. Taking into consideration Turner's "social structures" in initiation rites, it is worthwhile to examine whether such structures can be discerned in the relationship between neophytes and their instructors in the cases discussed here. All of the characters taking up the role of the instructor in the three texts are authorities in the sense that they are knowledgeable in the subject matter that they are teaching, although they are not necessarily socially superior to the neophytes. In addition, they exert considerable influence on the neophyte's decisions, with two exceptions: Raison in the *Roman de la Rose* and Logistica in the *Hypnerotomachia*, both of whom present the neophytes with an alternative path of life, away from the influence of the god of love. Based on these ascertainments, the texts present us with three variations on the relationship between instructor and neophyte: a) au-

14. Turner uses a great variety of terms to refer to individuals participating in a rite of passage, *e.g.* 'liminal persona,' 'passenger,' 'liminary,' 'neophyte,' 'initiate,' 'initiand' (the last three are used in relation to initiation rites). For the characterization of those characters who undergo an initiation process in the three texts under examination, I will be using the term 'neophyte.'

thoritarian, where the neophyte is either socially inferior to the instructor or deprived of his or her freedom by the instructor (Cupid Guard and Livistros, Amour and Amant, Cupid and Polia); b) authoritarian by convention, where the neophyte is socially superior or equal to the instructor and where the instruction is the result of a mutual agreement or of circumstance (Relative and Livistros, Vetanos and Rodamne, Ami and Amant, Five Senses and Poliphilo, Logistica, Thelemia and Poliphilo, Polia and Poliphilo, Polia and Nurse); c) subverted authoritarian, where the instructor unsuccessfully attempts to impose his or her authority on the neophyte (Raison and Amant).

Below, I will examine examples from the first two variations, where the instruction is markedly influential in determining the outcome of the story, contributing to the neophyte's conversion into a lover. In particular, I will discuss the following instructive speeches: Relative to Livistros (*L&R* 147–98), Cupid Guard to Livistros (*L&R* 232–84) and Vetanos to Rodamne (*L&R* 1537–55, 1606–16, 1784–93) in the *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne*; Amour to Amant (*RR* 2041–762) in the *Roman de la Rose*;[15] and Nurse to Polia (402–12 [B6v–C3v]) in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.[16] The reason for excluding Poliphilo's instruction from this study is simply the fact that it does not entail an instructive speech by a particular instructor, but rather stems from his personal observations and interpretation of his spatial surroundings and of the events that he witnesses. Poliphilo's instructors, such as the Five Senses, Thelemia, and Polia, function mainly as guides, providing practical instructions for his participation in particular rituals and directing him to the places and objects that he is called to understand for himself.

15. The text will be quoted from Strubel's edition, hereafter abbreviated *RR*; numbers refer to lines of the poem, not pages.

16. Though the text of the *Hypnerotomachia* will be quoted from the critical edition (Pozzi e Ciapponi), I will also include pagination references in accordance with the 1499 edition in square brackets. As the Aldine edition was not paginated, these pages are referred to by signature (A–Y) and folio number (1r–8v); thus, A1r, A2r, A3r, A4r correspond to pages 1, 3, 5, 7 and so on.

2 The Role of the Instructor

According to van Gennep, intermediaries in a rite of passage act as facilitators: "they are intended not only to neutralize an impurity or to attract sorcery to themselves but to serve as actual bridges, chains, or links – in short, to facilitate the changing of condition without violent social disruptions or an abrupt cessation of individual and collective life" (48). In the three texts, it is the secondary characters that function, on the ritual level, as the intermediaries of the initiation and courting processes. Their capacity to facilitate the neophytes'

progress and the couples' relationships determines the protagonists' character development and, to an extent, the progression of the narrative.

The instructors discussed in this paper are secondary characters who, as advocates of love, offer instruction to the neophytes in the form of speeches, ritual performances or even in the form of threats. In the cases of Livistros, Rodamne and Polia, whose initiations partly take place outside their dreams, the role of the instructor in the actual world is taken up by a familiar person in their close social or familial environment: the Relative, Vetanos and the Nurse respectively. These three secondary characters become counsellors and supporters of love, offering instructive speeches to the neophytes, which include practical advice for the advancement of the couples' relationships.

Livistros' Relative and Polia's Nurse are anonymous and are defined solely by their relationship with the neophyte. Based on his knowledge in matters of love, we could infer that the Relative is older than Livistros. We could also infer by his association with the young Latin king who eventually appoints him as the substitute ruler of Livandros that the Relative has a high social and political status. However, this is the extent of information about this character that can be extracted from the romance. The same vagueness characterizes many secondary characters, including the Nurse and Vetanos, whose defining characteristic is their gender identity – an old woman and a eunuch – which is a deliberate choice to justify these characters' proximity to the two female protagonists, devoid of any sexual tension.

The presence of a eunuch in Silvercastle along with a variety of other elements, *e.g.* the title of Emperor Chrysos (βασιλεύς) and Livistros' acclamation as co-emperor, enhances the Byzantine character of Rodamne's Latin kingdom.[17] In Byzantine society, eunuchs were important figures of the court, usually acting as liaisons between the imperial court and outsiders and being charged with high profile bureaucratic duties. Due to their particular condition, they were considered to be loyal and competent servants, while they were often perceived as guardians of women and children, serving as advisors, tutors and companions (Ringrose, "Eunuchs" 264–66). In *Livistros and Rodamne*, Vetanos' presentation adheres to this perception of eunuchs: "the young eunuch was the maiden's confidant | in counsels, in secrets and in her private conversations" (*L&R* 1263–64

17. On 'foreign' and 'native' ideological markers in Livistros and Rodamne, especially in regards to the presence of the eunuch, see Agapitos, "Poetics of Exoticism." I would like to thank Prof. Agapitos for providing me with a copy of his paper prior to publication. Whereas there are several studies on eunuchs in Byzantine society (*e.g.* Tougher, *The Eunuch* and "Cherchez l'Homme;" Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant*), there are only a few studies discussing the presence and function of eunuchs in Byzantine literature. An important contribution to the study of the literary representation of eunuchs is a recent monograph by Charis Messis, wherein he also briefly discusses the portrayal of eunuchs in Byzantine romances, including the *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne* (Messis 229–34). Though Messis also points out the mediatorial function of Vetanos in the relationship of the couple, I remain unconvinced as to his suggestion that the positive representation of this eunuch in Livistros, as opposed to negative representations of eunuchs in other novels and romances (for example, Constantine Manasses' *Aristander and Kallithea*, and *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*) should be attributed to Western influences on this particular romance.

καὶ ἐκεῖνον τὸ εὐνουχόπουλον ἦτον οἰκεῖον τῆς κόρης | εἰς λόγους, εἰς μυστήρια καὶ εἰς κρυφιοσυμβουλὰς της).

Apart from being an instructor to Rodamne, Vetanos assumes two further roles in his relationship with Livistros: he is a mediator facilitating the relationship of the couple and also an informer, providing helpful information to Livistros about Rodamne's reactions to his love letters. We could say that Vetanos is a liminal character, able to break away from the boundaries of the castle through his communication with Livistros and the latter's friend, functioning as a liaison in the relationship of the couple. Livistros' remark about Vetanos, which he addresses to his audience, that is, Klitovon and, in extent, us, relating to his meeting with the eunuch to arrange a secret meeting with Rodamne, demonstrates the inclination and competence of eunuchs in dealing with amorous affairs: "for all the race of eunuchs loves flattery, especially if involved in an amorous affair" (*L&R* 2233–34 γένος γὰρ πᾶν εὐνουχικὸν φιλεῖ τὴν κολακείαν | καὶ μᾶλλον ἂν εἰς ἔρωτος ὑπόθεσιν ἐμπλέξῃ).

Regarding the Nurse (*la sagace nutrice*), she is the only family that Polia has left after the plague, when everyone else deserted her due to her sickness. Because of her loyalty, Polia has a high opinion of her nurse and values her advice (382 [A4v] "si non dalla mia pietosa et optima Altrice,"[18] "except by my kindest and best Nurse"), considering her as a parent (399 [B5r] "la cara et reverita (in loco di parente) la Nutrice mia, nella quale deposita riposava, et collocato havea ogni mia fiducia et sperancia," "a dear and venerated person, taking the place of parent, my nurse, in whom I laid deposited and had placed my every confidence and trust"). The Nurse also proves to be insightful, knowledgeable in matters of love (403 [B7r] "la sagace et versuta Nutrice," "my wise and well-versed Nurse") and, thus, able to counsel Polia.[19]

Livistros and Polia also receive instruction within their dreams. Apart from the instructive qualities of the Court of Amorous Dominion as a space, Livistros benefits from the instructive speech of one of the Cupid Guards, who functions both as an instructor and as a guide. The cupid admonishes Livistros to abandon his defiant ways and to submit to Eros, repeating some of the arguments and examples that the Relative uses earlier and providing practical advice for his initiation and his conduct in the court. His instruction is more effective than that of the Relative due to the particular circumstances of the encounter: the cupid happens to be one of Livistros' captors threatening the dreamer's physical integrity should he decide

18. *Altrice* is an archaic word meaning nurse, deriving from the Latin verb ălĕre (= to nourish) from which the noun altrix, -icis. It is used interchangeably with the word *Nutrice*.

19. The English translations of the *Hypnerotomachia* are by Ian White. I would like to thank Mr. Ian White for providing me with a copy of his unpublished translation.

not to obey them. Therefore, instruction (*L&R* 243 νουθετήματα) is mixed with threats (*L&R* 242 ἀπειλάς, φοβερισμούς).

A similar strategy of instruction through coercion is employed by Cupid in the case of Polia. Appearing as an executioner in her first vision, Cupid is perceived negatively, intimidating Polia with his actions towards two other rebellious women, while, in her ensuing nightmare, she is terrorized by two executioners, who threaten to harm her. These terrifying dream experiences alert Polia to the overwhelming power of love, indirectly instructing her to change her rebellious behavior. Even though these characters, Cupid and the executioners, like the Cupid Guard in Livistros' dream, are promoters of love, having an instructive function, their appearance and behavior cause the neophytes to view them as adversaries. In other words, appearances can be deceiving. To reconcile this contradiction between what seems and what is, I would argue that these characters constitute a kind of inverted instructors, appearing as adversaries when in reality their interventions are beneficial to the neophytes.

In the case of Amant in Guillaume's *Roman de la Rose*, there are three different characters that offer him advice and instruction: two of them are promoters of love (Amour and Ami), while the other, Raison, offers him an alternative life path and, in doing so, she could be considered as an adversary to Amour and an obstructor to Amant's initiation. Since Ami's instruction in Guillaume's *Rose* is solely focused on ways to deal with Dangiers, one of Amant's adversaries, his intervention will not be considered in this paper.

Amour, the god of love, is initially introduced as one of the courtly inhabitants of the garden of Deduit (Pleasure), participating in the latter's carol. Being clothed in an indescribable robe decorated with every imaginable flower of every possible colour, as well as with patterns of birds and beasts, Amour seems to be enclosing the garden in his person while, at the same time, being enclosed by it. In a way, he is equated with the garden providing a concentrated version of it (Huot 17). From this point of view, the narrator's proclamation in his prologue, regarding his poetic work, creates a parallel between the relationship of the poem with its readers and the relationship of the dreamer with the garden (*RR* 37–38):

Ce est li romanz de la rose,
Ou l'art d'amours est toute enclose.

(It is the romance of the rose,
In which the whole art of love is enclosed.)

The entire romance as a work of fiction containing the art of love is presented as an enclosure that the readers are penetrating by the act of reading in the same way that the dreamer is penetrating the enclosed garden that contains – and is also equal to – the god of love, who will instruct the dreamer in the art of love. Therefore, the garden appears as a symbol of fiction and the readers are put into the dreamer's position, as fellow neophytes, becoming the indirect recipients of Amour's instruction.

Amour's instructive speech takes place after the dreamer's submission to him. It mainly aims to teach Amant the art of courting. Amour provides him with a set of commandments, a penance, as well as with practical advice for the pursuit of the erotic other. Moreover, he prepares Amant for the sorrow that he is to endure because of his newfound feelings by describing the various stages of being in love. Performing his role as an initiator and an instructor, Amour then vanishes, never to appear again in Guillaume's *Rose*, leaving Amant to pursue his object of desire alone.

A crucial point to be made regarding these secondary characters concerns their liminality, not only their functional liminality in their role as intermediaries in the initiation processes, but also their intrinsic liminality stemming from their physical attributes, their social status or the spaces that they inhabit. The Relative and the Nurse are characterized by a fluid identity, being without a name or a background story. Moreover, the Nurse, given her old age, is closer to the threshold of death than life, an element that, interestingly, lends her greater wisdom. Vetanos, Rodamne's eunuch advisor, is characterized by an ambiguous gender identity, being on the threshold between the masculine and the feminine, an attribute that fits well with his role as a 'bridge' between Livistros and Rodamne. Finally, the winged Cupid Guard in Livistros' dream, the winged Cupid in Polia's dream and Amour in the Roman de la Rose embody liminality by their paradoxical appearance and by existing solely within the confines of the imagination, inhabiting the liminal realms of the dreams. The Cupid Guard and Amour, in addition, can be seen as agents of spatial liminality, since they are responsible for facilitating Livistros' and Amant's passage through important thresholds – the Gate of Love and the Fountain of Narcissus respectively.[20]

20. For the liminality of the Fountain of Narcissus and its function as a threshold, see Priki, "Dream Narratives" 166–75.

3 Amorous Instruction

Having introduced the texts, the theme of initiation and instruction, and the main characters involved in this process – the neophytes and their instructors – let us now turn to the instructive speeches that constitute the focus of this paper. In the *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne*, Livistros benefits from two instructive speeches, one requested and one imposed, while the completion of his initiation is signalled by the instruction that he himself offers to his companion Klitovon, when he explains the mystery of the Threefaced Eros (*L&R* 915–41).

Prior to his initiation, Livistros spends his days as a carefree loveless young king. During a hunt, he shoots and kills a turtledove. Consequently, its mate, not bearing this loss, falls to its death. Having witnessed this puzzling incident, this "terrible mystery" (*L&R* 142 μυστήριον φοβερὸν), Livistros is compelled by curiosity to learn more about the cause of the bird's suicide and, thus, asks his Relative to elucidate him on the matter (*L&R* 149 ἕναν μου ἐρώτουν συγγενήν "I asked a relative of mine"). Consequently, he places himself in the authority of his willing instructor, who "always looked for the occasion to talk to me about the sorrows of love" (*L&R* 150–51 ἐψηλάφα | πάντα ἀφορμὴ τοῦ νὰ μὲ εἰπῇ τοῦ ἔρωτος τὰς ὀδύνας). The Relative's first word of response to the young king is μάθε (know), revealing the instructive intent of his subsequent speech.

The Relative's instruction is preceded by three actions: a) a disclaimer, that is, a statement made by the instructor to prevent any future misunderstanding by clarifying the expected outcome of his instruction, which is Livistros' relinquishment of his former carefree state and his enslavement by Eros; b) an act of proximity – Livistros taking his relative to his side (*L&R* 158 Καὶ παρευθὺς εἰς τὸ πλευρὸν τὸν συγγενή μου ἐπῆρα "Immediately I took my Relative to my side"); and c) an inquiry – Livistros asks about the turtledove and about the Amorous Tyranny. The Relative's speech is introduced in the rubrics that ascribe to this character his role as an instructor and to Livistros the role of a student. Apart from μανθάνω ("to know, to learn"), the other verbs used to denote the act of instruction are διδάσκω ("to teach, to instruct") and ἀναδιδάσκω ("to instruct carefully"). Moreover, in his speech, the Relative appeals to Livistros' sense of sight, asking him to observe the world around him: βλέπεις ("see"), ἰδὲς ("look"), θαύμασε ("wonder"), ξένισε ("marvel").[21] Interestingly, the same verbs are also used to describe Livistros' interaction with the

21. These verbs appear in the following lines: μανθάνω – μάθῃ (152), μάθε (154), μανθάνει (164); διδάσκω – διδάξω (155), ἐδίδαξεν (192); ἀναδιδάσκω – ἀναδιδάξῃ (161), ἀναδιδάξω (186); βλέπεις (166); ἰδές (174); θαύμασε (174, 177, 179); ξένισε (182).

wondrous spaces in his first dream, a mainly visual experience with instructive value.

The beginning of the Relative's instructive speech (*L&R* 166 "Βλέπεις το τοῦτο τὸ πουλὶν," λέγει με, "τὸ τρυγόνιν;" "he told me: 'Do you see this bird called turtledove?'") along with the act of proximity mentioned above indicate that the instruction is taking place during the hunt, at the place where the turtledove incident happened, in a natural landscape. It is perhaps not irrelevant that all of the examples mentioned in the speech concern the laws of amorous attraction in nature. Specifically, the Relative uses five examples to describe the feeling of love as experienced by natural objects and animals. The first two describe the sadness of losing a loved one: turtledoves cannot endure the pain of losing their mate and male palm-trees cannot bear fruit without their female counterparts. The other three exemplify the power of erotic desire: the magnet-stone is attracted to iron, the moray is willing to rise from the depths of the sea in order to mate with the snake, and the river Alpheius is willing to cross a vast sea in order to unite with a lake in Sicily. The use of these particular examples – four concerning paradoxes in nature and one derived from mythology – link this passage to analogous catalogues of *exempla* in the novels of the twelfth century, such as Niketas Eugenianos' *Drosilla and Charikles* and Constantine Manasses' *Aristander and Kallithea* and, by extension, to the ancient novel of Achilleas Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon* (Agapitos, "Η χρονολογική ακολουθία" 107; *L&R* Lendari 276–78).

Through these examples, the Relative wants to demonstrate that such is the power of love that it affects everyone, even those who are "more senseless than a rock" (*L&R* 198 ἀναιστητότερος [...] παρὰ λίθον). Interestingly, the analogy of Livistros with a rock resembles that of Rodamne with a stone in one of Livistros' love letters to her, while the attraction between the magnet-stone and iron used here as an example of love in nature is repeated again in Rodamne's response to Livistros, after receiving his ring, in analogy to her attraction to him (*L&R* 177–78 [Relative's example] and 1992–93 [Rodamne's letter]):

> Ἄφες αὐτὸ καὶ θαύμασε τὸν λίθον τὸν μαγνήτην,
> πῶς ἔλκει ἀπὸ τοῦ πόθου του τὴν φύσιν τοῦ σιδήρου.

(Put the tree aside and wonder at the magnet-stone,
how by its desire it draws near the very nature of iron.)

Εἵλκυσε τὴν καρδίαν μου τοῦ πόθου σου ὁ μαγνήτης
ὡς ἕλκει ἀπὸ τὴν φύσιν του τὴν φύσιν τοῦ σιδήρου.

(The magnet of your desire drew my heart,
as by its very nature it draws the nature of iron.)

The Relative's instruction produces the anticipated result: Livistros has opened himself to thoughts of love against his better judgment and is now in a position to receive further and more intensive instruction, which is what the dream achieves. In this first dream, Livistros initially finds himself riding in a beautiful and pleasant meadow, enjoying the natural landscape. While admiring nature, Livistros is interrupted by an incoming threat: a group of armed and winged cupid guards attack him as a rebel against the imperial authority of Eros, the sovereign ruler of the whole of nature. His instructor and guide within the dream is one of these Cupid Guards. Since their encounter results in Livistros' captivity, the instructive session that follows is imposed on him (*L&R* 235–37):

ἦλθεν ἐκεῖνος ἥμερα, κρατεῖ με ἀπὸ τὸ χέριν,
δένει με ἀπὸ τὸν τράχηλον καὶ λέγει με: "Ἀκολούθει,
καὶ ἄφες τὸ θράσος τὸ πολύν, τίποτε οὐκ ὠφελεῖ σε."

(approached me calmly, holds me by the hand,
binds me around the neck and says: "Follow me
and put aside all insolence for it will help you not.")

Livistros' literal binding anticipates his metaphorical binding to the power of Eros through his oath at the end of the dream. Moreover, it places his instructor in a position of authority over him, something that is absent from the previous instructive session. Interestingly, whereas the Relative uses the appellation "Livistros, lord of my country and my land" (*L&R* 154 τοπάρχα Λίβιστρε χώρας ἐμῆς καὶ τόπου), establishing Livistros' higher social status, the Cupid Guard simply refers to him as Ἄνθρωπε ("fellow").

The Cupid Guard's instructive speech is given to the dreamer during their movement from the meadow towards the Court of Amorous Dominion and amid the threats uttered by the other Cupid Guards. The speech is again introduced with a rubric ascribing to the

cupid the role of the instructor. Apart from this particular speech, the Cupid Guard also offers advice, commands and explanations throughout Livistros' first dream (*L&R* 357–58, 391–95, 465–66, 502, 543–60). The act of instruction is designated with the noun νουθετήματα ("admonition") and the verbs νουθετῶ ("to admonish"), ποθοπαραγγέλω ("to give amorous counsel"), νὰ σὲ εἰπῶ ("to tell you"), παραγγέλω ("to counsel, to order"), ἑρμηνεύω ("to interpret, to explain"), as well as with a series of commands using imperatives: ἀκολούθει ("follow"), ἄφες ("leave"), συγκλίθησε ("yield"), ρίξε ("cast away"), κλίνε ("bow"), ἔμπα ("enter"), δέθησε ("bind"), πρόσπεσε ("fall at the feet"), ἰδέ ("look up"), ἄκουσέ μου ("listen to me"), πρόσεξε ("look carefully"), πρόσεχε ("take heed"), ἀνάγνωσε ("read"), ἔλα ("come").[22]

22. These verbs appear in the following lines: νουθετήματα (243); νουθετεῖ, ποθοπαραγγέλει (245); νὰ σὲ εἰπῶ (246), ἂν σὲ εἰπῶ (263); παραγγέλω (273); ἑρμήνευσαν (543); ἀκολούθει (236); ἄφες (237); συγκλίθησε (256); ρίξε, κλίνε (256); ἔμπα, δέθησε (258); πρόσπεσε (259); ἰδέ (259, 266); ἄκουσέ μου (273); πρόσεξε (279); ἀνάγνωσε (281); πρόσεχε (357); ἔλα (470).

Regarding the content of the cupid's instructive speech, he begins by repeating essentially the Relative's main argument, namely, the impossibility of escaping love given the absolute power of Eros that dominates "all nature animate and all inanimate" (*L&R* 252 πᾶσα φύσις ἄψυχος καὶ ἐμψυχωμένη πᾶσα). A crucial difference, however, between the two arguments is that the Relative presents Livistros' acceptance of love as an eventuality using subjunctives (*L&R* 188–90 πιστεύω [...] νὰ ἔλθῃς [...] νὰ νοήσῃς τὴν ἀγάπην, νὰ φοβηθῇς), whereas the Cupid Guard presents it as an inevitable choice using imperatives (*L&R* 256–62):

> Ἄρτι ἂν μὲ ἀκούῃς, *συγκλίθησε*, *ρίξε* τὸ ἀγέρωχόν σου,
> τράχηλον *κλίνε* εἰς τὸν ζυγὸν τῆς ἐρωτοδουλείας,
> *ἔμπα* εἰς τοῦ Πόθου τὸν δεσμόν, *δέθησε* εἰς τὴν Ἀγάπην,
> *πρόσπεσε* εἰς τὴν Ἀσχόλησιν, τὸν Κρεμασμὸν *ἰδέ* τον,
> καὶ αὐτοὶ κἂν νὰ εἰποῦν τὸν Ἔρωταν, νὰ τὸν παρακαλέσουν,
> καὶ ἀπὲ τὸ τόσον μανικὸν τὸ κατ' ἐσοῦ ἐκακώθην,
> νὰ μεταπέσῃ, νὰ ἀλλαγῇ καὶ νὰ σὲ συμπαθήσῃ·
>
> (Even as you listen, yield now, cast away your haughtiness,
> bow your neck to the yoke of Amorous Servitude,
> step into the bond of Desire, bind yourself to Love,
> fall at the feet of Concern, look up at Longing,
> and they might say something to Eros, they might entreat him,
> so that he might desist from all the wrath he has against you,
> change his mind and show compassion towards you.)

Another difference is that, here, the abstract notions of desire, love, concern, and longing are treated as personifications, since the dreamer is admonished to form bonds with them, fall at their feet and look up to them, so that they intervene in his favor. The allegorical aspect of this passage takes on a more literal meaning, when Desire (Πόθος) and Love (Ἀγάπη) actually appear in the dream, at which point the Cupid Guard reminds Livistros to ask them to act as his guarantors, referring back to the above-quoted advice.

In his next argument, the Cupid Guard tries to persuade Livistros by praising his virtues, while questioning them at the same time, claiming that love is integral to one's sense of identity and that without the experience of love, Livistros will be reduced to nothing (*L&R* 269–72):

> ὅσον καὶ ἂν εἶσαι ἐξαίρετος εἰς σύνθεσιν καὶ πλάσιν,
> ἂν οὐκ ἐμπῇς εἰς τὸν ζυγὸν τοῦ πόθου νὰ πονέσῃς,
> νὰ παιδευθῇς τὰ ἐρωτικὰ καὶ μάθῃς τα ὡς ἁρμόζει,
> εἶσαι οὐδετίποτε, ἀπὸ ἐμὲν πληροφορέθησέ το.
>
> (As much as you are exceptional as to your bodily beauty and features,
> if you do not step under the yoke of desire in order to feel pain,
> to be educated in the matter of love and learn it as befits you,
> you are just a nothing – know it from me!)

Finally, the Cupid Guard concludes his instructive speech with technical instructions relating to Livistros' proper ritual conduct in his audience with Eros and to his impending crossing of the Gate of Love, emphasizing the importance of that threshold. The instructions concerning the encounter with Eros, a set of gestures and utterances that Livistros has to perform, point to a later moment in the same dream, to the ritual that takes place at the Amorous Tribunal. According to the Cupid Guard, Livistros must demonstrate his humility and prostrate himself in front of the Emperor Eros asking for mercy (*L&R* 274–78):

> ἄρτι ἂν ὑπάγῃς εἰς Ἔρωταν καὶ θέλῃς προσκυνῆσαι,
> ἔμπα κλιτὸς τὸν τράχηλον καὶ χαμηλὸς τὸ σχῆμα,
> ποῖσε δεινὸν τὸ βλέφαρον ὡσαν φοβερισμένος,
> δέσε τὰ χέρια σου σφικτὰ καὶ πέσε εἰς γῆν ὀμπρός του
> καὶ ἀπὸ καρδίας σου στρίγγισε καὶ παρεκάλεσέ τον.

(if you go now to Eros wishing to pay obeisance to him,
enter with a bowed neck and a humble composure,
make your gaze look frightened as if intimidated,
clasp your hands tightly and fall on the ground before him,
cry out from the depths of your heart and beg for mercy.)

As Ruth Macrides has suggested, this kind of conduct is related to the ritual of petition in front of the Byzantine emperor and, in particular, it is a supplication for pardon, a type of petition that required more dramatic gestures (365).[23]

Turning now to Rodamne's instruction in matters of love, it is combined with the attempts to persuade her to submit to Livistros. Her initiation begins with Eros' visitation – concluded with him shooting an arrow into Rodamne's heart (*L&R* 1424)[24] – and develops through the process of the letter exchange with Livistros, on the one hand, and with the help of Vetanos' instruction and advice, on the other hand.[25] Eros' command in her dream resembles the Cupid Guard's instruction to Livistros (*L&R* 256–59), but instead of asking her to submit to him as the sovereign ruler of the Amorous Dominion, Eros asks her to submit to Livistros (*L&R* 1418–21):

καὶ ἀποτουνῦν *παράλαβε* τὸν πόθον του εἰς τὸν νοῦ σου,
ἔπαρον τὴν ἀγάπην του, *δουλώθησε* εἰς ἐκεῖνον
καὶ σὸν τράχηλον ἄκλιτον *κλίνε* εἰς τὸν ἐρωτάν του,
ρίψε το τὸ κενόδοξον, *ἄφες* τὸ ἠπηρμένον·

(as of now receive desire for him in your mind,
accept his love, enslave yourself to him
and bow your unbending neck to his passion.
Cast away your haughtiness, leave aside your arrogance.)

The use of imperatives and the admonition to cast aside her arrogance and pride are characteristics not only of Eros' speech, but also of Vetanos' instruction and, at times, of Livistros' letters. Having already communicated with Livistros via the Friend, one of Livistros' companions, and being a member of Rodamne's most intimate social circle, Vetanos is in a position to influence her in favor of Livistros. His first instructive speech is given in response to Rodamne's angry reaction to Livistros' first letters, though it is not designated as an act of instruction. Characterized by the rubric as courageous (*L&R* 1539 μετὰ θάρρους), the speech almost takes the form of a warning rather

23. For an overview of the ritual of petition in Byzantium with all relevant bibliography, see Panagiotides.

24. Interestingly, this is the only scene from this romance which has been visualized in an illustration found in an early sixteenth-century manuscript transmitting the text (Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Scaligeranus 55, f. 62r).

25. For a detailed narrative analysis of the letter-exchange sequence, see Agapitos, "Η αφηγηματική σημασία."

than a counsel, as it is evident from the use of imperatives at the beginning of the first eight lines (*L&R* 1540–47):

> Ἄφες τὸ νὰ θυμώνεσαι, φουδούλα οὐδὲν ἁρμόζει,
> ἄφες τὸ νὰ εἶσαι μανικὴ κατὰ τοῦ πόθου τόσα,
> ἄφες τὸ νὰ κακώνεσαι τοὺς ἐρωτοποθοῦντας·
> *φοβοῦ* μὴ ἐμπλέξῃς εἰς δεσμὸν πολλάκις τῆς ἀγάπης,
> *βλέπε* μὴ ἔμπῃς εἰς τὸν βυθὸν ἀπέσω τῆς ἀγάπης,
> μὴ σὲ φλογίσῃ *πρόσεχε* τοῦ πόθου τὸ καμίνιν,
> *βλέπε* καλὰ μὴ ποντισθῇς εἰς θάλασσαν τοῦ πόθου,
> *πρόσεχε* τὴν καρδίαν σου νὰ μὴ τὴν παραδείρῃ
> κῦμα τῆς ἀσχολήσεως καὶ ἡ βία του νὰ σὲ πνίξῃ·
>
> (Avoid getting angry, it does not befit a noble lady;
> avoid being so wrathful against desire,
> avoid being resentful against those who fall in love.
> Take heed not to entangle yourself completely in love's knot,
> watch out not to fall into the depths of love,
> pay attention not to be scorched by desire's furnace,
> watch out well not to sink into the sea of desire,
> pay attention that your heart will not be beaten
> by the waves of concern because their force will drown you.)

Vetanos cautions Rodamne not to spurn those who fall in love, not only because it is not proper behavior for a lady, but also because she might also end up in their position. While he generally seems to promote love, Vetanos also advices moderation lest love overwhelm her. After this instructive speech, Rodamne is left alone to reflect upon Vetanos' advice (*L&R* 1554–55 Καὶ ἀφότου τὴν ἐσυνέτυχεν, ἀφήνει την καὶ ἐβγαίνει, | τοὺς λόγους τοὺς ἐλάλησεν ὁ εὐνοῦχος νὰ φροντίζῃ "Once the eunuch had spoken, he stepped out and departed, | leaving her to consider the words he had said").

The second instructive speech comes after Rodamne has received another love letter to which she reacts with more empathy. Vetanos takes advantage of her positive disposition (*L&R* 1606 ηὗρεν ἀφορμὴν "seized the occasion") and courageously (*L&R* 1607 θαρρετά) offers her instruction designated in the rubric with the noun ἐρωτονουθετήματα ("amorous counsel"). This composite noun connects Vetanos' speech to the Cupid Guard's instructive speech to Livistros in the oneiric Amorous Dominion. Regarding the reference to the eunuch's courage in confronting Rodamne with counsels, I find that it creates a peculiar dynamic between instructor and neo-

phyte, where the latter is in a privileged position causing the former to have difficulty asserting his authority as an instructor. Vetanos' social position is very low in respect to Rodamne, who is a princess – Vetanos refers to her as "my sovereign mistress" (*L&R* 1613 δεσποτεία μου). The term θαρρετά (*L&R* 1607) and the phrase μετὰ θάρρους (*L&R* 1539) suggest, however, that Vetanos has the freedom to speak openly – it is the right of παρρησία towards a ruler.

Vetanos' second speech, though brief, has three main points. First, he advises Rodamne to have compassion for those who suffer from love, referring to some of the abstract concepts that the Cupid Guard used in his own speech (Κρεμασμός, Πόθος, Ἀγάπη). Second, he urges her to examine the letters more carefully, revealing that they are not intended for one of her servants, but for her. Third, he reminds Rodamne of her dream, asking her to examine it closely. In pointing out these things, Vetanos alerts her to the direct connection between the sender of the letters and her assigned lover.

The effectiveness of Vetanos' instruction is made clear when Rodamne complains to him that she has fallen in love and, consequently, suffers, because of his counsel (*L&R* 1780–84):

> Πάντως τὴν βίαν σου βλέπεις την τὸ τί μὲ κατασταίνει,
> καὶ εἰς ποῖον βυθὸν μὲ ἐσέβασαν οἱ λόγοι σου τοῦ πόθου,
> πόσον κρημνὸν μὲ ἐγκρέμνισαν τὰ νουθετήματά σου,
> καὶ εἰς πόντον ποῖον μὲ ἔσυρες ἀπέσω τῆς ἀγάπης;
>
> (You do indeed see your coercion to what state it leads me to,
> to what depth your discourses about love have pushed me,
> into what a precipice your admonitions hurled me,
> and into what a sea of love you have dragged me?)

In response, Vetanos offers her a short instructive speech, with which he urges her to reply to Livistros' letters, by an appeal to emotion (*L&R* 1789–90 γράψε καὶ σὺ ἀντιπίττακον καὶ παρηγορήθησέ τον, | πόνεσε τὰς κακώσεις του τὰς ἔπαθεν δι' ἐσένα "you also write a letter of response and comfort him, take pity of the toils he suffered for you"). Influenced by the eunuch's persuasive words, Rodamne contemplates on what to do. In the short monologue that follows, she seems to be persuading herself by repeating Vetanos' advice and Eros' command: "Bend down, my unbending soul, my haughty neck; bow to the bond of desire, for you are already distressed" (*L&R* 1796–97 Συγκλίθησε, ἄκλιτε ψυχή, τράχηλε ἀγέρωχέ μου, | κύψε εἰς τοῦ πόθου τὸν δεσμὸν, ἤδη στενοχωρεῖσαι). Shortly afterwards, she writes

her first letter to Livistros. From then on, Vetanos functions mostly as a mediating agent helping in the exchange of love letters, encouraging Rodamne to reciprocate Livistros' advances and to grant his requests, and finally arranging the couple's secret meeting, which concludes the courting process and anticipates their eventual union.

Moving on to the *Roman de la Rose*, instruction in the art of love ("l'art d'amours") is at the core of the romance, as the narrator proclaims in his prologue. The dreamer's instruction, however, does not really take place until after he is forced into submission by Amour, the god of love. Prior to their encounter at the fountain of Narcissus, the dreamer mostly learns about the qualities of courtly life by observing the carolers at the Garden of Deduit (Pleasure) and the garden's amenities. Though most of the allegorical personifications in Deduit's entourage are also associated with the experience of love, the dreamer is not subjected to a clearly designated instructive session intended for his own personal development as a lover, before the defining incident at the fountain.

Following his attack against the unsuspecting dreamer at the fountain of Narcissus, Amour assumes the role of an instructor, when Amant, proclaiming his ignorance, requests that the god teach him how to better serve him – in other words, he wants to learn how to be a lover (*RR* 2041–48):

> Sire, fis je, por dieu merci,
> Avant que voz movez de ci,
> Voz commandemenz m'enchargier:
> Je sui dou faire encoragiez,
> Mes, espoir, se je nes savoie,
> Tost porroie issir de la voie.
> Por ce sui engrant de l'apprendre
> Car je n'i veil de rien mesprendre
>
> ("Sir," I said, "by God's grace, give me your commandments before you depart from here. I am encouraged to perform them, but I would perhaps soon go astray if I did not know them. I am longing to learn them, for I have no wish to commit any kind of fault.") (Horgan 31–32)

In his response, Amour praises the dreamer's willingness and makes a general comment about the relationship between master and disciple and how the latter needs to be attentive in order for the instruction to be effective (*RR* 2051–54):

> Li *mestres* pert sa poine toute
> Quant li *desciples* qui escoute
> Ne met son cuer au retenir,
> Si qu'il en puisse sovenir.
>
> (A master wastes his time completely when his disciple does not make an effort to retain what he hears, so that he can remember it.) (Horgan 32)

Following this response, the dream narrator briefly interrupts the flow of the dream narrative to address his readers/listeners, asking them to be attentive to the god's commandment (*RR* 2059 "Qui amer velt or i entende," "anyone who aspires to love should pay attention" [Horgan 32]), thus, placing them in the same position as Amant, while promising them an interpretation of the dream at the end of his narrative, a promise which is never fulfilled.[26] If indeed the ending of Guillaume's *Rose* is deliberately incomplete, then the unfulfilled promises that the dream narrator makes at this particular point might either be seen as an ironic subversion of Amour's commandments or, alternatively, as an indication that these commandments hold the key to the hidden truth ("verite covert") of the dream that only an attentive audience would be able to understand.

26. On the unfulfilled desire for knowledge in the *Rose* in relation to this instructive session, see also Huot 13–15.

The ritual of submission – in the form of vassal homage – that precedes Amour's instructive speech establishes the authoritarian relationship between the god and the dreamer. Consequently, the instruction is given in a series of ten commandments ("commandemenz") that the dreamer must obey to remain loyal to the god of love. In order to help him to do so, Amour also gives him a penance ("penitence"), practical advice and four allegorical gifts.[27]

27. On the structure of Amour's instructive speech, see also Lejeune 334–37.

The commandments are basically a list of practical advice on social behavior and of lifestyle guidelines, enriched with explanations and examples, and could be summarized as follows: 1) abandon Baseness ("Vilenie") as it is morally wrong; 2) avoid slander ("mesdire") – example provided: comparison between two Arthurian knights, the slanderous Kay and the courteous Gawain; 3) be courteous ("entres") and approachable ("acointables") – example provided: greeting habits; 4) do not use rude words ("orz moz") or coarse expressions ("vilenies"); 5) serve ("sers") and honor ("honore") all women; 6) avoid pride ("orgueil") as it is unbecoming of a true lover, but be elegant ("cointerie," "elegance") – explanation provided: advice on how to dress elegantly; 7) do now allow any dirt

("ordure") upon your person – explanation provided: advice on bodily cleanliness; 8) always be blithe ("d'anvoisseüre maintenir") and know how to entertain ("bel deduit faire") in order to ease the pain of love; 9) be agile ("haitiez") and athletic ("legiers") – example provided: courtly activities; and 10) be generous and avoid avarice and a reputation for meanness ("por aver"). After listing his commandments, Amour uses summary as a method of more effective instruction (*RR* 2223–26):

> Or te vueil briement recorder
> Ce que t'ai dit por remenbrer,
> Car la parole mains engreve
> De retenir quant ele est brieve.
>
> (Now, I would like to remind you briefly of what I have said so that you will remember it, for words are less difficult to recall when they are brief.) (Horgan 34)

In the second part of the speech, Amour gives Amant a penance. The penance is a voluntary act of repentance that is performed in order to achieve the absolution of sins. In the *Rose*, it is presented as a repetitive act (*RR* 2232–33 "Que nuit et jor sanz repentance | An amors metes ton panser," "day and night, without backsliding, you should fix your thoughts on love" [Horgan 34]) whose aim is Amant's improvement as a lover and the guarantee of his loyalty (*RR* 2237–42):

> Et por ce que fins amanz soies,
> Veil je et commant que tu aies
> En *.i. seul leu* tout ton sue mis,
> Si qu'il n'i soit mie demis,
> Mes touz entiers sanz tricherie,
> Que je n'ain pas la moquerie.
>
> (In order that you might be a true lover, it is my wish and my command that your whole heart may be set in a single place, and that it should not be divided, but whole and entire, without trickery, for I do not love mockery.)[28]

28. I have made some minor alterations in Horgan's translation, which renders the last line of the passage as "for I do not like sharing" (34–35).

That "seul leu" to which Amant must focus his thoughts on is, of course, the Rose that he espied on the fountain's reflective surface when Amour first attacked him. By setting his heart on the Rose, Amant opens up to the bittersweetness of love and all the suffering that this entails. Amour prepares him for these conflicting feelings in

the next part of his speech by describing the experience of falling in love (*RR* 2263–574): the need to be close to one's beloved or to be able to see her even from afar, the agony of being separated from her, the lover's lamentations, the deceptive erotic dreams, the burning wish to get a single kiss, the attempts to approach one's beloved, the loss of weight. At the same time, Amour provides Amant with some practical advice as regards to his conduct during the courting process, for example: "kiss the door as you leave" (*RR* 2536 "Au revenir, la porte bese"), "ensure that the serving-maid of the house thinks you are generous" (Horgan 39; *RR* 2556–57 "Que tenir te faces por large | A la pucele de l'ostel"). Finally, Amour concludes his instruction with the following (*RR* 2575–78):

> Or t'ai dit coment n'en quel guise
> Amanz doit fere mon servise.
> Or le fai donques, se tu viaus
> De la belle avoir tes aviaus.
>
> (Now I have told you how and in what way a lover must do my service: do it, then, if you wish to have joy of your fair one.) (Horgan 40)

However, Amant has another question: how does a lover endure love's suffering? In response, Amour gives him a supplemental instructive speech, pointing out that the suffering is the necessary 'payment' that ensures the value of the 'purchase,' that is, the desired object (*RR* 2595–600). A similar idea is present in the *Livistros and Rodamne*, where the difficulty of conquering Rodamne's heart makes the reward all the more precious; her resistance is a test for Livistros' perseverance, making his quest worthwhile, while also demonstrating Rodamne's prudent character. The necessity of suffering for love is also expressed by Poliphilo in the *Hypnerotomachia* who embraces his emotional suffering for Polia since "what is acquired with hardship is more precious, and is held so, than that which is obtained conveniently" (431 [D5r] "Et per questo cosa più pretiosa è [et cusì si tene] la quale erumnosamente aquistassi, che la adepta acconciamente"). This idea is in accordance to the rules of courtly love, as shown, for example, in Book II of the twelfth-century treatise *De Arte Honeste Amandi*, otherwise known as *De Amore*, by Andreas Capellanus (no. 14, "Facilis perceptio contemptibilem reddit amorem, difficilis eum carum facit haberi"). Following this comment on the value of a lover's suffering, Amour then bestows on the lover four alle-

gorical gifts – Hope ("Esperance"), Pleasant Looks ("Doux Regard"), Pleasant Conversation ("Doux Parler"), and Pleasant Thought ("Doux Penser") – explaining how they will help ease his pain. As soon as he answers Amant's question, Amour vanishes before the dreamer can even speak, thus preventing him from asking any further questions regarding the conquest of the Rose.

Amour's speech is a codification of a courtly lover's behavior, an art of love, and it belongs to a long tradition of classical and medieval love poetry, the most important examples of which are Ovid's *Ars amatoria* and the Capellanus' *De Amore* (Arden 21–26). Moreover, as Silvia Huot aptly argues, the use of second-person singular and of imperative and future-tense verbs in Amour's speech – both characteristics of the instructive treatises on love mentioned above – places the reader in the receiving end of the instruction (Huot 15). Reader and dreamer merge in the role of the neophyte, both being instructed by the author / Amour.

The last instructive speech to be examined in this paper is that of the Nurse to Polia in Book II of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. Even though Poliphilo's initiation is concluded at the Cytherean Island, the dream narrative is prolonged by Polia's narration to the nymphs accompanying the couple in the garden of Adonis, where Poliphilo and Polia conclude their journey. This encased narrative is introduced at the end of Book I of the *Hypnerotomachia* and comprises the content of Book II. The reader leaves Poliphilo's architectural wonderland and enters into a pseudo-historical Treviso, in which an alternate love story of the couple takes place. The main part of Polia's story presents her initiation to love as instigated by the shocking death of Poliphilo at her feet and caused by her indifference. Her initiation is accomplished through a sequence of three oneiric experiences, two visions and a nightmare, and an instructive speech by her nurse who advices her to seek guidance at the temple of Venus.

The Nurse resides in Polia's *palazzo*, where the latter escapes to after Poliphilo's supposed death and after her first terrifying vision, in which she saw Cupid as an executioner, torturing and dismembering two women, because of their defiance towards love. The Nurse consoles Polia and sleeps beside her to keep her safe, so that as soon as she sees Polia struggling and turning in her bed, she wakes her up and rescues her from a second nightmare, in which two executioners were threatening her with bodily harm if she persisted in her disobedience towards the gods of love. When Polia confides in her all that has befallen her the previous day – Poliphilo's death, Cupid's vi-

sion and the nightmare – the nurse not only comforts her but, understanding the cause of Polia's torment, also takes the initiative to offer her instruction and counsel (402 [B6v-B7r]):

> Non più presto dunque ricontato questo hebbi, che ella pensiculatamente, et *cum senicula peritia*, la cagione suspicava, piamente refocilante, cum molte suasivole blanditie, la mente mia alquantulo sedata et pusillo tranquillata refece. Proferendose di tuti mei gravi et molesti langori, *essere vera remediatrice, si io ad gli sui trutinati et salutiferi moniti arendevola, me prestarò observabile*. Et quivi sublata di omni altro pensiero, et extraneo cogitato soluta, precipua et solamente, *ad gli sui fidi et dolati consiglii sequissima imitatrice et cum miro effecto mansuetissima disciplinabonda, me offerisco*. Si essa solamente fora di tanto angustioso, afflicto, et prodigioso periculo traherae la mente mia, et la succissiva vita di tanto merore et lucto.
>
> (No sooner then had I recounted this, than with old-womanly thinking wise and wareful, she had an inkling of the whys and wherefores: tenderly reviving me with warmth, with many persuasive encouragements, my mind somewhat stilled and slightly calmed she restored, offering herself as the true provider of a remedy for all my grave and troubling weaknesses if I, yielding to her well-weighed and salutary advice, should prove myself to notably take note. And now, lifted away from any other thought and released from considerations from elsewhere, especially and solely to her faithful and well-framed counsels, as a follower copying just so, and with admirable completeness putting into effect, I begin by offering myself as a docile instructed pupil and disciple, if only she will pull my mind out of such a straitening, afflicted, and portentous peril, and what is left of life from so much grief and sorrow.)

From this passage that concludes one chapter in Polia's story while introducing the next that contains the Nurse's instruction, two main observations can be made. Firstly, through the exchange between Polia and the Nurse described in the passage above, the authoritarian relationship between instructor and neophyte is established, but pertains only to this particular instant – Polia's instruction. Secondly, love is treated as a sickness, an affliction that can be cured through

instruction; similarly, Amour in the *Rose* describes the experience of love as an agonizing sickness – "mal d'amer" – also providing advice on how to treat it, while Poliphilo in Book I of the *Hypnerotomachia* encounters the anatomical location of this sickness (the heart) inside the body of a male colossus. Moreover, the idea of unrequited love as a painful state of being, an affliction, a *pathos*, is also evident in the *Livistros and Rodamne*, for example in the use of the following words and phrases: τυραννισθεὶς ἐξ ἐρωτομανίας (*L&R* 5a "oppressed by the madness of love"), πάσχω διὰ τὸν πόθον (78 "I suffer for amorous desire"), τοῦ ἔρωτος τὰς ὀδύνας (*L&R* 151 "the sorrows of love"). Lovesickness is a recurring motif in literature with a rich tradition from Sappho to today, while the pathology of love has troubled philosophers and physicians alike, especially during the medieval and Renaissance periods.[29]

29. For an overview of the motif, see Peri 1–46. For a modern psychological (Jungian) approach to the issue of the pathology of love, see Carotenuto.

The Nurse's instructive speech is formally introduced in the chapter title, which describes the content of her speech, while emphasizing the instructor's wisdom (403 [B7r]):

> POLIA RACONTA PER QUAL MODO *LA SAGACE NUTRICE* PER VARII *EXEMPLI* ET *PARADIGMI* L'AMONISSE VITARE L'IRA, ET EVADERE LE MINE DELI DEI. ET COMO UNA DONNA DISPERATA PER INTEMPERATO AMORE SEME UCCISE. *CONSULTANDO* SENZA PIGRITARE IRE ALLA ANTISTA DEL SANCTO TEMPIO DELLA DOMINA VENERE, CHE QUELLO ESSA SOPRA DI CIÒ DEBI FARE. QUELLA BENIGNAMENTE GLI PRESTARAE CONVENEVOLE ET EFFICACE DOCUMENTO.
>
> (Polia recounts the way in which her sagacious nurse by various examples and paradigms warned her to avoid the wrath, and escape the threats of the gods; and [told her] how a lady in despair through intemperate love killed her own self; [and advised her] to go without delay to the high priestess of the holy temple of the Lady Venus seeking counsel as to what she ought to do about this. The latter would kindly offer her a suitable and efficacious lesson.)[30]

30. After White's translation.

Following the title, Polia addresses a long remark to the nymphs listening to her narrative on the difficulty of changing her mind, in other words, of converting from the chills of chaste Diana to the flame of ardent Amor, and then reintroduces the Nurse's instructive speech pointing out the Nurse's willingness to remove the "hardened mass of ice" (403 [B7r] "duro et immassato gelo") from her heart.

The Nurse begins her speech by inquiring into the gods' wrath, judging that since Polia is willing to take her advice, she is not entirely to blame for what has befallen her. Therefore, she asks Polia to think whether she has ever exhibited any rebellious behavior and then goes on to provide a list of examples from classical mythology, citing the stories of Ajax, of Ulysses' companions, of Hippolytus, of Propoetides,[31] of Arachne, and of Psyche, all of whom perished or were punished in some way, because they insulted or scorned a god out of "negligence and insufficient fear of the threat of divine punishment" (404 [B7v] "per negligentia et poco timore delle divine ultione minitante"). The Nurse mentions these examples for avoidance in order to warn Polia not to commit any more crimes against love lest she also provoke the wrath of the gods, and especially of the tyrant and mysterious Cupid (404 [B7v]):

> Quanto crudele, quanto immite, quanto impio, quanto violente, quanto potente nella Tyrannica sua il figlio della Divina Matre sia, tanto veramente, che per vera et indubitata experientia, nui liquidamente comperto habiamo (quantunche celata sia) che non solo gli mortali homini, ma ancora gli pectin divini vigorosamente ello havere senza alcuno respecto et miseritudine acerbamente infiammando vulnerato.
>
> (How cruel, how untamed, how pitiless, how violent, how powerful in his Tyranny the son of the Divine Mother is, and how truly by true and undoubted experience we have found it crystal-clear – however much it may be hidden – that not only mortal men, but also the breasts of gods he has lustily without any respect or compassionateness sharply wounded by inflaming.)

The Nurse solidifies her argument on the omnipotence of Cupid by citing the examples of Jupiter's amorous conquests, of Mars' inability to protect himself against the archer god and even of Cupid who could not prevent himself from falling in love with Psyche. Through these examples, the Nurse cross-references the triumphal imagery that Poliphilo witnesses in his dream in Book I: the four triumphs at the realm of Materamoris celebrating the power of love over gods, most notably Jupiter, Mars' appearance at the amphitheatre of Venus and the appearance of Psyche at the triumphal procession of Cupid at the Cytherean Island. Establishing, thus, the omnipotence of Cupid, the Nurse turns the discussion back to Polia: "And if he could

31. The Propoetides were the daughters of Propoetus from the city of Amathus in Cyprus, who defied Venus and, in effect, were punished by becoming the first to prostitute their bodies in public. The myth appears in Ovid *Met*. 10.220–42.

not prevent himself from falling in love with the fair Psyche, how could he be harmless to others?" (405 [B8r] "Et si ello di se medesimo, non perdonoe, a 'namorarse della bella Psyche, como ad altri innocuo sarae?"). It is essentially the same logical argument used by the Relative, the Cupid Guard and Vetanos in the *Livistros and Rodamne*. This similarity is owed to the fact that both the *Hypnerotomachia* and the *Livistros and Rodamne* draw on the Greco-Roman culture and literary tradition. The discourse of persuasion that these characters employ is a powerful rhetorical *topos* that goes back to Greek Archaic Lyric[32] and is further developed in late antique and medieval literature.[33] Furthermore, in the case of the *Hypnerotomachia* ("non perdonoe, a 'namorarse"), it is clearly a reference to Dante's well known verse in the *Inferno* (5.103–05 "Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona, | mi prese del costui piacer sì forte, | che, come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona"), which recalls a famous rule of the medieval treatises on the art of love that found its way into the Provencal lyric and the Stilnovo.

Next, the Nurse attempts to interpret the causes of Polia's dream experiences. She begins by explaining the power of Cupid's two arrows, which do not appear in the dreams: the gold one causes love, while the grey one made of lead causes hatred. This duality could be a reference to the two types of love: unrequited (Eros) and requited (Anteros). Interestingly, Anteros, who is traditionally armed with arrows of lead, is the punisher of those who scorn love and the advances of others, like Polia. This interpretation of Anteros was still current in the mid- and late-sixteenth century, as is evident in the work of Vincenzo Cartari, *Le immagini dei dei degli antichi*, published in 1556, as well as in the paintings of Paolo Fiammingo on the *Four Ages of Love* (1585–89).[34] As an example of the effects of these arrows, the Nurse tells the story of Phoebus, whom Cupid shot with his golden arrow for having revealed the "sacred amours of Venus" (405 [B8r] "gli sancti amori della divina Venere"), while shooting Phoebus' loved ones with his leaden arrow, so that the more Phoebus loved them, the more they hated him. While the Nurse mentions this myth as an example of Cupid's vengeance parallel to Polia's first vision, it can also be seen as a parallel to Poliphilo and Polia's relationship up to that point in Polia's story: the more Poliphilo expressed his love for Polia, the more she spurned him, leading to his apparent death.

The Nurse's next argument is based on flattery. After thoroughly praising Polia's beauty, the Nurse claims that: "your winsome look indicates rather being worthy of her [Venus] warm service, than that

32. See, for example, Sappho on the inescapability of love (Voigt, fragments 1 and 130).

33. This is not to say, of course, that the two texts were necessarily influenced by the exact same sources. *Livistros and Rodamne*, for example, owes a lot to the ancient Greek novels and the Komnenian novels, particularly Eumathios Makrembolites' *Hysmine and Hysminias*, whereas the *Hypnerotomachia* makes explicit references to Latin authors, such as Ovid and Apuleius, among others, while it also builds upon the tradition of the courtly romance, including the *Roman de la Rose,* and on the works of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.

34. Eros and Anteros as a pair is a motif that we often encounter in Italian Renaissance literature and art, as well as in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century emblems, where Anteros does not represent reciprocated love, but is interpreted as virtuous love (*Amor Virtutis*), rejecting and chastising physical love favoring divine love instead (see also Merrill; Comboni; Stephenson).

of icy and unfruitful Diana" (406 [B8v] "Il perché il tuo ligiadro aspecto più presto indica per gli sui caldi servitii, essere digno che della gelida et infructifica Diana"). Beauty is linked to love in a way that makes them interdependent. Therefore, by renouncing love, Polia goes against her own nature and disregards her 'duty,' whereby her nightmare is interpreted as a warning of what could happen if she persists in neglecting that duty. As was shown above, a very similar argument is employed by the Cupid Guard in the *Livistros and Rodamne*, who after praising Livistros' merits, points out that beauty without love is nothing special, underlining the appropriateness of him becoming a lover and warning him that the opposite choice would be an act of self-negation (*L&R* 267–72).

Following these arguments, the Nurse continues with a parable, already announced in the chapter title (see above), of a girl like Polia, from the same town as she, who provoked the god of love with her indifference and, as a punishment, he shot her with his golden arrow, inflaming her desires to such a degree that she became lascivious and insatiable, unable to control her lust. The pathological effects of her condition were diagnosed by a physician as an excess of love in her heart. Consequently, as a remedy, her parents decided to marry her to an old, rich and, most importantly, impotent man, who is described in great detail to emphasize the unsuitability of the match. Regardless of her husband's impotency and old age, this lady tried every means possible to seduce him, but with no success. Realizing her unhappy fate, she finally committed suicide. This story-within-a-story is used to intimidate Polia and to convince her to change her ways in order to prevent her own story from having the same outcome – which is somewhat ironic given that Polia is actually dead, as the epitaph at the end of the book reveals. Therefore, the remainder of the Nurse's instruction is filled with lamentations and warnings appealing to Polia's emotions, for example (409, 410 [C2r, C2v]):

> O misera et afflicta me si in questa mia aetatula (che gli superi me liberano) tale infortunio, como di te acadere potrebbe, per qualche simigliante offensa, io me morirei avanti il tempo da dolore, et da tristecia accellerando il supremo claustro della vita mia.
>
> (Oh how wretched and shattered I should be if in my little remaining lifetime, – from which may the powers above release

> me! – a misfortune like that could happen to you on account of some similar offence – I should be dead before my time from pain and sadness, hastening the final closure of my life.)
>
> Dunque Polia thesorulo mio caro, per quanto la praesente vita et aetate florula gratiosa appretii, o me guardate che per tale cagione in te Cupidine non praedimonstrasse, et per tale visione et ostentamento non praesagisse le tumefacte, et già concepte ire forsa contra te.
>
> (Therefore, Polia, my dear little treasure, as much as you value the present life and flower of your age, ah me, watch out lest for this reason Cupid should have been demonstrating beforehand, in you, and by such a vision and putting on show should have been foreboding, the wrath perhaps already swelling up, conceived against you.)

Finally, the Nurse urges Polia to go to the temple of Venus of her "own free will" (411 [C3r] "di arbitrii solitaria") in order to confess her error and to seek the advice and help of the High Priestess of Venus. After the nurse's speech, Polia is left alone to reflect and review the valuable instruction she has been offered and, persuaded, she "started being disposed to fall in love" (411 [C3r] "DISPOSITAMENTE INCOMINCIOE A INAMORARSE"). Her conversion to the gods of love is later confirmed when she has her last vision, in which Cupid and Venus chase away Diana, an experience that is preceded by an inner transformative experience, resembling a daydream, described by Polia as a welcome attack by "a shower of arrows combatively penetrating my soul, originating from my dearest Poliphilo" (419 [C7r] "una congerie di sagittule certatamente penetrabonde l'alma cum maxima voluptate susteniva oriunda dall'amatissimo Poliphilo").

Similarly to the Cupid Guard in *Livistros and Rodamne*, the Nurse offers Polia practical advice as to her ritual conduct in the presence of the High Priestess. In both cases, this ritual conduct indicates that Livistros and Polia are called to perform the ritual of petition. Despite the similarities in the performance of the ritual – mediation of a third party, prostration of the rebellious neophyte, repentance, forgiveness, oath – there are two basic differences between Livistros' and Polia's petition. First, Livistros' petition is made directly to the god of love in the imaginary space of the dream, while Polia's petition is made indirectly through the gods' representative, the High

Priestess, in a supposedly actual space, the temple of Venus in a quasi-historical Treviso. Second, Livistros' petition is entirely regulated by the other participants of the ritual – the cupid guards, Desire, Love and, of course, Emperor Eros – who direct his every movement, while Polia's petition results from her own initiative, after deliberate consideration of the Nurse's advice. These variations reflect the socio-cultural differences between the two works. Specifically, in the case of Livistros, the text reflects the practice of royal petitions of rebellion in a clearly medieval context, while, in the case of Polia, the text presents a private and urban act of 'piety' in early Renaissance Italy.

4 Concluding remarks

Overall, the interpretative analysis of the instructive speeches within the framework of rite of passage theory has brought out, to an extent, both structural and thematic similarities between the three texts. Instruction takes place right before or during the neophyte's submission to the gods of love. It is a type of preparatory ritual in the initiation process instigated by a crucial event in the neophyte's progress: in the cases discussed here, these events are Livistros' disruptive act of killing a turtledove, Rodamne's oneiric attack by Eros, Amant's act of looking into the Fountain of Narcissus, and Polia's defiance towards Poliphilo's advances even after his apparent death at her feet. The main narrative and ritual function of the instructive speeches discussed in this paper is to promote and to facilitate the initiation and courting processes, containing statements affirming the omnipotence of love, examples of lovers and non-lovers to imitate or to avoid, practical advice, consolatory words and dream interpretations. The instructors, as promoters of love, exert considerable influence on the neophyte's personal development and life choices.

In the examples examined, love is described as a complex feeling, a paradoxical feeling, both bitter and sweet, that can inflict great pain, almost like a disease, but also great pleasure. Due to the complexity of the experience of love, the lovers-to-be need to go through an initiation process that, on one hand, enables them to receive instruction and, on the other, offers them access to the liminal space of dreams, the realm of erotic desire, where love's paradoxes can be accommodated and where lovers can deal with their incomprehensible feelings.

In *Livistros and Rodamne* and in the *Hypnerotomachia*, love is also characterized by its warmth, being capable to 'melt' even the hardest of hearts; the dichotomy between ice and fire, cold and hot is particularly intense in Polia's initiation. In the *Roman de la Rose*, the overwhelming power of love is expressed through Amour's attack, wounding the dreamer with his five metaphorical arrows. Analogous imagery is employed in Rodamne's oneiric encounter with Eros and in Polia's daydreaming, when she perceives the awakening of her desire for Poliphilo as a host of arrows penetrating her soul. Because of its catalytic power, love is able to effect transformation and, specifically, the transformation of the neophytes into lovers.

By bringing together the *Tale of Livistros and Rodamne*, the *Roman de la Rose* and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, my aim was to demonstrate the insights that such a comparative study might offer. The similarities that can be observed between the texts can be attributed to their common literary and cultural background, *i.e.* Greco-Roman, as well as to their similar subject-matter. At the same time, the texts present several divergences from each other, which, of course, relate to the distinct historical and socio-cultural environments associated with their production: the Byzantine imperial court at Nicaea, the courtly culture of late medieval France, the humanist movement of early Renaissance Italy. Both the similarities and the differences are important to the comparative study of the three texts, since both raise questions regarding the network of shared influences that unite them and the particular socio-cultural and historical conditions that separate them. Finally, the juxtaposition of the initiation processes and of the dreams associated with them helps elucidate aspects of each text that may have been overlooked and provides us with a fresh perspective.

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