

THE LEXICON OF LOVE: LONGUS AND PHILETAS *GRAMMATIKOS*

Abstract: This article offers a fresh approach to the well-known questions surrounding the identification of Longus' character Philetas with the Hellenistic poet Philetas or Philitas. Noting that the poet was famed in antiquity also for his critical writing, particularly his lexicographical work the *ataktōi glōssai*, it argues that the fictional characters Daphnis and Chloe consult Philetas for, among other things, a lexical definition of *erōs*.

NEAR the beginning of the second book of *Daphnis and Chloe*, the rustic *naïfs* are approached by an old man who addresses a pair of long speeches to them. The first begins as follows:

Φιλητᾶς, ὦ παῖδες, ὁ πρεσβύτης ἐγώ, ὅς πολλὰ μὲν ταῖσδε ταῖς Νύμφαις ἦισα, πολλὰ δὲ τῷ Πανί ἐκείνῳ ἐσύρισα, βοῶν δὲ πολλῆς ἀγέλης ἠγησάμην μόνῃ μουσικῇ. ἦκω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅσα εἶδον μηνύσων, ὅσα ἤκουσα ἀπαγγελῶν. (2.3.2)

Philetas the old man am I, children, who have sung many songs to these nymphs, and piped many tunes to Pan over there, and led many a herd of cows with music alone. I have come to reveal to you all that I have seen, and to announce to you all that I have heard.

The old man states his identity immediately, without deferment or concealment. There is no scandal here, no narrative *frisson* to the moment of revelation:¹ the name of 'Philetas' means nothing to the young lovers (except perhaps paronomastically).² Yet for the sophisticated *pepaideumenoi* to whom the text was directed, there are additional resonances; as so often, Longus drives a narratological wedge between the focalization of the rustics and the expectations of his readership. For a start, the directness of the self-revelation is complicated by the allusions to the *Odyssey*, the paradigmatic narrative of self-concealment.³ More importantly still, Philetas must be more than the incidental figure he appears to Daphnis and Chloe. As was noticed long ago, in the context of this most allusive (and 'Alexandrian') of Greek novels, it can be no coincidence that the name is (whether exactly or nearly)⁴ shared with one of the founding figures of Hellenistic literature.⁵

¹ For scandalous self-identifications, see T. Cave, *Recognitions. A Study in Poetics* (Oxford 1988).

² φίλημα in this episode: 2.4.4, 2.5.2, 2.7.7, 2.8.5, 2.9.2; also φιλεῖν (in the sense of 'kiss'): 2.5.1 (Eros: ἐμοὶ μὲν, ὦ Φιλητᾶ, φιλήσαι σε πόνοσ οὐδέεις), 2.7.4, 2.9.1, 2.9.2. For earlier plays on the name, see K. Spanoudakis, *Philitas of Cos* (Leiden 2002) 22 n.6.

³ The name + relative clause formula invokes Odysseus' announcement of his name at *Od.* 9.19-20: εἶμ' Ὀδυσσεὺς Λαερτιάδης, ὅς πᾶσι δόλοισιν/ ἀνθρώποισι μέλω. But the polyptotic anaphora of πολὺς in a relative clause (ὅς πολλὰ μὲν ταῖσδε ταῖς Νύμφαις ἦισα, πολλὰ δὲ τῷ Πανί ἐκείνῳ ἐσύρισα, βοῶν δὲ πολλῆς ἀγέλης ἠγησάμην μόνῃ μουσικῇ) activates a closer, playfully bathetic, allusion to *Od.* 1.1-4 (... ὅς μάλα πολλὰ / πλάγγθη ... πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω, / πολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὄν κατὰ θυμόν ...). For Odyssean dissimulation, see S. Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1987); S. Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice. Essays in Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge 1991) 24-56. On Dio Chrysostom's approximately contemporary play with Odyssean dissimulation, see, e.g., T. Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire. The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford 2001) 239-41.

⁴ Both of Longus' MSS agree that the name is Φιλητᾶς; the Coan poet is sometimes spelled in this way, and sometimes Φιλίτας (a form found on Cos). On the Φιλητᾶς/Φιλίτας question, see E.L. Bowie, 'Theocritus' seventh *Idyll*, Philetas and Longus', *CQ* 35 (1985) 72, esp. n.27; L. Sbardella, *Filita. Testimonianze e frammenti poetici* (Rome 2000) 3-7; Spanoudakis (n.2) 19-23. I use 'Philetas' throughout, though without commitment on this debate. The two names would have been homophonic by the second century AD.

⁵ The identification was first made by R. Reitzenstein, *Epigramm und Skolion* (Giessen 1893) 260 n.1, and has been widely accepted: see L.R. Cresci, 'Il romanzo di Longo Sofista e la tradizione bucolica', *A&R* 26 (1971) 1-2, translated at S. Swain (ed.), *Oxford Readings in the Greek Novel* (Oxford 1999) 210-11. For significant recent discussions, see R. Hunter, *A Study of Daphnis and Chloe* (Cambridge 1983) 76-83; Bowie (n.4) 72-5; F.I. Zeitlin, 'The poetics of *eros*: nature, art and imitation in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*', in D.M. Halperin, J.J. Winkler and F.I. Zeitlin (eds), *Before Sexuality. The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton 1990) 447-9; Spanoudakis (n.2) 64-6.

That Longus' Philetas serves as a metapoetic figure is clear. In the passage cited above, he is said to have sung to the nymphs, played the *syrinx* to Pan, and (with Orpheus-like powers) led the herds with his music alone. Presently, he will play the *syrinx* masterfully, and give his pipes to Daphnis (2.35-7). It is a fair guess that these passages resonate with Philetan intertextuality (though the few slender fragments extant do not allow for much confidence).⁶ Philetas' reputation as an erotic poet (resting on his poem for Bittis or Battis)⁷ – perhaps also as a pastoral poet, though there is no direct evidence⁸ – makes him a highly appropriate figure to appear at this critical point in *Daphnis and Chloe*.

The Coan Philetas, however, was known not just as a poet. Strabo refers to him as 'both poet and critic' (ποιητῆς ἄμα καὶ κριτικός, 657C = T2 Dettori, T11 Spanoudakis); and indeed it is as a 'critical grammarian' (γραμματικὸς κριτικός) that the *Suda* describes him in the first instance (Φ 332 = T1 Dettori, Spanoudakis). This reputation quickly percolated into popular culture: the sole fragment of the comic poet Strato (c. 300 BC) refers to the need to consult his books (τὰ τοῦ Φιλίτα ... βιβλία) in order to decipher a cook's exotic language (*Phoenicides* fr. 1.40-4 K-A = Ath. *Deipn.* 383a-b, *P.Cair.* 65445 = T7 Dettori, T4 Spanoudakis). His celebrity in this field rested upon, amongst other works, the treatise known as the *Ataktoi glōssai*, which – whatever its focus, level and aim⁹ – was later recognized as a founding work of Hellenistic lexicography. As a *grammatikos*, indeed, he was important enough to elicit an *Against Philetas* from no lesser a figure than Aristarchus.¹⁰

How full a range of the scholar-poet's activities is reflected in Longus' Philetas? The old man begins by telling Daphnis and Chloe an allegorical tale about seeing a naked young boy who turns out to be Eros in his garden; in his second speech he explains the nature of Eros, and the symptoms he suffered as a young man when in love with Amaryllis. 'Having completed this education' (τοσαῦτα παιδεύσας, 2.8.1; cf. παιδευτήριον, 2.9.1, τοῖς Φιλητᾶ παιδεύμασιν, 3.14.1) of Daphnis and Chloe, he departs, leaving them to ponder his words. The paideutic charge of his words operates at multiple levels. Most fundamentally, Philetas serves as an *erotodidaskalos*, instructing the young couple in the arts of love (albeit rather aporetically).¹¹ His words are also figured as a kind of mystical enlightenment: his claim to have come 'to reveal to you all that I have seen, and to announce to you all that I have heard' (2.3.2) exhales the air of the mystery cult.¹² The young lovers are said to take the Erotic allegory for a 'myth, not a *logos*' (μῦθον οὐ λόγον, 2.7.1), a phrase that (for all its slipperiness) signals to the reader that there is a depth to the narrative that the naïve will miss.

This episode also represents a stage in the lexical education of the young couple: 'they heard for the first time the name of *Erōs*' (τότε πρῶτον ἀκούσαντες τὸ Ἔρωτος ὄνομα, 2.8.1). 'The

⁶ For the poetical fragments of Philetas, see *CA* pp. 90-6; *SH* 673-675d. For potential additions to the *corpus*, see R. Führer, 'P.Oxy. 3723: Philetas?', *ZPE* 122 (1998) 47-8; E. Livrea, 'Un nuovo frammento di Filita di Cos', *ZPE* 125 (1999) 67-8. More speculation about the contents of Philetas' poetry in Bowie (n.4), and A.S. Hollis, 'Heroic honours for Philetas?', *ZPE* 110 (1996) 56. Three recent editions have appeared: E. Dettori, *Filita grammatico. Testimonianze e frammenti* (Rome 2000); Sbardella (n.4); Spanoudakis (n.2). A forthcoming paper by John Morgan makes some further captivating suggestions based on Longus.

⁷ For the Bittis/Battis debate, see Spanoudakis (n.2) 31-2, and now P. Bing, 'The unruly tongue: Philitas of Cos as scholar and poet', *CPh* 98 (2003) 330-48, arguing ingeniously for Battis.

⁸ The strongest evidence, outside *Daphnis and Chloe*, is Theocritus 7.40-1; but that evidence is problematic, in

that the other poet mentioned, Asclepiades, has no pastoral connotations himself. Has Theocritus playfully 'bucolicized' two non-pastoral poets?

⁹ Dettori (n.6) 20-49; Spanoudakis (n.2) 384-8. Bing (n.7) argues attractively for the ἄτακτοι γλῶσσαι as playfully subversive 'unruly tongues'.

¹⁰ Schol. A *Il.* 1.524c; 2.111b (= T6a-b Dettori, T10 Spanoudakis); Dettori (n.6) 20, 185, 186; Spanoudakis (n.2) 29.

¹¹ Philetas' education in Book 2 is thus balanced by Lycæon's in Book 3 (μαθητὴν, διδάξω, 3.17.3; διδάξαι, 3.18.1; διδάσκεσθαι, 3.18.2; παιδεύειν, 3.18.3; ἐπαίδευε, 3.18.4, παιδαγωγίας, πεπαίδευτο, 3.19.1; μαθεῖν, ἐπαίδευσε, 3.19.2).

¹² Spanoudakis (n.2) 277; also, more generally, R. Merkelbach, *Die Hirten des Dionysos. Die Dionysos-Mysterien der römischen Kaiserzeit und der bukolische Roman des Longus* (Stuttgart 1988) 164-6.

name of *Erôs*’ – or ‘the word *erôs*’? Modern orthographic conventions are misleading, and downplay the elusive slippage between god and concept. It is the word that captivates Daphnis and Chloe; they are undergoing a lesson in, amongst other things, semantics.

This phrase ‘the name/word of *erôs*’ (ἔρωτος ὄνομα) looks to Socrates, Greek literature’s most famous searcher after definitions. It appears in exactly this form in Plato’s treatise on names and naming, the *Cratylus* (398d). It also figures less exactly, but even more pertinently, in that magisterial quest for the truth about *eros*, the *Symposium*: Diotima complains that common parlance takes but one aspect of *eros* and applies to it ‘the name of the whole concept, *erôs*’ (τὸ τοῦ ὅλου ... ὄνομα ἔρωτα, 205b). The Platonic allusions magnify the moment: Philetas’ attempt at definition is heralded as an epistemological epiphany.

Knowledge of the name/word of *eros* has been an important issue throughout *Daphnis and Chloe* thus far.¹³ Early in the narrative, Dryas and Lamón are visited by a dream representing the Nymphs handing Daphnis and Chloe over to a winged boy bearing bows and arrows (1.7.1-2); the fathers respond by, amongst other things, sacrificing to ‘the winged boy ... (for they did not know what his name was)’ (τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα λέγειν οὐκ εἶχον, 1.8.2). When the young couple take their first bath together, Chloe likes what she sees, and is struck by ἔρωσ; but she does not know what is happening to her, being young, reared in the countryside, and ‘never having heard anyone speak the name/word of love’ (οὐδὲ ἄλλου λέγοντος ἀκούσασα τὸ ἔρωτος ὄνομα, 1.13.5). She attempts to analyse her feelings with a long internal discussion (1.14): ‘this is what she underwent, this is what she said, searching for the name/word of love’ (τοιαῦτα ἔπασχε, τοιαῦτα ἔλεγεν, ἐπιζητοῦσα τὸ ἔρωτος ὄνομα, 1.15.1). Daphnis, too, laments: ‘O vile victory, o novel kind of illness, for which I do not know even the name/word’ (ὦ νίκης κακῆς, ὦ νόσου καινῆς, ἧς οὐδὲ εἰπεῖν οἶδα τὸ ὄνομα, 1.18.2). Chloe’s predator Dorcon, on the other hand, knows ‘the name/word – and the deeds too – of love’ (ἔρωτος καὶ τοῦνομα καὶ τὰ ἔργα, 1.15.1). What the lovers appear most visibly to lack, then, is the name (ὄνομα).

In the first instance cited above (1.8.2), ὄνομα means quite literally the ‘name’ of the god. In the other cases, it takes on an additional, more global sense: knowing the ὄνομα implies control of the meaning of the concept. What Daphnis and Chloe appear to lack most crucially is, perhaps, a *definition* of *erôs*. And, indeed, it is precisely a definition that they ask of Philetas. In response to his allegorical narrative, ‘they asked what Eros was, a boy or a bird, and what he *dunatai*’ (ἐπυνθάνοντο τί ἐστὶ ποτε ὁ Ἔρωσ, πότερα παῖς ἢ ὄρνις, καὶ τί δύνεται, 2.7.1). The conceptual framework Longus uses here is, once again, predominantly Platonic. The question ‘what is it’ (τί ἐστὶ ποτε – or, in Plato, τί ποτέ ἐστι) – appears repeatedly in the course of Socrates’ searches for the true definition of a word.¹⁴

As for ‘what he *dunatai*’, it might mean ‘what are Eros’ powers’; and indeed it does solicit from Philetas a clichéd¹⁵ response hymning the power of Eros (‘his powers exceed even those of Zeus’: δύνεται δὲ τοσοῦτον ὅσον οὐδὲ ὁ Ζεὺς, 2.7.2). It is open to us, however, to consider whether, despite Philetas’ actual response, Daphnis and Chloe are in fact asking ‘what does [the word] *erôs* mean?’¹⁶ In Strato’s *Phoenicides*, after all, the master turns to the lexicographer Philetas precisely in order to ‘consider what each of the utterances *dunatai*’ (σκοπεῖν ἕκαστον τί δύνεται τῶν ῥημάτων, 44). However we take Longus’ phrase ‘what he *dunatai*’, though, it is clear by now that the question of the semantics of *erôs* greatly occupies Daphnis and Chloe. Their turn to Philetas for help is a playfully pastoralized rendering of a sophisticated reader’s turn

¹³ See further R. Hunter, ‘Longus and Plato’, in M. Picone and B. Zimmermann (eds), *Der antike Roman und seine mittelalterliche Rezeption* (Basel, Boston and Berlin 1997) 21-2, in the light of Platonic theories of definition.

¹⁴ For τί ποτέ ἐστι questions, cf. Pl. *Euthyphr.* 13e, *Hipp.* 225a, *Charm.* 162b, *Prot.* 312c, *Gorg.* 502e, *Men.*

74e, 80d, *Hipp. Maj.* 287e, 289c, 294e, *Resp.* 524e, *Tim.* 48b, *Min.* 321d, *Leg.* 655c.

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., Soph. *Trach.* 497-506; Eur. *Hipp.* 439-81; Petron. *Sat.* 83; Ach. Tat. 1.2.1.

¹⁶ For δύνεμαι in the sense of ‘of words, signify, mean’, cf. LSJ s.v. II.3.

to the great Hellenistic lexicographer for the definition of a recondite lexeme. Longus' Philetas is not just the doyen of refined, sophisticated poetry, but also the sagacious lexicographer of repute.

The principal irony of the scene, finally, is that the definition supplied by Philetas leads them not to enlightenment but to confusion and frustration, as they apply Philetas' advice inexpertly and overliterally (2.9-11). Longus may be glancing towards the biographical tradition concerning the 'real' Philetas: he died, according to the sepulchral epigram preserved in Athenaeus, through wastage in his search for the mysterious 'fallacious *logos*' (ψευδόμενος λόγος).¹⁷ Whatever this phrase means exactly,¹⁸ and whatever a second-century reader might have taken it to mean, the implication of the passage as a whole is that Philetas withered away out of frustration in his search for solutions to linguistically based problems. Similarly, Daphnis and Chloe might well exclaim 'everything Philetas told us is true' (ἀληθῆ πάντα εἶπεν ὁ Φιλητάς, 2.8.4), but his *logos* will not prove to be a veridical guide to erotic fulfilment. If the allusions I have identified to the Socratic¹⁹ pursuit of definitions are accepted, then we might take this outcome as a characteristically Platonic *aporia*. Yet it is more pertinent to locate this episode in its synchronic intellectual context: like his near-contemporaries Lucian and Athenaeus,²⁰ Longus playfully satirizes the limitations of the *grammatikoi* who consider semantics – words (ὀνόματα) without deeds (ἔργα) – a useful end in themselves.

TIM WHITMARSH
University of Exeter

¹⁷ ξεῖνε, Φιλίτας εἰμί. λόγων ὁ ψευδόμενος με / λεσε καὶ νυκτῶν φροντίδες ἐσπέριοι, *FGE* 442 = Ath. *Deipn.* 401e = T5 Dettori, T21 Spanoudakis); the story of the ψευδόμενος λόγος is found at *Suda* Φ 332 (= T1 Dettori, Spanoudakis).

¹⁸ Discussion at A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton 1995) 490-1. Cameron (followed, apparently independently, by Spanoudakis (n.2) 340) takes it as a reference to the paradox of Eubulides of Miletus, ὃς καὶ πολλοὺς ἐν διαλεκτικῆι λόγους ἐρώτησε, τὸν τε ψευδόμενον κτλ. (Diog. Laert. 2.108). Support for this interpretation might be sought in the fact that Philetas' younger contemporary Chrysippus was also much exercised by this puzzle, writing six treatises on it (Diog. Laert. 7.196-7). But in fact the phrase ψευδόμενος λόγος can be used of any argument deemed fallacious: see, e.g., Arist. *EN* 1146a 22 (retaining the MSS reading, *contra* Coraes); Diog. Laert. 7.44.

¹⁹ Longus' Philetas might be thought to have a distant hint of the Cynic (and, hence, of Cynic-Socraticism) about him: cf. πῆραν ἐξηρημένους (2.3.1), with J. Hahn,

Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft. Selbstverständnis, öffentliches Auftreten und populäre Erwartungen in der hohen Kaiserzeit (Stuttgart 1989) 38, on the characteristic Cynic πῆρα. But this is more plausibly a sign of rusticity: he also wears a σισύρα (a rough, folded goatskin, often seen as synonymous with the βαίτη; Photius calls it a περιβόλαιον ἀγροικικόν, *Lex.* Σ513) and καρβάτιναι (an ἀγροικον ὑπόδημα, *Poll. Onom.* 7.88; cf. Hesych. K785, schol. *Luc. Philops.* 13).

²⁰ For Lucian, see S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire. Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-250* (Oxford 1996) 45-9; M. Weissenberger, *Literaturtheorie bei Lukian. Untersuchung zum Dialog Lexiphanes* (Stuttgart 1996) 70-4 (arguing, however, that Lucian is not just satirizing, but also offering a positive literary theory); and on Athenaeus' ὀνοματοθήραι (97f, 99d, 184b, 649b) Swain (*op. cit.*) 49-51, and more generally D. Braund and J. Wilkins (eds), *Athenaeus and his World. Reading Greek Culture in the Roman Empire* (Exeter 2000).