

## Imagining Images: *Anacreontea* 16 and 17

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### *Anacreontea* 16

<p>Ἄγε, ζωγράφων ἄριστε,          {γράφε, ζωγράφων ἄριστε,}          Ῥοδῆς κοίρανε τέχνης,          ἀπεύσαν, ὡς ἂν εἶπω,          γράφε τὴν ἐμὴν ἐταίρην.          γράφε μοι τρίχας τὸ πρῶτον          ἀπαλάς τε καὶ μελαίνας·          ὁ δὲ κηρὸς ἂν δύνηται,          γράφε καὶ μύρου πνεούσας.          γράφε δ' ἐξ ὄλης παρειῆς          ὑπὸ πορφυραῖσι χαίταις          ἐλεφάντινον μέτωπον.          τὸ μεσόφρυον δὲ μὴ μοι          διάκοπτε μήτε μίσηγε,          ἐχέτω δ' ὅπως ἐκείνη,          τὸ λεληθότως σύνοφρυον          βλεφάρων ἴτυν κελαινήν.          τὸ δὲ βλέμμα νῦν ἀληθῶς          ἀπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς ποίησον,          ἅμα γλαυκὸν ὡς Ἀθήνης,          ἅμα δ' ὑγρὸν ὡς Κυθήρης.          γράφε ῥίνα καὶ παρειάς          ῥόδα τῶι γάλακτι μίξας·          γράφε χεῖλος οἷα Πειθούς,          προκαλούμενον φίλημα.          τρυφεροῦ δ' ἔσω γενείου          περὶ λυγδίνωι τραχήλωι          Χάριτες πέτοινο πᾶσαι.          στολίσον τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτήν          ὑποπορφύροισι πέπλοισι,          διαφανέτω δὲ σαρκῶν</p>	<p>5 10 15 20 25 30</p>	<p>Come, best of painters,          {paint, best of painters}          master of the Rhodian art,          paint my absent girlfriend,          as I tell you.          First paint her hair          soft and black;          and if the wax can do it,          paint it even perfumed with myrrh.          Paint her entire cheek          and beneath the dark hair          an ivory forehead.          And neither divide nor join          the part between her eyebrows,          but, just as she has them,          let them meet imperceptibly          the dark rim of her eyelids.          And make her gaze as it truly is,          from fire,          at once flashing, like Athena's          and soft, like the Kytherean's.          Paint her nose and cheeks          having mingled roses with cream.          Paint her lip like Persuasion's          calling for a kiss.          And under her tender chin          may all Graces fly around          her neck, white as marble.          Adorn the rest of her          with light-purple robes,          but let a little of her flesh be seen through</p>
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ὀλίγον, τὸ σῶμ' ἐλέγχον.  
ἀπέχει· βλέπω γὰρ αὐτήν·  
τάχα κηρὲ καὶ λαλήσεις.<sup>1</sup>

verifying (the beauty of) her body.  
Hold! For I see her!  
Soon, wax, you will even talk.

### *Anacreontea 17*

Γράφε μοι Βάθυλλον οὕτω  
τὸν ἑταῖρον ὡς διδάσκω·  
λιπαρὰς κόμας ποίησον,  
τὰ μὲν ἔνδοθεν μελαίνας,  
τὰ δ' ἐς ἄκρον ἠλιώσας·  
ἔλικας δ' ἔλευθέρους μοι  
πλοκάμων ἄτακτα συνθεῖς  
ἄφες ὡς θέλωσι κείσθαι.  
ἀπαλὸν δὲ καὶ δροσῶδες  
στεφέτω μέτωπον ὄφρυς  
κυανωτέρη δρακόντων.  
μέλαν ὄμμα γοργὸν ἔστω,  
κεκερασμένον γαλήνηι,  
τὸ μὲν ἐξ Ἄρηος ἔλκον,  
τὸ δὲ τῆς καλῆς Κυθήρης,  
ἵνα τις τὸ μὲν φοβῆται,  
τὸ δ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδος κρεμάται.  
ρόδέην δ' ὁποῖα μῆλον  
χνοῖην ποιεῖ παρειήν·  
ἐρύθημα δ' ὡς ἂν Αἰδοῦς  
δύνασαι βαλεῖν ποίησον.  
τὸ δὲ χεῖλος οὐκέτ' οἶδα  
τίνι μοι τρόπωι ποιήσεις  
ἀπαλόν, γέμον τε Πειθοῦς·  
τὸ δὲ πᾶν ὁ κηρὸς αὐτός  
ἐχέτω λαλῶν σιωπῆι.  
μετὰ δὲ πρόσωπον ἔστω  
τὸν Ἀδώνιδος παρελθῶν  
ἐλεφάντινος τράχηλος.  
μεταμάζιον δὲ ποίει

Paint for my sake Bathyllos, my beloved,  
just as I am instructing you:  
Make his hair shining,  
the parts beneath dark  
5 but the ends brightened by the sun.  
And having placed unconstrained curling  
locks, let them lie in disorder,  
as they wish.  
And let his eyebrows, darker than snakes,  
10 crown  
his soft and dewy forehead.  
Let his dark, grim eyes  
be blended with calmness,  
the one deriving from Ares,  
15 the other from the beautiful Kytherean  
so that someone may be in fear  
but also be suspended in hope.  
And make his downy cheek  
rosy like an apple.  
20 If you can do it,  
place some red, like that of Modesty.  
I no longer know  
in what way you will make  
his lips soft and full of Persuasion.  
25 But let the wax itself attend to everything,  
speaking in silence.  
And after his face, let there be  
an ivory neck  
superior to that of Adonis.  
30 Make his chest

1 The text is according to West (1984). All translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

<p>             διδύμας τε χεῖρας Ἑρμοῦ,              Πολυδεύκεος δὲ μηρούς,              Διονυσίην δὲ νηδύν·              ἀπαλῶν δ' ὕπερθε μηρῶν,              35 μαλερόν τὸ πῦρ ἐχόντων,              ἀφελή ποιήσον αἰδῶ              Παφίην θέλουσαν ἤδη.              φθονερὴν ἔχεις δὲ τέχνην,              ὅτι μὴ τὰ νῶτα δεῖξαι              40 δύνασαι· τὰ δ' ἦν ἀμείνω.              τί με δεῖ πόδας διδάσκειν;              λάβε μισθὸν ὅσον εἴπηις,              τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα δὲ τοῦτον              καθελῶν ποίει Βάθυλλον·              45 ἦν δ' ἐς Σάμον ποτ' ἔλθῃς,              γράφε Φοῖβον ἐκ Βαθύλλου.           </p>	<p>             and his two hands like Hermes',              his thighs like Polydeukes'              and his belly like Dionysus'.              Above his soft thighs,              containing a mighty fire,              make a brazen member              already desiring the Paphian.              But you have a grudging art              because you are not able to show              his buttocks; that would have been better.              Why should I instruct you about his feet?              Take your fee, as much as you say.              Having removed this Apollo,              make Bathyllos.              And if you ever come to Samos,              paint Phoebus from Bathyllos.           </p>
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Despite its name, the *Anacreontea*, a collection of sixty-two poems, was not written by Anacreon, as its first printed edition (Paris, 1554) led its audience to believe, but by anonymous imitators who lived from around the first century BCE to the beginning of the Byzantine era.<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, the corpus of Anacreon and that of his imitators have a number of traits in common, from the setting of performance—the symposion—to treatment of similar themes, mainly those of love, youth, old age and wine-drinking, all being expressions of the symptotic motif of *carpe diem*.<sup>3</sup> Whereas Anacreon shows little interest in artifacts, the *Anacreontea* displays a keen interest in them, although not as finished objects of art already in use or display, but as works in progress, the completion of which advances simultaneously with the completion of the poems in which they appear. These artifacts have as their source the imagination of the poet and emerge through his instructions to particular craftsmen.<sup>4</sup> In the two poems discussed here, the speaker bids a painter depict his beloved: a *hetaira* in 16 and an *eromenos* in 17. By fictionalizing the process by which language is transformed into image, the poems invite us to explore the inter-

2 For the dating of particular poems, structure and organization of the collection, see West (1984) xvi–xviii; Campbell (1988) 10–18; Rosenmeyer (1992) 123–146.

3 Cf. West (1990) 272–276; Ladianou (2005) 47–60, who understands the references to dance (*choreia*) as the 'linguistic imprint' of an element present in Anacreon but absent in his imitators.

4 Poems 3, 16 and 17 are addressed to a painter; poems 4, 5 and 57, to a silversmith.

actions between word and sight, not only abstractly but also in the context of their literary and cultural milieu, that is, the Greek East after the first century BCE. I suggest that the speaker's response to the paintings differs from the usual patterns of viewing naturalistic art in that he perceives the depicted figures as reciprocating through their gaze, while, at the same time, he maintains an awareness of their artificiality and avoids being absorbed into their illusionist setting. Moreover, the speaker's narrative creates interplay between different levels of imagined realities and fusion of roles among the characters of the poems (and even between the poet/speaker and the reader), a fusion which generates a range of functional ambivalences and interdependencies.

The two poems, written in the Greek East of the post-Hellenistic period, are products of an environment well known for its interest in the complexities of viewing works of art. This interest is expressed primarily through the prominence of paintings and other artifacts in contemporary literature and also through the exploration of the concept of ekphrasis in the field of rhetoric. The varied modes of viewing, as depicted in one of its major literary genres, the Greek novel, have attracted increasing attention, and the study of subjects such as gaze, image, and description reveals their importance not only as narrative elements but also as metatextual references which shape our understanding of the author's voice in a fundamental way.<sup>5</sup> But visibility is treated in other literary areas as well, especially in the sub-genre known as 'ekphrastic epigram', typically presenting a setting in which readers are invited to look at a painting and attempt to interpret it. Through such narrative frames and responses to works of art these epigrams generate sophisticated commentary not only on the aesthetics of the painting but also on the relationships between viewer and representation on the one hand, and viewer and cultural reception on the other.<sup>6</sup> The instances of viewing in literature find their counterpart in the examination of similar ideas in the rhetorical handbooks of the time (*Progymnasmata*), containing exercises on topics appropriate for 'a descriptive account which brings the indicated event or object vividly before one's eyes'.<sup>7</sup> Such an account generates in the viewer a powerful mental representation, the technical term for which is φαντασία. The ability of words to create the illusion of 'being there' was coveted in rhetorical circles because immediacy and a sense of presence were perceived as heightening emotions and thus facilitating per-

5 Bartsch (1989) 11–35; Whitmarsh (2002) 111–125; Morales (2004) 77–95; Webb (2009) 345–352.

6 See Goldhill (1994) 197–223.

7 Theon's (early second century) definition of ekphrasis as λόγος περιηγηματικός έναργῶς ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον (*Prog.* p. 118 Spengel = 66 Patillon). See Bartsch (1989) 7–10; esp. Webb (2009) 39–60.

suasion. It is in these handbooks that we first encounter the term ‘ekphrasis’ and also detailed guidelines regarding the suitability of particular topics for ekphrastic treatment. Physical appearance of persons was one of the appropriate topics.<sup>8</sup>

Poems 16 and 17 reflect this culture of ekphrasis.<sup>9</sup> Their vividness (ἐνάργεια) is achieved through the effusiveness of the instructions pertaining to colors and shapes of the beloved’s body and even to non-visual aspects, such as the softness of his flesh and perfume of his hair, elements which obviously cannot be depicted in a two-dimensional artifact.<sup>10</sup> In both poems the composition proceeds in an orderly fashion, from top to bottom: the remarks about hair are followed by details about the various parts of the face (cheeks, brow, eyes, lips), then neck and finally torso, which is treated with distinct scopophilic earnestness. The *hetaira*’s body is spared detailed description, but is nevertheless exposed with titillating voyeurism, as the speaker imagines her in essence undressed, her purple πέπλοι revealing rather than concealing.<sup>11</sup> Bathyllos receives an even more intrusive gaze, as the focus now turns on the youth’s erect genitalia and attractive thighs and buttocks.<sup>12</sup> These sexually arousing details are the final references to the beloved’s body, as in both poems the speaker leaves his instructions unfinished, having already described a satisfying *simulacrum*.

The prevailing colors of the portraits are three, white, red, and black, indicated either by standard adjectives or nouns, such as μελαίνας, κελαινήν, ἐρύ-

8 πρόσωπα as an acceptable topic for ekphrasis appears in all surviving handbooks (Theon, ps. Hermogenes, Athonios and Nikolaos). For a detailed list, see Webb (2009) 64.

9 The detailed charts in Campbell (1988) 16–18 indicate that there is general agreement among the editors (Hanssen, Sitzler, Edmonds, Sánchez, West) that both poems are among the oldest of the collection; dialect, prosody and stylistic elements suggest a date in the first century of our era or probably later.

10 Cf. Philostratos the Elder, who in his work *Eikόνες* brings up not only the literary and historiographical associations of the paintings but also non-visual elements which generate synaesthetic perceptions, see Bartsch (1989) 16; Manieri (1999) 111–121; Webb (2009) 187 on the sounds and scents of the painting as an important aspect of the perceptual world of the gallery.

11 Cf. Olson (2008) 94 on the male gaze as comparable to sexual penetration.

12 Shapiro (1992) 53–72. Sutton (1992) 21 discussing the Greek culture of male nudity notes that its pornographic effect cannot be dismissed, given the high visibility of pederasty and homosexuality: nude athletes and other figures, regardless of what else they stood for, were also understood as a source of sexual pleasure. For the interest of the *Palatine Anthology* in voyeuristic descriptions, see poems 10.20, 12.3, 12.95, 12.197, 12.207 (penis/male arousal); 12.6, 12.210, 12.222 (anus), all included in Hubbard (2003) 294–304.

θημα, or by figures of speech: ivory, milk/cream (γάλα) and marble stand for white; ῥόδον, for red; δράκων, for black. At a primary level, these colors signify physical characteristics which, in turn, may suggest additional personal qualities: delicacy of complexion, for example, implies urbanity with its concomitants of luxury and sophistication; rosy cheeks allude to health and youth. But colors, especially in a figurative context, are also employed in ways which, to use Goldhill's expression, enable us 'to see the character in the image and the image as a mark of character'.<sup>13</sup> The ivory metaphor, for instance, appearing in both poems, has unmistakable cultural and mythological overtones: in the *Odyssey* (19.564) and the *Aeneid* (6.895–896) the gates of false dreams are made of this material; in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Narcissus notices the 'ivory' neck of his reflection (3.422), and Hermaphroditus, when he appears in the waters of the lake, is 'like an eburnean figure sealed up in clear glass' (4.353–355).<sup>14</sup> Thus ivory is soft, warm, luxurious and exotic, alluding to the faraway places of its origin; but it combines these elements with an evocation of deceptiveness, elusiveness and distance.<sup>15</sup> The ῥόδον simile expresses a similar ambiguity: on the one hand the rose is a symbol of youth, erotic passion, divine beauty and poetic inspiration. On the other, its thorns can turn it into a dangerous possession, as we learn from various mythological tales.<sup>16</sup> But while the red of the ῥόδον, suggesting delicate freshness and divine allure, is encountered in both poems, another type of red, ἐρύθημα, associated with Αἰδώς (modesty, shame, regard for propriety), significantly appears on the cheeks of the *eromenos* alone. The beloved of 16 is a *hetaira*, a female whose profession renders it unlikely or even undesirable that she feel Αἰδώς; even when half-clothed she is exposed to the penetrating gaze of the male. On the other hand, because he too becomes the object of the speaker's pitiless voyeurism, the *eromenos* is expected to display a sense of Αἰδώς and thus preserve his respectability.<sup>17</sup> Distinctions between the red of desire and the red of Αἰδώς cannot be indicated, of course, by paint

13 Goldhill (1994) 213.

14 Skin viewed as ivory appears already in *Il.* 4.141–142.

15 Cf. Elsner (2007) 126; Salzman-Mitchell (2008) 296; Stoichita (2008) 7, 210 n. 5.

16 In the letters of Philostratos the Elder roses prick Aphrodite's feet; spring from the blood of dead Adonis; are woven by Medea into the crown that causes Glauke's death, see Rosenmeyer (1992) 210–211.

17 Cairns (1996) 79: '*Aidos* traditionally is something that conceals, that prevents exposure; this is part of the fundamental association between *aidos* and the visual.' On blushing, see de Temmerman (2007) 235–252; Stoichita (2008) 16–20. On αἰδώς in relationship to exposure and objectifying gaze, see Hubbard (2003) 10–11; Elsner (2007) 136; Olson (2008) 94–95.

alone;<sup>18</sup> and thus in his eagerness to portray the beloved in his fullness, the speaker imposes upon the painter an impossible task. Yet when the poet looks at the portrait, he thinks that his instructions have been carried out to perfection. His desire to see the beloved as he imagines him preconditions him to see precisely what he wishes.

Desire grows from absence, we are told,<sup>19</sup> and both poems are expressions of absence: in 16, the speaker informs us directly that his beloved is ἀπεούσα (4), and in the last lines of 17 he indicates that the setting of the poem is at a place other than Samos, the island associated with Bathyllos (and, of course, Anacreon). To fill the void the speaker commissions a portrait, which gives him the opportunity to transcend the separation by speaking about the beloved. Roland Barthes, discussing a similar subject, notes that absence is always an unsustainable situation because it generates a clash between two time spheres, with the beloved being absent as referent but present as thought or subject of discussion: to talk about the absent is to postpone the sense of abandonment and loss.<sup>20</sup> The ancients, too, from early on seem to have been aware of the uses of language as a compensation for absence: in Homer, the invocations to the Muses can be seen as mediation between word and sight<sup>21</sup> and Demodokos' retelling of the war is credited by Odysseus as having the power of an eyewitness' account (αὐτὸς παρεών, *Od.* 8.491) which revives the past with great accuracy (λίην κατὰ κόσμον, 8.489).<sup>22</sup> In poems 16 and 17, through the ἐνάργεια (vividness) of his own words and the dexterity of the painter, the poet transfers the mental representation (φαντασία) of his absent beloved onto an actual canvas in such a way that the eye is fooled into believing that it sees

18 Cf. Philostratos' treatment of colors in Manieri (1999) 111–121 and Dubel (2009) 309–321.

19 Cf., e.g., Sapph. 16.15–16 L.-P.:]με νῦν Ἀνακτορι[ας ὀνέμναι/σ' οὐ] παρείσας, '... and now she reminds me of Anaktoria, who is not present'; 94.1–2: τεθνάκην δ' ἀδόλως θέλω / ἄ με ψισδομένα κατελίμπανεν, 'Honestly I wish I were dead; she, in tears, was leaving me ...'; 96.6–7: νῦν δὲ Λύδαισιν ἐμπρέπεται γυναί/κεσσιν, 'But now she is distinguished among the Lydian women'.

20 Barthes (1978) 13–17. Socrates seems to allude to the same notion, when he scolds teasingly Kritoboulos for constantly mentioning his absent beloved (οὐ γὰρ παύσῃ σὺ Κλεινίου μεμνημένος; Xen. *Symp.* 4.21).

21 Cf. Hardie (2002) 4: 'The Muses, present always and everywhere, are called on to be present to the poet at the moment of composition; Muses and poet are in turn conduits of real presence to the reader, transforming memory of the past into an experience of being present at the time.'

22 Cf. A. *Ag.* 1200–1201: πόντου πέραν τραφείσαν ἀλλόθρουον πόλιν κυρεῖν λέγουσαν ὥσπερ εἰ παρεστάτεϊς, 'Although you [sc. Cassandra] have been bred across the sea, you speak about a foreign city correctly, as if you had been here'.

the real person.<sup>23</sup> Mimesis plays its trick. In commemorating the absent-as-referent the poet and artist together make present the absent-as-thought.

It is precisely this power of naturalism to fool the eye—and the mind—that lies behind familiar tales such as the ones in which a handsome young man is captivated by his own reflection, thinking it is a lover; a sculptor falls in love with his statue of a beautiful woman (and even tries to have intercourse with it); or birds confuse painted grapes for real ones. In the same way, the speaker in the *Anacreontea* succumbs to the disorienting effects of illusion; for as the image on the canvas becomes increasingly complete, he is overwhelmed by its sight and begins to believe that it responds to him, until he ends his narrative abruptly, as if unable to bear the awakened awareness of the beloved's absence. This tension between the speaker and the image is different, however, from the tension often associated with the viewing of mimetic art in two respects: a) the speaker thinks that he is perceived reciprocally by the depicted beloved, but b) he manages to maintain an awareness of the true nature of the image as a painting.

One of the traps of naturalistic representation is that while it invites the viewer to participate in its illusion, at the same time it makes this participation impossible. It has been noted that mimesis operates independently of the viewer, and thus it produces only implausible yearning and frustrated desire.<sup>24</sup> Yet in poems 16 and 17 the speaker believes that he interacts with the image through exchanges of gaze. In fact, in both portraits the eyes become a focal point: in 16, the *hetaira* responds with a fiery and soft look that forbids and at the same time welcomes; while the promise in Bathyllos' eyes is tempered with a shadow of inapproachability, suggestively conveyed by the use of the adjective γοργόν (fierce, grim), which brings to mind the Gorgons of the myth, transforming anyone they looked at into a stone.<sup>25</sup> His gaze clearly has power

23 Pliny (*Nat.* 35.43) in fact suggests that the invention of clay portraiture is associated with the solitude of the lover left behind: 'Modeling portraits from clay was first invented by Boutades, a potter of Sicyon, at Corinth. He did this owing to his daughter, who was in love with a young man; and she, when he was going abroad, drew in outline on the wall the shadow of his face thrown by a lamp. Her father pressed clay on this and made a relief.' (Translated by H. Rackham, *Loeb Classical Library*). I owe this reference to Françoise Letoublon.

24 See Elsner (2007) 24; Lacan (1979) 67–119. Art's inability to substitute for reality is expressed in Kritoboulos' complaint in Xen. *Symp.* 4.22: ἡ μὲν αὐτοῦ ὄψις εὐφραίνειν δύναται, ἡ δὲ τοῦ εἰδώλου τέρψιν μὲν οὐ παρέχει, πόθον δὲ ἐμποιεῖ, 'For the sight of the beloved is able to cheer me up, but the sight of the image provides no delight, while it creates desire'. I owe this reference to Anastasia-Erasmia Peponi.

25 Cf. the nuanced translation of the poem in Hubbard (2003) 306.

to impact the viewer. But even in their severity the beloved's eyes open a door for the viewer into the image's realm and break the self-containment of naturalistic art, because 'seeing and being seen are means of engaging the world, constituting the self, and fulfilling desires'.<sup>26</sup>

Despite this engagement resulting from the imagined establishment of reciprocal gaze, the speaker paradoxically is not absorbed into the illusionist reality. On the contrary, he displays a strong awareness that the painted beloved is just that and nothing more. In fact, one of the salient elements in both poems is the centrality which the artifact achieves precisely as artifact: the intense anaphora of γράφε (seven times in poem 16 alone), verbs of poiesis (στόλισον, εἰ δύνασαι βαλεῖν, ποίησον, ποίει), materials of the craft (whether mentioned literally—κηρός—or figuratively—ρόδον, γάλα for red and white paint), references to ζωγράφος and τέχνη, all underline the speaker's understanding that the painted figure is, in Plato's words, in appearance only like the original object, while, in fact, not real.<sup>27</sup> The limitations of naturalistic art, however, do not diminish the speaker's enthusiasm for it: while he recognizes that a two-dimensional image cannot reproduce three-dimensionality (and thus the painting cannot render at once Bathyllos' genitalia and also his buttocks), he downplays this limitation by attributing it to φθόνος (grudge) rather than lack of power on the part of art.<sup>28</sup> It is significant that both poems end not with a reference to the beloved but to the craftsman's work.<sup>29</sup>

And yet the craftsman's work exists for the memorialization of the beloved. Indeed what an ideal beauty the pictures reveal! The eyes of the *hetaira* are flashing, like Athena's, and soft ('moist'), like Aphrodite's; the neck of Bathyllos

26 Nelson (2000) 8–9 in his discussion of Lacan; also Quinet (1995) 139–148.

27 *Rep.* 10.597a οὐκ ἂν τὸ ὄν ποιοί, ἀλλὰ τι τοιοῦτον οἶον τὸ ὄν, ὃν δὲ οὐ, 'He would not make the real thing but something similar to the real thing, but in fact not real'. On Plato's notions on art and imitation, see Hyman (2006) 59–72. On the limitations and dangers of replication of reality, see Bryson (1983); Elsner (2007) 1–26; Stoichita (2008).

28 It is an irony that despite the speaker's belief in the supremacy of visual art, his poetry/verbal skill proves more effective: by alluding to (and thus, in a sense, already displaying) the desirability of the beloved's body in its totality he achieves what the painter cannot. Cf. Dubel (2009) 319–320 on the ability of words to give the painting its synaesthetic power; also Stoichita (2008) 6 on the primacy of the text in the artistic process. For the ancients' notions of visual representation as opposed to representation by poetry, see Sharrock (1996) 103–106.

29 Cf. the almost forced emphasis on paintings in the Greco-Roman novels. These paintings, besides their interpretive/metatextual function (Bartsch [1989] 11–35; Morales [2004] 77–95), also draw attention to the artifice of the novel *per se*, see Maeder (1991) 1–33; Webb (2009) 310–352.

is finer than Adonis', while his chest and hands are like Hermes', his thighs like Polydeukes' and his stomach like Dionysus'. Such superlative language points to a truly rare countenance, divine rather than human in its perfection. Upon closer inspection, however, one realizes that the verbal portraits of the two objects of desire are quite clichéd. Martin West's edition, with its generous apparatus, makes it abundantly clear that the images, as projected by the speaker, are hardly the representation of particular individuals, but rather the summation of generic beauty, as depicted in Hellenistic and subsequent literature, especially the *Palatine Anthology*. The flashing and melting eyes, the rosy and white cheeks, the inviting mouth, the perfumed hair, the revealing purple dress, erotic Πειθῶ, and so on, all prove to be poetic *topoi*. In other words, the speaker in 16 and 17 employs signifiers of beauty not unique, as he believes the beauty of his beloved to be, but rather collected from the repository of stock similes and metaphors commonly used in Hellenistic, Greco-Roman and Latin poetry.

Does the poet really believe his beloved is as beautiful as the gods, or is this extravagant description simply lack of originality on his part? Norman Bryson in his discussion of Lacan points out that visuality is a cultural construct, an experience determined by 'a screen of signs consisting of all the multiple discourses on vision built into the social arena. ... Seeing is social, that is, an articulation of our retinal experiences with the codes of recognition that come to us from our social milieu.'<sup>30</sup> More simply, we see beauty the way we have been taught to see it, and we express it with the verbal or visual means which our social environment has handed us. Lacan speaks in broad psychoanalytical, almost sociological, terms, but since visuality is discussed here in a poetic context, it is advisable to narrow the focus and replace 'social milieu' with 'literary milieu', especially since the latter is an aspect of the former. Thus the portraits in 16 and 17 reveal the fantasies of a lover who perceives the beloved as an idealized object of desire and expresses this perception through the medium of a recognized literary discourse. The attribution, then, of divine beauty to the beloved does not necessarily reveal delusion on the part of the speaker, but rather his wish to stay within (or his inability to break from) the well-traveled path with its conventionalized imagery for the expression of erotic desire.<sup>31</sup>

30 Bryson (1987) 91–92.

31 Cf. the propensity of the Greco-Roman novel to depiction of human beauty in divine overtones, e.g. Chariton, *Khaireas and Kallirhoe*: 'Her beauty was not human, but divine ... (like that) of maiden Aphrodite ...' (1.1.2). 'When she walked in public, wonder possessed the entire crowd, just as when Artemis appears to hunters in remote places' (1.1.16). Xenophon, *An Ephesian Tale*: 'The beauty of his body was surpassing ... and all looked at the boy like

An examination of the relationships among the characters of the two poems (the poet/speaker, the artist and the beloved) and also between the poet and the reader suggests that there is interplay between different levels of fictionality and also a shifting fusion of roles. To start with the poet in relationship to the painter: in both 16 and 17, from early on the poet consciously blurs the territories of verbal and visual representation through the repetition of the term γράφω, which connotes both pictorial and authorial activity.<sup>32</sup> The poet acts as if perceiving the artist as an extension of himself, an alter ego of his poetic persona. In fact the speaker seems to produce his instructions with the intent of facilitating the artistic process, by which the drawing of the human figure begins at the head and works its way down.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the fact that the poet is here a lover enhances his similarity to a painter, for, to recall Plutarch, he constructs and carries the image of the beloved in his heart.<sup>34</sup> The affinities of

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a god. And there were already some who, when they saw him, prostrated and prayed ...' (1.1.1–3). 'Her body was a flower of beauty ... Often the Ephesians prostrated before her, as if before Artemis ... some saying she is the goddess herself' (1.2.5–7). Heliodorus, *An Ethiopian Story*: 'A girl was sitting on a rock, her beauty incredible, giving the impression she was a goddess' (1.2.1). The poet of 17 may even have been inspired by Anacreon himself, who, it is said, claimed that he did not write hymns to the gods because his gods were the boys (ἅτι οὗτοι [sc. παῖδες] ἡμῶν θεοὶ εἰσιν, schol. Pi. *Isthm.* 2.1b. III 213 Drachmann).

32 γράφω, -ή as painting: e.g., E. *Hec.* 807; Pl. *Phd.* 11c–b; Pl. *Ti.* 19b; Hdt. 3.24, 4.36; as writing: e.g., Pl. *Phdr.* 274b, 276c; Hdt. 1.125; Pi. *o.* 10.3; etc. In Longus' prologue to *Daphnis and Chloe*, the two meanings appear within the same sentence: πολλὰ ἄλλα καὶ πάντα ἐρωτικά ἰδόντα με καὶ θαυμάσαντα πόθος ἔσχεν ἀντιγράψαι τῇ γραφῇ, 'Having seen and admired many other things, all of them related to love, I was seized by desire to write in response to the picture'. The similarities between written word and painting were noticed by Plato, although with an unsympathetic eye: δεινὸν γὰρ που τοῦτ' ἔχει γραφή, καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὅμοιον ζωγραφίᾳ. καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἐκείνης ἔκγονα ἔσθηκε μὲν ὡς ζῶντα, ἐὰν δ' ἀνέρη τι, σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγᾷ. ταῦτόν δέ καὶ οἱ λόγοι, 'For writing has this strange feature, and it is truly similar to painting: for its offspring stand there as if alive, but if you ask them something, they are solemnly silent altogether. The same applies to [written] words' (*Phdr.* 275d).

33 See Vermeer's 'The Artist's Studio' (1665), in which the painter is depicted as starting the drawing of his female model from the head, and specifically her hair and flower crown. In manuals on how to draw the human figure, the reader is invariably advised to proceed from top to bottom.

34 ἡ γὰρ ὄψις ἔοικε τὰς μὲν ἄλλας φαντασίας ἐφ' ὑγροῖς ζωγραφεῖν, ταχὺ μαραινομένης καὶ ἀπολειπούσας τὴν διανοίαν· αἱ δὲ τῶν ἐρωμένων εἰκόνες ὑπ' αὐτῆς οἶον ἐν ἐγκαύμασι γραφόμεναι διὰ πυρὸς εἶδωλα ταῖς μνήμαις ἐναπολείπουσι κινούμενα καὶ ζῶντα καὶ φθειρόμενα, 'For, it seems, vision paints other representations on wet surfaces, which fade swiftly and become forgotten. But the pictures of lovers, painted by it [vision] with fire, as in encaustic paintings, leave in the memory images which move, are alive and speak' (Plut. *Amat.* 759c.). In

poetic and artistic action are underlined even further by the fact that in the two poems the portraits are works in progress. While a completed painting offers itself in wholeness at once, a verbal description of the same image is by necessity fragmented and sequential.<sup>35</sup> In the two poems, however, there is symmetry between verbal and visual representation in that the image is revealed in both cases only gradually. For the internal viewer (poet, painter) and external one (reader) the figures of the beloved materialize with complete synchronicity, as verses and brushwork advance simultaneously.

As for the poet in relationship to his beloved: in the last decades, there has been extensive discussion (with various degrees of rigidity) of the sociopolitical empowerment of the objectifying gaze, which could inform our approach to the two poems beneficially.<sup>36</sup> The reader however does not fail to recognize that this empowerment is not unconditional and that the lover, although in control of the visual pleasure, is “in fear” and also ‘suspended by hope’ (17.16–17) at the prospect of winning his beloved. At least in the case of Bathyllos, the poem suggests that he wields considerable leverage over his admirer, which arises perhaps from his civic/social status and certainly his attractive form. For ‘simple demographic reckoning tells us that eligible youths in that short-lived, but most desirable, window of efflorescence (from about fourteen to eighteen) were far fewer in numbers than the adult lovers who might pursue them.’<sup>37</sup> Despite his intrusive gaze, the speaker’s dominance here is not unequivocal, as the beloved responds with a look resonant with ambiguity. In fact this lack of easy responsiveness, a staple in erotic poetry,<sup>38</sup> reinforces the notion that the objects of desire are depicted stereotypically, whether this depiction has roots in reality or not; they are fictions of fashionable erotic partners. The *hetaira* of 16, like the *puella* of Roman elegy, does not even have a name. ‘Bathyllos’, we

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Xenophon too, we find a similar sentiment: οὐκ οἶσθα ὅτι οὕτω σαφές ἔχω εἶδωλον αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ὡς εἰ πλαστικός ἢ ζωγραφικός ἦν, οὐδὲν ἂν ἦττον ἐκ τοῦ εἰδώλου ἢ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄραν ὅμοιον αὐτῷ ἀπειργασάμεν; ‘Don’t you know that I have such a clear picture of him [the beloved] in my heart that if I were a sculptor or a painter I could produce a likeness of him not less perfect from the picture than from looking directly at him?’ (Xen. *Symp.* 4.21). Cf. Shakespeare’s sonnet 24.1–2: ‘Mine eye hath played the painter and hath stelled / Thy beauty’s form in table of my heart.’

35 Cf. Sharrock (1996) 103–130.

36 For an overview of gender-sensitive studies of scopophilia and especially of the female as an erotic spectacle, see Salzman-Mitchell (2005) 6–21.

37 Hubbard (2003) 10–11.

38 Esp. in Anacreon’s poetry, the model for the *Anacreontea*, lack of fruition in erotic pursuits is a perennial motif, see Kantzios (2010) 577–589.

know, was a literary *eromenos* of Anacreon,<sup>39</sup> who lived at least five centuries before the poet of 17. *Our* Bathyllos, then, is the reincarnation of a beloved who sprang out of the verses of the great archaic poet and has now been recast with the idealizing markers *de rigueur* of the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman period. But Bathyllos as an *eromenos* requires an Anacreon as a lover. Thus in 17, the poet imagines himself as Anacreon imagining his *eromenos* being imagined—and portrayed—by a painter.

This painter's role is ambivalent: on the one hand he yields to the authority of the speaker and faithfully transforms his words into visual images. On the other, through the lifelikeness of his images he too becomes a figure of authority, creating poetry like the speaker. For in both portraits the lips of the beloved exude *πειθῶ* (persuasion, seduction) through *words* which the lover expects to hear (τάχα κηρὲ λαλήσεις, 16.34) or thinks he hears (ὁ κηρὸς αὐτός ... λαλῶν σιωπῆ, 17.25–26). Thus in the two poems poetry turns into image, and conversely image into poetry. Words paint pictures, paintings speak.<sup>40</sup>

As for us the readers, are we not in complicity with the speaker, when, listening to his words, we generate a mental image, a *φαντασία* of the beloved that fits *our* sensibilities, conforms to *our* aesthetic predilections and activates *our* longings? In a sense we are like the painter, following orders, and we too are called upon to transform language into images, although on the canvas of our imagination. But we are called upon to do more than that: theoretical studies in the last decades inform us of the intricacies of the relationship between author and reader.<sup>41</sup> The latter is also a co-creator, the agent who through his experiences negotiates the text and ultimately controls its meaning. Thus even before we transfer the instructions of the poet into the visual sector of our brain we insert into them the values of the 'interpretive community' to which we belong and adapt them sufficiently to make them our own. There should be

39 *A.Pl.* 306, 307; *A.P.* 7.30, 31; *Anacr. PMG* 402, 471, 503.

40 Cf. *Plut. De gloria Ath.* 346: τὴν μὲν ζωγραφίαν ποίησιν σιωπῶσαν προσαγορεύει (sc. Σιμωνίδης), τὴν δὲ ποίησιν ζωγραφίαν λαλοῦσαν 'Simonides calls painting silent poetry, and poetry, painting that speaks'. See also Olson (2008) 5 on the ability of pictures to impose meaning immediately, without analyzing or diluting it.

41 See especially the reader-response approach, as developed by theorists such as S. Fish, W. Iser, N. Holland and H. Jauss, according to whom reading a text can be seen in many ways as analogous to performing a musical composition. The meaning of the text is determined not by the author but the reader, who is the final arbiter through a negotiable relationship with the written word. Cf. Elsner (2007) 122: 'The theme of Pygmalion as a viewer is itself a metaphor for the reader as creator of his own narrative, his own reality out of the text.'

no doubt that there are as many distinct mental portraits of the two objects of desire as there are readers of the poems. The reader is both painter and poet along with the characters in the poem.

*Anacreontea* 16 and 17 differ from the ekphrastic epigrams and even more from the Greek novels (both of which are loaded with metatextual or authorial concerns)<sup>42</sup> because their narrative framing is minimal and the images themselves bare of editorial commentary. But this editorial absence should not be taken necessarily as a lack of self-awareness on the part of the poet, for he navigates competently not only through the various levels of imagined realities but also through the normative codes of looking at art. Thus the emerging portraits in their fictionalized settings are complex. They function, on the one hand, as a remedy for absence and as a fulfillment of the desire for erotic reciprocity; and, on the other, as agents of visual gratification or objectification through the verbalization of the beloved's beauty. In fact, the beloved's objectification is carried even further in another way: in poem 17, the speaker, with his suggested replacement of the portrait of Apollo with that of Bathyllos, moves viewing from the private realm of the lover's eye into the public sphere. This movement transforms the beloved into a sight for public consumption and cancels his privileged relationship with one particular lover. It is an irony that for the speaker this act of ultimate alienation is understood as a token of intimacy. In a sense, however, this objectification brings the circle to its completion: through the use of commonplace poetic language, the public domain has provided the poet with the materials for the creation of the Ideal Intimate. Now this Ideal Intimate, through the public display of his portrait, is returned to common view not as an object of private desire, but as a kind of a Universal Beloved, the embodiment of Everyman's fantasies.

In closing, *Anacreontea* 16 and 17 are part of a cultural milieu which cultivated a keen interest in the complexities of viewing mimetic art. The two verbal portraits, through their vividness and detailed instruction, strive for complete lifelikeness of the absent beloved, at least as the speaker imagines it, a lifelikeness which does not confine itself to form alone but reveals aspects of character as well. The speaker does succumb to the effects of naturalist illusion, in fact he even thinks that the depicted figures respond to him through reciprocal gaze; yet he manages to maintain an awareness of the true nature of the images as paintings. The images themselves become the occasion for fusion of roles and the nexus of interactions among the characters of the two poems and also between the poet and the reader. The instructions to the artist and the speaker's

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42 Goldhill (1994) 197–223; Elsner (2007) 67.

response to the images indicate that the poet is cognizant of certain important aspects of the relationships between word and sight, viewer and representation. In fact the poet brings forth these relationships in a spirit of sophisticated playfulness: in the end, poems 16 and 17 discuss mimesis while they themselves are a mimesis of the poetry of Anacreon.<sup>43</sup>

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43 Many thanks to the anonymous referees and the audience of the conference at Delphi for their helpful suggestions; also to Niki Kantzios for her editorial eye.

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