

THE VISIBILITY OF ‘QUEER’ DESIRE IN EUNAPIUS’ *LIVES OF THE PHILOSOPHERS*

Mark Masterson (Victoria University of Wellington)

In this talk, I consider the visibility of male homosexual desire that is excessive of age-discrepant and asymmetrical pederasty within a late fourth-century CE Greek text: Eunapius’ *Lives of the Philosophers*, section 5.2.3-7 (Civiletti/TLG); Wright 459 (pp. 368-370). I call this desire ‘queer’ and I do so because desire between men was not normative in the way pederastic desire was. I engage in the anachronism of saying the word queer to mark this desire as adversarial to normative modes of desire. Its use is an economical signal as to what is afoot and indeed marks an adversarial mode of reading on my part, a reading against some grains then and now.

My claim is that desire between adult men is to be found in this text from the late-Platonic milieu. Plausible reception of Eunapius’ work by an educated readership, which was certainly available, argues for this visibility and it is the foundation for my argument. For it is my assertion that the portion of Eunapius’ text I am discussing today is intertextual with Plato’s *Phaedrus* (255B-E).

In his text, Eunapius shows the philosopher Iamblichus (third to the fourth century) calling up two spirits (in the form of handsome boys) from two springs called, respectively, *erōs* and *anterōs*. Since this passage is obviously intertextual with the *Phaedrus*, interpreting it in light of its relation with Plato makes for interesting reading as the circuits of desire uncovered reveal that Iamblichus is both a subject and object of desire. Reading this episode from Eunapius with Plato suggests that what we are so often told about male/male sexual desire in antiquity (i.e., that only pederastic desire, normatively arranged, is visible—at least minus the brine of invective) is in need of nuance, for men in possession of the *paideia* (and this most emphatically includes ancient readers of this work by Eunapius) would perceive the presence of this desire because of the erudition that was their possession—and because of what I hope we can agree on, namely that such a desire, albeit difficult to see, can be reasonably thought of as existent then and known then.

Joan Copjec puts it well when she speaks of the role cognizance and acceptance of desire and sexual pleasure as facts can play in accounts we may wish to write: ‘desire [and I would add here the anticipation of sexual pleasure] is not an impurity that threatens the ‘objectivity’ of the detective [investigating, say, the late-ancient world], but the quasi-transcendental principle that guarantees it’ (1994) 178.

So with these starting places in place, as it were, i.e., the acceptance of an erudite readership and the existence of desire between men granted as a known option, even if it is not discussed much, what is the order of what is to come? First I will detail the relation between these texts of Eunapius and Plato. Then, second, I will address why my narrative is plausible and, briefly, why we should engage in such speculative activity.

But before proceeding, though, what is Eunapius’ *Lives of the Philosophers*? It is a lengthy work from the late-/neo-Platonic milieu of late antiquity. It was written around the end of the fourth century CE. It is what Patricia Cox Miller (2000) has felicitously called a ‘collective biography’. A collective biography (and the roughly contemporaneous anonymous *Historia Monachorum* provides another example of this notional genre) features a series of lives that work in tandem to present an overarching notion of what the proper contents of a life are. The subjects in Eunapius’ work are all

men except for one woman, Sosipatra (who has a lengthy section devoted to her exploits). As opposed to this somewhat covert content just mentioned—and which justifies looking at this work for material that addresses social norms (as I am doing here in the present talk)—the overt content of this work of Eunapius traces the, as it were, golden chain of philosophers starting from Plotinus and going through to Eunapius' teacher Chrysanthius.

Before proceeding to the story of Iamblichus and the boys from the springs, let's consider the opening of the work. Note that Eunapius, an adult male, is addressing here adult males as he speaks about his various heroes:

This much, then, I place on record, and I am aware that some things have perhaps escaped me, but other things have not. And in that, after expending much thought and pains so that the result might be a continuous and definite account of the lives of the most celebrated of philosophers and rhetoricians, I fell short of my ambition, I have had the same experience as those who are madly and feverishly in love. For they, when they behold their beloved and the adored beauty of her visible countenance, bow their heads, too weak to fix their gaze on that which they desire, and dazzled by its rays. But if they see her sandal or chain or earring, they take heart from these and pour their souls into the sight and melt at the vision since they can endure to see and love the symbols of beauty more easily than the beauty itself ... (Eunapius, *The Lives of the Philosophers* 2.2.1.1-5.1; 454-55 [Wright 348-50]; trans. Wright, adjusted¹).²

Admiration for the intellectual and philosophical hero is metaphorized as sexual regard and even a fetishizing one. This sets a tone and sexualizes the philosophic heroes at some level, if only metaphorically. But my thought on metaphorizations like this is that one has to have control over reception that one cannot have to keep a metaphor from ceasing to be metaphorical. Will not the vehicle that conveys the freight of straight-up admiration come to be freight itself as the metaphor reverses itself? Cannot that which has been sublimated become desublimated, at least at the point of a wayward reception that knows the ins and outs of disavowed desire?

For those who want to say that it is merely the borrowing of overheated heterosexual devotion to metaphorize male-to-male intellectual admiration and, further, that this notion would not put something else into circulation, they will have some explaining to do as we proceed into the homosocial wilds to come. Now we proceed to the first passage I want to consider in detail today.

In the course of his remarks on the philosopher Iamblichus, Eunapius tells the story of him and his disciples/intimates (*homilētai*/ὁμιληταί) visiting some hot springs near Gadara. Two of these springs are productive of things erotic as will be seen (and note too that the term for disciple/intimate is already something erotic: *homilia* (and the related verb *homileō* [and this verb with its sexual meaning is nearby in the *Lives of the Philosophers* at 4.2.5/Wright 360-61]) was one of the words for sexual union in classical Greek and it maintains this meaning up to and through late antiquity.³ As

¹ When I adjust a translation, there is no implied judgment of the translator; I make changes with an eye to the needs of my argument.

² Καὶ ταῦτά γε εἰς μνήμην ἐγὼ τίθεμαι, τοῦτο συννορῶν, ὅτι τὰ μὲν ἔλαθεν ἴσως ἡμᾶς, τὰ δὲ οὐκ ἔλαθεν. ἐκείνου δὲ καίπερ πολλὴν ποιούμενος φροντίδα καὶ σπουδὴν, τοῦ συνεχῆ καὶ περιγεγραμμένην εἰς ἀκριβείαν ἱστορίαν τινὰ λαβεῖν τοῦ φιλοσόφου καὶ ῥητορικοῦ βίου τῶν ἀρίστων ἀνδρῶν, εἴτα οὐ τυγχάνων τῆς ἐπιθυμίας, ταῦτόν τι τοῖς ἐρώσιν ἐμμανῶς καὶ περιφλέκτως ἔπαθον. καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι, τὴν μὲν ἐρωμένην αὐτὴν ὁρῶντες καὶ τὸ περίψυκτον ἐν τῷ φαινομένῳ κάλλος, κάτω νεύουσιν, ὃ ζητοῦσιν ἰδεῖν ἐξασθενοῦντες, καὶ περιλαμπόμενοι· ἐὰν δὲ πέδιλον αὐτῆς ἢ πλόκιον ἢ ἔλλοβιον ἴδωσιν, ἐκείνων καταθαρσοῦντες, τὴν ψυχὴν τε τῇ ὄψει προσαφιάσι καὶ κατατήκονται πρὸς τῷ θεάματι, τὰ σύμβολα τοῦ κάλλους μᾶλλον ἢ τὸ κάλλος ὁρᾶν ἀνεχόμενοι καὶ στέργοντες.

³ Ὅμιλέω is found with sexual meaning in classical sources (*LSJ* IV), as is the related noun ὁμιλία (*LSJ* I.2). Sexual meanings continue to be associated with these words later in the empire: ὁμιλέω (Lampe A4; *Apophth. Patr.*, Paphnutius 1 [PG 65 377C]; John Chrysostom, *Oppugn.* 2.10 [PG 47 346]; Athanasius, *Ar.* 3 [348B7; Müller 1952, 984]); ὁμιλία (Lampe A2a; John Chrysostom, *Oppugn.* 3.15 [PG 47 375]).

will be shown, the perceptible sexual dimensions of this word are rendered more possible when a reader has the *Phaedrus* in mind; and all this is in addition to the names for the two springs: *erōtes*. Here is this passage from Eunapius:

Two of the hot springs (κρηνῶν), smaller but prettier than the others — [Iamblichus] bade his disciples/intimates (ὄμιλητάς) ask the inhabitants of the place by what names these used to be called in prior times. When they had done his bidding, they said: ‘This is no explanation (πρόφασις)—but this spring is called Erōs, and the name of the one next to it is Anterōs.’ He at once touched the water with his hand—he happened to be sitting on the ledge of the spring where the overflow ran off—and uttering a brief summons he called forth (ἐξεκάλεσεν) a boy from the depths of the spring. He was white-skinned and of medium height, his locks were golden and his back and breast shone; and he exactly resembled one who was bathing or had just bathed. His comrades (ἐταίρων) were overwhelmed with amazement, but Iamblichus said, ‘Let us go to the next spring,’ and he rose and led the way, with a thoughtful air. Then he did the same things (τὰ αὐτὰ δράσας) there also, and called forth (ἐξεκάλεσεν) another Erōs like the first in all respects (τῷ προτέρῳ παραπλήσιον ἅπαντα), except that his hair was darker and fell loose in the sun. Both the boys embraced Iamblichus and clung closely to him as though he were their real father. He restored them to their proper places and went away after his bath (λουσάμενος), revered by his comrades (ἐταίρων). After this the crowd of his disciples/intimates (ἡ τῶν ὄμιλητῶν πληθὺς) sought no further evidence, but believed everything from the proofs that had been revealed to them, as though they were being dragged by an unbreakable rein (ὑπ’ ἀρρήκτου ῥυτῆρος). (Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 5.2.3-7 [Civiletti/TLG]; Wright 459 [pp. 368-70] [trans. Wright, adjusted]).⁴

There is clearly the atmosphere of a religious rite about this scene. Calling forth and doing things—these have connections to ritual language and the prevailing notion of miracle ... I mean these are supernatural beings and the summoning sage has, it would seem, supernatural powers ... while the religious angle is relevant and will appear in the final remarks (when this is written up for publication in hard-copy, as it were), in the present moment I will focus on the sexual component of the passage.

I have already mentioned Iamblichus’ *homilētai*/ὄμιληταί. Then there are, most obviously, *erōs* and *anterōs*. What should we want to make of them? Wright back in 1921 and Civiletti in 2007 have suggested that we read this passage with an anecdote from one of Themistius’ speeches (*Oration* 24 304d-305a-b [the *Protrepticus to the Inhabitants of Nicomedia*] year = probably 340s [Vanderspoel 1995]).⁵ While this text is relevant, the text I believe that should command our attention is Plato’s *Phaedrus* and in particular 255B-E. It is right to suppose both that Eunapius had this passage in mind and, and this is perhaps even more important, that it would have been in the minds of educated late-ancient readers of this text (and remember that this dialogue of Plato had a starring role in late-ancient education [Lamberton (2001) 444-45]). Here

⁴ <καί> τῶν θερμῶν κρηνῶν δύο, τὰς μικροτέρας μὲν, τῶν δὲ ἄλλων χαριεστέρας, ἐκέλευσεν ἐκπυθάνεσθαι τοὺς ὄμιλητάς παρὰ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ὅπως ἐκ παλαιοῦ προσωνομάζοντο. οἱ δὲ τὸ προσταχθέν ἐπιτελέσαντες, “ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔστι γε πρόφασις;” εἶπον, “ἀλλ’ αὕτη μὲν Ἔρως καλεῖται, τῇ παρακειμένη δὲ Ἀντέρως ὄνομα.” ὁ δὲ εὐθὺς ἐπιψάσας τοῦ ὕδατος (ἐτύγχανε δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς κρηπίδος κατὰ τὴν ὑπέρκλυσιν καθήμενος), καὶ βραχέα τινὰ προσειπῶν, ἐξεκάλεσεν ἀπὸ τῆς κρήνης κάτωθεν παιδίον. λευκὸν ἦν τὸ παιδίον καὶ μετρίως εὐμέγεθες, καὶ χρυσοειδεῖς αὐτῷ κόμαι τὰ μετάφρενα καὶ τὰ στέρνα περιέστιλβον, καὶ ὄλον ἐώκει λουομένῳ τε καὶ λελουμένῳ. καταπλαγέντων δὲ τῶν ἐταίρων, “ἐπὶ τὴν ἐχομένην” εἶπεν “κρήνην ἴωμεν,” καὶ ἤγειτο ἀπιῶν, καὶ σύννοσος ἦν. εἶτα κάκεῖ τὰ αὐτὰ δράσας, ἐξεκάλεσεν ἕτερον Ἔρωτα τῷ προτέρῳ παραπλήσιον ἅπαντα, πλὴν ὅσον αἱ κόμαι μελάντεραί τε καὶ ἠλιώσαι κατεκέχυντο. καὶ περιεπλέκετό γε ἀμφοτέρα αὐτῷ τὰ παιδία, καὶ καθάπερ γνησίῳ τινός πατρὸς ἐμφύοντα περιείχετο. ὁ δὲ ἐκεῖνά τε ταῖς οἰκείαις ἀπέδωκε λήξεσιν, καί, σεβαζομένων τῶν ἐταίρων, ἐξῆι λουσάμενος. οὐδὲν μετὰ τοῦτο ἐζήτησεν ἢ τῶν ὄμιλητῶν πληθὺς, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ τῶν φανέντων δειγμάτων, ὥσπερ ὑπ’ ἀρρήκτου ῥυτῆρος εἴλκοντο, καὶ πᾶσιν ἐπίστευον.

⁵ In Themistius’ anecdote, Aphrodite gives birth to Erōs but then he will not grow, even though he is fostered by the Graces and by Aphrodite herself. Aphrodite consults Themis who tells her that Erōs will thrive if he has a brother. And so, Aphrodite duly gives birth again and Anterōs comes into being and Love, well, grows.

is this passage (in it we see the devotion of the *erastēs* [sometimes called the *erōn* in the passage] in the process of winning the *erōmenos* over):

When he [the lover] has been admitted and is allowed conversation and intimacy (ὀμιλίαν), the good will of the lover (τοῦ ἐρώοντος), realized so near at hand, amazes the beloved (τὸν ἐρώμενον) who comes to feel that all his other friends and relatives provide no share of friendship (φιλίας) in comparison to his divinely possessed friend (τὸν ἔνθεον φίλον). When he continues doing this and draws near [him] in the gymnasium and in other intimacies (ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ὀμιλίαις) to the point of physical contact, at that moment the spring (πηγή) of that flowing stream (which Zeus, as the lover of Ganymede, called ‘desire’) is borne, copious, upon the lover (τὸν ἐραστήν). And part of it is absorbed within him, but when he is filled all the way up it flows away outside him. As a breath of wind or an echo, rebounding from a smooth hard surface, goes back to its place of origin, even so the stream of beauty turns back and re-enters the eyes of the handsome/fair one (τὸν καλόν). And so by the natural channel it reaches his soul and gives it fresh vigor, watering the roots of the wings and quickening them to growth, whereby the soul of the beloved, in its turn, is filled with *erōs* (ἔρωτος). So he loves, yet knows not what he loves; he does not understand, he cannot tell what has come upon him; like one that has caught a disease of the eye from another, he is not able offer an explanation (πρόφασις), he has not realized that he is seeing himself in the lover as though in a mirror (ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ἐν τῷ ἐρώοντι ἑαυτὸν ὀρών λέληθεν). And when the other is beside him, he shares his respite from anguish; when he is absent, he likewise shares his longing and being longed for, since he possesses that *anterōs* which is the image of *erōs* (εἶδωλον ἔρωτος ἀντέρωτα ἔχων), though he supposes it to be friendship (φιλίαν) rather than *erōs*, and calls it by that name. (Plato, *Phaedrus* 255B-E [trans. Hackworth in Hamilton and Huntington Cairns 1961, adjusted]).⁶

This is clearly an important passage to consider in relation to Eunapius’ narration of Iamblichus’ swimming adventures. Here is why:

- There the language of water and overflowing present in both;
- The word used for the disciples/intimates (ὀμιληταί) in Eunapius can be seen to mirror the word that is used of intercourse (ἐν ταῖς ... ὀμιλίαις) in the passage from Plato (and it used as such frequently in the Platonic dialogue⁷) and this word, as previously noted, is euphemistic for sexual intercourse from the classical period on and is used as such in the *Lives of the Philosophers*;
- there is the repetition of the word explanation (πρόφασις) with nearly identical valence: the disciples in Eunapius say they have no explanation but merely the names to report and the *erōmenos* in Plato, similarly, is not able to offer an explanation for why he feels the way he does. Indeed, he only has a name to offer and it’s an incorrect one at that; he thinks it is friendship but it is *erōs*, as Plato says. (This passage in the *Phaedrus* is more complex than it first appears to be and it has been often cited, incorrectly, in the secondary literature as a sort of proof

⁶ προσεμένου δὲ καὶ λόγον καὶ ὀμιλίαν δεξαμένου, ἐγγύθεν ἢ εὐνοια γιγνομένη τοῦ ἐρώοντος ἐκπλήττει τὸν ἐρώμενον διαισθανόμενον ὅτι οὐδ’ οἱ σύμπαντες ἄλλοι φίλοι τε καὶ οἰκεῖοι μοῖραν φιλίας οὐδεμίαν παρέχονται πρὸς τὸν ἔνθεον φίλον. ὅταν δὲ χρονίζῃ τοῦτο δρῶν καὶ πλησιάζῃ μετὰ τοῦ ἀπεισθαι ἐν ἐν γυμνασίοις καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ὀμιλίαις, τότε ἤδη ἢ τοῦ ρεύματος ἐκείνου πηγῆ, ὃν ἴμερον Ζεὺς Γανυμήδους ἐρώων ὠνόμασεν, πολλὴ φερομένη πρὸς τὸν ἐραστήν, ἢ μὲν εἰς αὐτὸν ἔδου, ἢ δ’ ἀπομειστομένου ἔξω ἀπορρεῖ καὶ οἷον πνεῦμα ἢ τις ἠχώ ἀπὸ λείων τε καὶ στερεῶν ἀλλομένη πάλιν ὅθεν ὠρμήθη φέρεται, οὕτω τὸ τοῦ κάλλους ρεῦμα πάλιν εἰς τὸν καλὸν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἰόν, ἢ πέφυκεν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἰέναι ἀφικόμενον, καὶ ἀναπτερώσαν τὰς διόδους τῶν πτερῶν, ἄρδει τε καὶ ὠρμησε πτεροφυεῖν τε καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐρωμένου αὐτῆς ψυχὴν ἔρωτος ἐνέπλησεν. ἐρᾶ μὲν οὖν, ὅτου δὲ ἀπορρεῖ καὶ οὐδ’ ὅτι πέπονθεν οἶδεν οὐδ’ ἔχει φράσαι, ἀλλ’ οἷον ἀπ’ ἄλλου ὀφθαλμίας ἀπολελαυκῶς πρόφασιν εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἔχει, ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ἐν τῷ ἐρώοντι ἑαυτὸν ὀρών λέληθεν. καὶ ὅταν μὲν ἐκείνου παρῆ, λήγει κατὰ ταῦτα ἐκείνῳ τῆς ὀδύνης; ὅταν δὲ ἀπῆ, κατὰ ταῦτα αὐτῷ ποθεῖται, εἶδωλον ἔρωτος ἀντέρωτα ἔχων· καλεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ οἶεται οὐκ ἔρωτα ἀλλὰ φιλίαν εἶναι.

⁷ 239E, 240A, 250A, and three times in 255B.

that Plato and Athenian discourse as a whole believe that what the *erōmenos* feels is different from what the *erastēs* feels.⁸);

- the rein (the ῥυτήρ) at the end of the Eunapius passage recalls conceptually the horses and the charioteer in the *Phaedrus* (254C: τὰς ἡνίαις);
- and if that were not enough, there is the 'scriptural status' of Plato in late antiquity⁹ that directs the scholar now to think of the relationship between this text and Plato in the matter of the coming to an interpretation. We should be assuming an audience who will have the capability of sensing parallels such as these.

So this scene from Eunapius with Iamblichus calling up the boys from the pool arguably has a sexual undercurrent that is underscored forcefully when we compare it to the *Phaedrus*. But to the point of this paper, what might we want to say is queer here? My assertion is that comparison of these two passages now (or in late antiquity) suggests the possibility for male/male sexual activity that exceeds the norms of pederasty.

In the first place, the boys *erōs* and *anterōs* are nearly identical. The *anterōs* is similar to the *erōs* ('like the first in all respects' [τῷ προτέρῳ παραπλήσιον ἅπαντα]), except his hair and its mode of presentation is different. The age-differential that is a feature of most accounts of male/male sexuality from antiquity is not present as the concepts of love and counterlove are embodied by beings that are practically identical. Indeed, there is at this moment subtle agreement with Socrates' assertion that the *erōmenos* is mistaken when he calls the *anterōs* *philia* and thereby the *erōmenos* is (also mistakenly) underscoring difference in defiance of the greater measure of similarity. Similarity produces a resistance to the conventions of pederasty when we read these two texts together.

Now one way to preserve asymmetry and to de-queer what's looking queer here is to think of Iamblichus as the older lover/*erastēs* perhaps. Indeed, it is interesting, to say the least, that he appears to have gotten in the water himself (λουσάμενος). And too there is the dynamic of Iamblichus being in an asymmetrical relationship with his disciples/intimates. But this re-instatement of asymmetry endures stress when we consider that his *homilētai* are also his comrades or *hetairoi*/ἑταῖροι (which might call to mind Homeric warriors, if we wish to think of an educated reception of the passage, and which is more symmetrical than asymmetrical in any case). Furthermore, the case of asymmetry endures considerably more stress when, just a little later in his text, Eunapius refers to Iamblichus as a spring himself, with a significant change of vocabulary as he switches from the *krēnē*/κρήνη of this passage to *pēgē*/πηγή. *Pēgē* is the word designates spring in the *Phaedrus*:

Now Alypius had many followers, but his teaching was limited to conversation, and no one ever published a book by him. On this account, they very eagerly made their way to Iamblichus, to fill themselves full and drink as though from a spring (πηγῆς) that bubbles over and does not stay within its limits. (Eunapius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 5.3.3 [Civiletti/TLG]; Wright 460 [pg. 372]; trans. Wright, adjusted).¹⁰

⁸ That this is the case for Athenian discourse may or may not be true, of course. This is not the place to adjudicate this question and my point is that this passage from Plato actually argues against such a conclusion for Athens (and certainly for Plato).

⁹ Miller (2000) 212; Shaw (1995) 8; cf. Cameron (1998) 680-82.

¹⁰ ζηλωτὰς μὲν οὖν εἶχεν πολλοὺς ὁ Ἀλύπιος, ἀλλ' ἡ παιδείουσις ἦν μέχρι συνουσίας μόνης, βιβλίον δὲ προέφευρον οὐδὲ εἶς· ὥστε μάλα ἀσμένως πρὸς τὸν Ἰάμβλιχον ἀπέτρεχον, ὡς ἐκ πηγῆς ὑπερβλυσούσης, οὐ μενούσης καθ' ἑαυτήν, ἐμφορησόμενοι καὶ πιούμενοι.

Iamblichus then is also to be seen as ‘the spring of that flowing stream’ (ἡ τοῦ ῥεύματος ἐκείνου πηγὴ) that Zeus calls ‘desire’ that is borne upon the lover. He bubbles over and is productive of desire (as desirable as one of the *erōtes* from the spring or the *erōmenos* in the *Phaedrus*). Iamblichus perhaps embodies on this reading a desire that does not brook limits. This change of vocabulary destabilizes any generational polarities that we may want to see as operative. With positions interchangeable, the hierarchical positioning which is generally sought in description of ancient male/male sexual relations is not definitively present if all the evidence is considered—and this is queer.

Now that I have suggested that such a desire is visible at the point of educated reception of Eunapius’ text, I think it is desirable (and the coming remarks function as a conclusion) to reiterate why such a thing would have been visible then.

In the first place, we do well to posit the existence of sophisticated readers of these texts who would have been alive to and found meaningful the obvious intertextual relations between these texts. I suggest that the considerable work done on the study of intertextuality of literature as making meaning at the point of later texts’ receptions should be relevant here.¹¹ If the Flavian epicists rely on the their publics knowing Homer and Virgil and making meaning on the basis of this knowledge, then surely it is hardly a bridge too far to imagine Eunapius and Plato in a similar relation. It would be absurd to deny it actually.

In the second and final place, we should accept the existence of desire, as J. Copjec (1994) 178 says, as a sort of transcendental resource or datum that can help to anchor analysis. Though same-sex male attraction among males excessive of pederasty is a rare bird, it is none the less not unknown and is discussed in late antiquity. I think here of two laws: *CTh* 9.7.3 and 9.7.6 and of Firmicus Maternus’ astrological treatise, the *Mathesis*, to take some examples. But that said, we hardly need such evidence to be allowed to imagine its existence—we know of the map of the human body and its possibilities—this should be enough to support the notion that a portion of Eunapius’ audience would see things as I have seen them here. I will leave it there.

REFERENCES

- Cameron, A. (1998). ‘Education and Literary Culture.’ *Cambridge Ancient History 13: The Later Empire A. D. 337-425*. Averil Cameron and Peter Garnsey (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press. 665-707.
- Civiletti, M. (trans. and comm.) (2007). *Eunapius: Vitae Sophistarum*. Milan: Bompiani.
- Conte, G. (1986). *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press.
- Copjec, J. (1994). *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists*. Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press.
- Edmunds, L. (2001). *Intertextuality and the Reading of Roman Poetry*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.
- Fowler, D. (2000). *Roman Constructions: Readings in Postmodern Latin*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

¹¹ I have found the following helpful in coming to an understanding of intertextuality: Conte (1986), Edmunds (2001), Fowler (2000) 115-137, and Hinds (1998). For compelling applications of intertextuality to late-ancient texts see the following: Kelly (2008), Mastrangelo (2008), or MacCormack (1998).

- Hinds, S. (1998). *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Kelly, G. (2008). *Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Lamberton, R. (2001). 'The Schools of Platonic Philosophy of the Roman Empire: The Evidence of the Biographies', in Y.L. Too (ed.), *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill. 433-58.
- MacCormack, S. (1998). *Shadows of Poetry: Vergil in the Mind of Augustine*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- Mastrangelo, M. (2008). *The Roman Self in Late Antiquity: Prudentius and the Poetics of the Soul*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.
- Miller, P. (2000). 'Strategies of Representation in Collective Biography: Constructing the Subject as Holy', in Tomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau (eds.), *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. 209-54.
- Müller, G. (1952). *Lexicon Athanasianum*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co.
- Shaw, G. (1995). *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press.
- Vanderspoel, J. (1995). *Themistius and the Imperial Court: Oratory, Civic Duty and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press.
- Wright, W. (2005 [1921]). *Philostratus and Eunapius*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press.