

LESBIANTIQUITY

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← PLATO
ARISTOKLES →
GAIA'S GIRLS

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Plato translation, introduction, and notes © Georgina Barker 2024

Greek text from: Kenneth Dover, ed., *Plato: Symposium*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980)

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THE TRANSLATOR

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I am the inventor of the Root & Branch translation method, which I developed to highlight the queerness of selected classical texts, drawing on my experience as a translator from Russian. I am the author of *SPQR in the USSR: Elena Shvarts's Classical Antiquity*, and the compiler and director of the verbatim play *Princess Dashkova, the Woman Who Shook the World*. I am currently researching receptions of Greek and Roman 'lesbianism' by Russian lesbians and bisexual women. I live in Scotland with my wife and my parrot.



ΠΛΑΤΩΝ / 'ΑΡΙΣΤΟΚΛΗΣ

Plato (probably named Aristokles; 'Platōn', meaning 'broad', was his nickname) was born an Athenian aristocrat in 428/7 BC, near the start of Athens' 27-year war against Sparta (the Peloponnesian War), in which he probably fought as a young man. At the age of twenty, having tried wrestling, painting, and poetry, Plato became a follower of the philosopher Sokrates, who was some forty years older than him; Sokrates' execution in 399 BC profoundly affected him. He began writing around this time, and made Sokrates his main character and mouthpiece in almost all his works. On his return from a three-year trip around the ancient world (390–388 BC) – encompassing Egypt, Cyrene, Lower Italy, Syracuse, and a brief stint as a slave in Aegina – Plato founded the Academy, which taught 'philosophy' (then, a broad range of topics) free of charge. Aristotle was one of the teachers at the Academy. Plato made his sole direct foray into politics in the 360s BC, when he was invited to Syracuse to help reform its tyranny through philosophy; his attempts failed. Plato died aged eighty in 348/7 BC. He must be unique in all Graeco-Roman antiquity in that 'everything that was listed in antiquity as having been written by Plato has been preserved' – plus a few more works! Christianity, and thence European identity, has been shaped by Plato more than any other thinker.¹

Put simply, Plato's *Symposium*, or *Drinking Party*, is all about sexual love (eros), and about all conceivable (by fifth-century Athenian thinkers) forms of sexual love. The narrative has a convoluted chronology. The titular symposium was held by the playwright Agathon the day after a big party celebrating his victory in a tragedy competition – a real event, which occurred in 416 BC (Plato was then a twelve-year-old boy). The frame narrative takes place years after this, around 400 BC: Apollodoros narrates the symposium's events

¹ All information on Plato's biography in this paragraph is from Szlezák (2006).

and speeches, having heard them from Aristodemos, who was actually at the party. Finally, Plato wrote the story [down] around 380 BC, when he was about fifty.² Since so many of those present at the symposium had drunk too much the previous day, they decide to drink less and talk more, each man round the table giving in turn a speech in praise of the god Eros.

Seven speeches are made. The speech by the then middle-aged³ comic playwright Aristophanes comes fourth, right in the middle, having been delayed by a bout of hiccups. This rather ridiculous introduction fits the comic poet and his brand of bodily humour, but his speech is more serious than might be expected of Aristophanes, though with some comic, even 'burlesque',⁴ elements. Aristophanes spins a queer and memorable myth explaining the human tendency to 'couple', which features almost the only representation of women who love women that survives from Ancient Greece's Classical period⁵ (5th–4th centuries BC). This sounds very odd coming out of the mouth of Aristophanes, who makes no reference whatsoever to female homosexuality in his (extant) plays – especially as his depiction of the women lacks any Aristophanic crudity, satire, or condemnation.⁶

Aristophanes' presence at the symposium and prominence in the dialogue is just as surprising: he had publicly attacked Sokrates in his 423 BC play *Clouds*, and Plato blamed his and others' accusations of Sokrates corrupting Athenian youth for bringing about Sokrates' trial two dozen years later.⁷ Unsurprisingly, Plato has Sokrates' speech surpass all the others, and Sokrates counters Aristophanes'

² Rowe (1998) pp. 10–11.

³ Boehringer (2021) p. 77.

⁴ Boehringer (2021) p. 80.

⁵ The other two are in Plato's *Laws*: Boehringer (2021) p. 86.

⁶ Boehringer (2021 p. 102) thinks Plato is staging philosophy topping comedy here – broaching a subject that even Aristophanes would not.

⁷ Boehringer (2021) p. 77.

speech in particular (when quoting the female philosopher Diotima in the main section of his speech), which retroactively casts Aristophanes as a foil for Sokrates'/Diotima's brilliance.⁸ Aristophanes' speech is 'an imaginative but otherwise useless aetiology of sexual intercourse' which 'unwittingly demonstrates the unsatisfactory nature of sex as a goal'⁹ – the point which Sokrates' own speech hammers home.

Yet despite its logical and philosophical fallibility, the myth about the children of the Sun/Helios, the children of the Earth/Gaia, and the children of the Moon/Selene, has gained more fame than any other part of the *Symposium*. Over five centuries later, the myth's *hetairistria* – 'womanising women' – take centre stage in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 5.¹⁰ Some seventeen centuries after that, the myth was implicated in the early development of sexology, being drawn upon by both Sigmund Freud and Karl Heinrich Ulrichs.¹¹ And in 2001 the entire myth was animated and set to music as the song 'The Origin of Love' in the cult gay film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.¹²

⁸ Boehringer (2021) pp. 82–6.

⁹ Rowe (1998) p. 9.

¹⁰ Lucian alludes to Plato on multiple levels – see Blondell & Boehringer (2014) and LESBIANTIQUITY 25.

¹¹ Out of the three sexes posited by 'Aristophanes', Freud focused on the androgynous, and therefore later heterosexual, being: Boehringer (2021) p. 77. Ulrichs focused on the male, and therefore later male homosexual, being: Matzner (2015) pp. 100–1.

¹² Direction and vocals by John Cameron Mitchell; lyrics and music by Stephen Trask; animation by Emily Hubley.

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ROOT & BRANCH READING GUIDE

Our translations branch out to explore
a variety of options for the text:
any variants in the original <Greek
Latin> texts
and the various possible meanings in English.

Our translations are rooted in the words
of the original text, replicating when possible
word order, root meanings of words, and
grammatical gender $\left(\begin{matrix} [n] \\ [f] \\ [m] \end{matrix} \right)$ of words about people.

You, the reader, will choose which branches you prefer to follow.

ARISTOPHANES' SPEECH: SYMPOSIUM 189C–193D

for, to me, humans seem altogether not to sense the might of <love
Eros>, since people sensing it would have built <it
him> the greatest temples and altars, and would make the greatest sacrifices, not like how now none of this is created for <it
him>, that ought most of all to be created. for <it
he> is the <human-fondest
kindest> of gods, [189d] being an ally of humans and healer of those things, the healing of which would be the greatest <good-fortune
happiness> to humankind. I myself will try introduce you [pl] to his might, you then will be the teachers of others. you need first to learn human nature and its <sufferings
experiences>. for once of old our nature was not the same as now, but different.



έμοι γάρ δοκοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι παντάπασι τὴν τοῦ ἔρωτος δύναμιν οὐκ ἠσθῆσθαι, ἐπεὶ αἰσθανόμενοί γε μέγιστ' ἂν αὐτοῦ ἱερὰ κατασκευάσαι καὶ βωμούς, καὶ θυσίας ἂν ποιεῖν μεγίστας, οὐχ ὥσπερ νῦν τούτων οὐδὲν γίγνεται περὶ αὐτόν, δέον πάντων μάλιστα γίγνεσθαι. ἔστι γὰρ θεῶν φιланθρωπότατος, [189δ] ἐπίκουρός τε ὦν τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἰατρὸς τούτων ὦν ἰαθέντων μέγιστη εὐδαιμονία ἂν τῷ ἀνθρωπεῖῳ γένει εἴη. ἐγὼ οὖν πειράσομαι ὑμῖν εἰσηγήσασθαι τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ, ὑμεῖς δὲ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι ἔσεσθε. δεῖ δὲ πρῶτον ὑμᾶς μαθεῖν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην φύσιν καὶ τὰ παθήματα αὐτῆς. ἡ γὰρ πάλαι ἡμῶν φύσις οὐχ αὐτὴ ἦν ἥπερ νῦν, ἀλλ' ἄλλοία.

NOTES

189c *fondest*: throughout I distinguish between *erōs*, ‘love’ / ‘Eros’ (always sexual), and *filotēs*, ‘fondness’ (sometimes sexual, always tinged with friendship and esteem).

189c *people*: rendering the subjectless impersonal third-person plural, here and elsewhere.

189d *ally*: *epikouros*, literally ‘alongside-warrior’, is distinct from the more straightforward word for ‘ally’, *summachos*, literally ‘co-fighter’. Apparently, *epikouros* is not derived from *kouros*, ‘youth [m]’. Lavelle (1997) hypothesises that the word is Carian in origin, borrowed by the Greeks in the Bronze Age, denoting ‘a special type of fighter’ – ‘semi-professional, perhaps’ – ‘a vigorous ally who came from afar, fought steadfastly, and did so with both skill and élan’, which came to mean ‘mercenary’ in Plato’s time, ‘when the Peloponnesian War had made mercenaries commonplace in the Greek world’. It is intriguing that Plato uses such a loaded word about Eros.

189d *I myself*: here and elsewhere, I use underlining to mark emphatic nominative pronouns in the Greek, and ‘-self’ for the emphatic particle *oun* when it follows a pronoun.

for, firstly, three were the kinds of humans, not, as now, two, male and female, [189e] but also there was a third alongside, being joint of both of them, whose name still remains, though it itself has vanished: for <manwoman
androgynē> was one then both in <appearance
form> and in name joining from both others that of male and female, though now nothing but an insulting name is left. moreover, the whole of each human's shape was round, back and sides formed a circle, it had four <arms
hands>, and the legs equal to the <arms
hands>, and faces [190a] – two, upon a circular neck, totally alike; then the head – for both the faces (on opposite sides) there was one, and four ears, and two <privates
private parts>, and the rest all just as you would expect from this.



πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τρία ἦν τὰ γένη τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, οὐχ ὥσπερ νῦν δύο, ἄρρεν καὶ θῆλυ, [189ε] ἀλλὰ καὶ τρίτον προσῆν κοινὸν ὃν ἀμφοτέρων τούτων, οὗ νῦν ὄνομα λοιπόν, αὐτὸ δὲ ἠφάνισται· ἀνδρόγυνον γὰρ ἔν τότε μὲν ἦν καὶ εἶδος καὶ ὄνομα ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων κοινὸν τοῦ τε ἄρρενος καὶ θήλεος, νῦν δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλλ' ἢ ἐν ὀνείδει ὄνομα κείμενον. ἔπειτα ὅλον ἦν ἐκάστου τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ εἶδος στρογγύλον, νῶτον καὶ πλευρὰς κύκλῳ ἔχον, χεῖρας δὲ τέτταρας εἶχε, καὶ σκέλη τὰ ἴσα ταῖς χερσίν, καὶ πρόσωπα [190a] δύο ἐπ' αὐχένι κυκλοτερεῖ, ὅμοια πάντα, κεφαλὴν δ' ἐπ' ἀμφοτέροις τοῖς προσώποις ἐναντίοις κείμενοις μίαν, καὶ ὦτα τέτταρα, καὶ αἰδοῖα δύο, καὶ τᾶλλα πάντα ὡς ἀπὸ τούτων ἂν τις εἰκάσειεν.

189e–190a Rowe (1998 p. 154) notes that there is ‘an Eros with two genders and two or more of other things in Orphism – an Eros–Phanes “described in the fragments as simultaneously male and female, with two pairs of eyes allowing him to see on all sides, two sets of genitals placed above his buttocks, and many heads” (Vernant 1989: 468)’, which corresponds quite closely to Aristophanes’ manwoman/androgynē.

189e *an insulting name*: the word *androgynos*, ‘manwoman’ / ‘androgynē’, was used as an insult in Plato’s time – for example, by the comic poet Eupolis (fragment 3) – against ‘effeminate or cowardly’ men (Dover 1980 p. 114).

190a *privates / private parts*: the Greek for ‘genitals’, *aidoia*, literally means ‘things-deserving-modesty/shame/reverence’ – just like the Latin *pudenda*, and very like the colloquial English terms I’ve chosen for my translation.

it moved both upright, like now, in either direction it should want,
 and when it quickly charged off at a run – like how tumblers
 <rolling round with legs out straight
 revolving their legs round upright> tumble in a circle – on eight
 then existing limbs (relying
 leaning) they were quickly borne in a circle.
 pushing
 there were these three [190b] kinds, and they were like this,
 through the male being <the sun's
 Helios's> original offspring, and the
 female – <the earth's
 Gaia's>, and the mix of both – <the moon's
 Selene's>,
 since <the moon
 Selene> too mixes both: <round
 roly-poly> indeed were both
 they and their movement through being like their <progenitors
 parents>.
 they really were fearsome in strength and in brawn, and they had
 big (thoughts
 minds
 spirits), they tried their hand even against the gods, and



ἐπορεύετο δὲ καὶ ὀρθὸν ὥσπερ νῦν, ὅποτέρωσε βουλευθείη, καὶ
 ὁπότε ταχὺ ὀρμήσειεν θεῖν, ὥσπερ οἱ κυβιστῶντες καὶ εἰς ὀρθὸν
 τὰ σκέλη περιφερόμενοι κυβιστῶσι κύκλῳ, ὅκτῳ τότε οὖσι τοῖς
 μέλεσιν ἀπεριδόμενοι ταχὺ ἐφέροντο κύκλῳ. ἦν δὲ διὰ ταῦτα τρία
 [190β] τὰ γένη καὶ τοιαῦτα, ὅτι τὸ μὲν ἄρρεν ἦν τοῦ ἡλίου τὴν ἀρχὴν
 ἔκγονον, τὸ δὲ θῆλυ τῆς γῆς, τὸ δὲ ἀμφοτέρων μετέχον τῆς
 σελήνης, ὅτι καὶ ἡ σελήνη ἀμφοτέρων μετέχει· περιφερῇ δὲ δὴ ἦν
 καὶ αὐτὰ καὶ ἡ πορεία αὐτῶν διὰ τὸ τοῖς γονεῦσιν ὅμοια εἶναι. ἦν
 οὖν τὴν ἰσχὺν δεινὰ καὶ τὴν ῥώμην, καὶ τὰ φρονήματα μεγάλα εἶχον,
 ἐπεχείρησαν δὲ τοῖς θεοῖς, καὶ

190a καὶ ὀρθὸν ὥσπερ νῦν, ὁποτέρωσε βουληθείη, καὶ ὁπότε...: I follow Rowe's punctuation here (instead of βουληθείη· καὶ), allowing for the 'both...and' sentence structure.

190a *how tumblers rolling round with legs out straight / revolving their legs round upright tumble in a circle*: i.e. cartwheeling.

190a *they*: after his comparison of the manwoman/androgynē (singular) to tumblers, Plato forgets the grammar of the first part of the sentence, and goes on to write about it in the plural.

190b *since the moon/Selene too mixes both*: Rowe (1998 p. 154) suspects that Aristophanes has made this up, since the moon – the goddess Selene – is gendered female in Greek language and literature. But Lamb (1925 p. 137) notes that the moon's double gender is mentioned in *Orphic Hymn* 9, and Dover (1980 p. 115) notes that Selene's bisexuality is also mentioned by the mythographer Philochoros (fragment 184).

190b *roly-poly*: this translation misses the tone of the Greek *periferē*, but follows its etymological logic – rolling = round.

190b *like their progenitors/parents*: i.e. the sun, earth, and moon are all spherical and follow circular orbits, therefore so do their children.

190b *really*: here and elsewhere, I use 'really' for the emphatic particle *oun* when it works in English.

what Homer tells about Ephialtes and Otos is told about these, that they tried their hand at making an ascent to $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} \text{the sky} \\ \text{heaven} \\ \text{Ouranos} \end{smallmatrix}\right)$, [190c] to set upon the gods. Zeus himself and the other gods debated in council what they must do with them, and were at $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{a loss} \\ \text{an impasse} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$: for neither did they see how they could exterminate them like the giants, thunderbolting, their kind was vanished (for the $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{honours} \\ \text{offerings} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ and the $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{temples} \\ \text{sacrifices} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ to them from the humans would vanish) nor how they could allow them to go on $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{rampaging} \\ \text{defiling} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$. hardly indeed can Zeus, having $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{contemplated} \\ \text{thought it over} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ in his mind, tell [them] that “I seem to me,” he declared, “to have a $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{machination} \\ \text{contrivance} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$, so humans might both $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{be} \\ \text{exist} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ and stop the unruliness, having become $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{powerless} \\ \text{weaker} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$. [190d] for, now,” he declared, “I’ll cut them in



ὁ λέγει Ὅμηρος περὶ Ἐφιάλτου τε καὶ Ὠτου, περὶ ἐκείνων λέγεται, τὸ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνάβασιν ἐπιχειρεῖν [190ξ] ποιεῖν, ὡς ἐπιθησομένων τοῖς θεοῖς. ὁ οὖν Ζεὺς καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι θεοὶ ἐβουλεύοντο ὅτι χρὴ αὐτοὺς ποιῆσαι, καὶ ἠπόρουν· οὔτε γὰρ ὅπως ἀποκτείναιεν εἶχον καὶ ὥσπερ τοὺς γίγαντας κεραυνώσαντες τὸ γένος ἀφανίσαιεν (αἱ τιμαὶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ ἱερὰ τὰ παρὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἠφανίζετο) οὔτε ὅπως ἐῷεν ἀσελγαίνειν. μόγις δὴ ὁ Ζεὺς ἐννοήσας λέγει ὅτι “δοκῶ μοι,” ἔφη, “ἔχειν μηχανήν, ὡς ἂν εἶέν τε ἄνθρωποι καὶ παύσαιντο τῆς ἀκολασίας ἀσθενέστεροι [190δ] γενόμενοι. νῦν μὲν γὰρ αὐτούς,” ἔφη, “διατεμῶ

190b *Ephialtes and Otos*: ‘Otos and Ephialtes, “tallest men on earth”, who had once imprisoned Ares for a year (*Iliad* 5.385ff.), planned to overthrow the gods by piling Mt Ossa on Olympus and Pelion on Ossa (*Odyssey* 11.307–20), but Zeus destroyed them’ (Dover 1980 p. 115).

190c *exterminate them like the giants, thunderbolting, their kind was vanished*: i.e. Zeus, backed by the other gods, thunderbolted the giants into extinction. The Greek word order flows on, adding more meanings without disrupting what comes before. I have tried to replicate this effect in my translation, but felt it necessary to add commas for comprehensibility.

190c *rampaging/defiling*: the Greek *aselgainō*, ‘behave outrageously’, has connotations of rape, which I preserve in my translation.

<twain
two>, each one, and not only will they be <powerlesser
weaker>, but
 also usefuller to us through the number of them becoming more: and
 they'll plod upright upon two legs. if still they seem to <rampage
defile>
 and don't wish to keep quiet – over again," he declared, "I'll cut in
 <twain
two>, so moving upon one leg they're hopping." having said
 this he cut the humans in <twain
two>, like people cutting sorbs [190e]
 and planning to pickle them, or like people [cutting] eggs with
 hairs: whomever he cut, he commanded Apollo to twist the face
 around and the half of the neck towards the <cut
stump> – so viewing
 its cutting the human would be <orderlier
better behaved> – and the rest
 he commanded him to heal. who then twisted the face around, and
 drawing together from all sides the skin upon



δίχα ἕκαστον, καὶ ἅμα μὲν ἀσθενέστεροι ἔσσονται, ἅμα δὲ
 χρησιμώτεροι ἡμῖν διὰ τὸ πλείους τὸν ἀριθμὸν γεγονέναι· καὶ
 βαδιοῦνται ὀρθοὶ ἐπὶ δυοῖν σκελοῖν. ἐὰν δ' ἔτι δοκῶσιν ἀσελγαίνειν
 καὶ μὴ ῥέλωσιν ἡσυχίαν ἄγειν, πάλιν αὖ," ἔφη, "τεμῶ δίχα, ὥστ' ἐφ'
 ἑνὸς πορεύσονται σκέλους ἀσκωλιάζοντες." ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἔτεμνε
 τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δίχα, ὥσπερ οἱ τὰ ὄα τέμνοντες [190ε] καὶ
 μέλλοντες ταριχεύειν, ἢ ὥσπερ οἱ τὰ ὦα ταῖς θριξίν· ὄντινα δὲ τέμοι,
 τὸν Ἀπόλλω ἐκέλευεν τό τε πρόσωπον μεταστρέφειν καὶ τὸ τοῦ
 αὐχένος ἥμισυ πρὸς τὴν τομήν, ἵνα θεώμενος τὴν αὐτοῦ τμήσιν
 κοσμιώτερος εἴη ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ τὰλλα ἰᾶσθαι ἐκέλευεν. ὁ δὲ τό
 τε πρόσωπον μετέστρεφε, καὶ συνέλκων πανταχόθεν τὸ δέρμα ἐπὶ

190d *plod*: the Greek *badiountai* specifically means walking/going slowly.

190d *sorbs*: the small apple-/pear-like fruit of the Service Tree (*Sorbus domestica*), native to mainland Eurasia and northwest Africa, which are only edible when pickled or almost rotten. Think crabapple?

190e *cutting eggs with hairs*: Dover (1980 p. 116) explains: 'halving a (sc. hard-boiled and shelled) egg with a hair is possible; Plutarch, *Moralia* 770b mentions "dividing an egg with a hair" as a proverbial expression used jokingly of the ease with which lovers, apparently so firmly united, can fall out over a triviality'. Plato has chosen a very apt proverb, given the roundness of both eggs and Aristophanes' humans, and the point Aristophanes' story is making about love.

190e *who then twisted*: i.e. Apollo (in his capacity as god of medicine).

the belly, [as it's] now called, like <pull-close
drawstring> bags, making one
<mouth
opening> he bound it up over the middle of the belly, which
indeed people call the navel. and the other wrinkles [191a] – many –
he smoothed them, and coarticulated the <chest
breasts>, <having
holding>
some such tool as the (leather-cutters
leatherworkers)
hide-cutters
smoothing around the
shoe last the <hides'
leather's> wrinkles: a few, though, he left behind,
those around the belly itself and the navel, to be a memorial of the
old <suffering
experience>. once their nature really was cut in <twain
two>,
desiring – each that half that's itself's – would come together, and
throwing their <arms
hands> around and entwining with each other,
setting their hearts on <growing
being fused> together, they <died
perished>
from <hunger
starvation> and [191b] other inactivity through not



τὴν γαστέρα νῦν καλουμένην, ὥσπερ τὰ σύσπαστα βαλλάντια, ἐν
στόμα ποιῶν ἀπέδει κατὰ μέσσην τὴν γαστέρα, ὃ δὴ τὸν ὀμφαλὸν
καλοῦσι. καὶ τὰς μὲν ἄλλας ρυτίδας [191a] τὰς πολλὰς ἐξελέαινε
καὶ τὰ στήθη διήρθρου, ἔχων τι τοιοῦτον ὄργανον οἷον οἱ σκυτοτόμοι
περὶ τὸν καλάποδα λεαίνοντες τὰς τῶν σκυτῶν ρυτίδας· ὀλίγας δὲ
κατέλιπε, τὰς περὶ αὐτὴν τὴν γαστέρα καὶ τὸν ὀμφαλόν, μνημεῖον
εἶναι τοῦ παλαιοῦ πάθους. ἐπειδὴ οὖν ἡ φύσις δίχα ἐτμήθη, ποθοῦν
ἕκαστον τὸ ἥμισυ τὸ αὐτοῦ συνήει, καὶ περιβάλλοντες τὰς χεῖρας
καὶ συμπλεκόμενοι ἀλλήλοις, ἐπιθυμοῦντες συμφῶναι, ἀπέθνησκον
ὑπὸ λιμοῦ καὶ τῆς [191β] ἄλλης ἀργίας διὰ τὸ μηδὲν

190e *navel*: the navel, or *omphalos*, of the world was located at Apollo's shrine at Delphi, so it is fitting that Apollo is connected here with the creation of the human navel. Given the connection between childbirth and the navel, it is also fitting that Plato emphasises the forming of the navel in his/Aristophanes' origin myth for sex.

191a *coarticulated the chest/breasts*: i.e. constructed them into an articulated (well-jointed), organic, bipartite whole. Dover (1980 pp. 116–17) points out that 'since the change in the method of human procreation was not effected until later (191b5–c8), Aristophanes passes over in silence the differentiation between male and female breasts'.

191a *shoe last*: the Greek, *kalapoda*, literally means 'beautiful-feet'.

191a *desiring* – *each that half that's itself's* – *would come together*: here I try to replicate in my translation the mirrored structure of the Greek, *pothoun hekaston to hēmisu to hautou sunēiei*. This chiasmus puts the half in the centre, with the neuter articles either side, then the neuter pronouns, and finally the desire and coming-together (not yet intercourse/sex) on the outside. It verbally enacts the half-humans' struggles, rather heartbreakingly.

191a *setting their hearts on*: this idiom directly corresponds with the Greek *epithumountes*, but in four words instead of one.

191a *growing / being fused together*: the Greek *sumfunai* is used of wounds.

wishing to do anything apart from each other. and whenever someone $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{died} \\ \text{perished} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ of the halves, one then would be left behind, the left-behind one would seek another and entwine, whether it was a woman's half of the whole it $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{happened} \\ \text{hit} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ upon (this indeed we now call woman) or whether a man's: and thus they were being destroyed. pitying them, Zeus provides another $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{machination} \\ \text{contrivance} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$, and repositions their $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{privates} \\ \text{private parts} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ to the front. for so far, these too they had outside, and procreated [191c] and reproduced not in each other but in the earth, like the cicadas. he repositioned (really) thus their [bits] to the front and through these made their procreation in each other, through the male in the female, for these reasons: so in the entwining not only – if a man $\left\langle \begin{smallmatrix} \text{happened} \\ \text{hit} \end{smallmatrix} \right\rangle$ upon a woman –



ἐθέλειν χωρὶς ἀλλήλων ποιεῖν. καὶ ὅποτε τι ἀποθάνοι τῶν ἡμίσεων, τὸ δὲ λειφθείη, τὸ λειφθὲν ἄλλο ἐζήτει καὶ συνεπλέκετο, εἴτε γυναικὸς τῆς ὅλης ἐντύχοι ἡμίσει, ὃ δὴ νῦν γυναῖκα καλοῦμεν, εἴτε ἀνδρός· καὶ οὕτως ἀπώλλυντο. ἐλεήσας δὲ ὁ Ζεὺς ἄλλην μηχανὴν πορίζεται, καὶ μετατίθῃσιν αὐτῶν τὰ αἰδοῖα εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν. τέως γὰρ καὶ ταῦτα ἐκτὸς εἶχον, καὶ ἐγέννων [191ξ] καὶ ἔτικτον οὐκ εἰς ἀλλήλους ἀλλ' εἰς γῆν, ὥσπερ οἱ τέττιγες. μετέθηκέ τε οὖν οὕτω αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν καὶ διὰ τούτων τὴν γένεσιν ἐν ἀλλήλοις ἐποίησεν, διὰ τοῦ ἄρρενος ἐν τῷ θήλει, τῶνδε ἕνεκα, ἵνα ἐν τῇ συμπλοκῇ ἅμα μὲν εἰ ἀνὴρ γυναικὶ ἐντύχοι,

191b *happened/hit upon*: the verb *entuchoi* stems from, *tugchanō*, meaning ‘happen’, ‘chance to’, also has the sense ‘hit the target’, which gives the half-humans’ lucky encounters an element of physical collision.

191c *reproduced ... in the earth, like the cicadas*: Dover (1980 p. 117) suggests that ‘Plato may have confused cicadas and grasshoppers’: while both species’ young emerge from the ground, cicada eggs are laid in trees, whereas some female grasshoppers lay eggs in the ground using an ovipositor, which Plato may have believed to be a penis.

191c *bits*: the word ‘privates’ / ‘private parts’ is left implicit in the Greek.

would they procreate and their kind would be created, but also – if too a male, a male – satisfaction at least would be created of the (togetherness intercourse sex), and they would pause and turn to their tasks and attend to the rest of life. it is indeed really from so [long ago] [191d] that <love of eros for> each other is innate to humans and is the original nature's uniter and is trying its hand at making one from two and healing the nature of humanity. each and every one of us is of a human – a stub, as having been cut like the flatfishes, from one – two: each seeks always his own stub. those of the men that really are a cutting of the joint one, which then was called <manwoman androgynē>, are woman-fond, and most <fornicators adulterers> from this kind



γεννῶεν καὶ γίγνοιτο τὸ γένος, ἅμα δ' εἰ καὶ ἄρρην ἄρρενι, πλησμονὴ γούν γίγνοιτο τῆς συνουσίας καὶ διαπαύοιντο καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τρέποιντο καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου βίου ἐπιμελοῖντο. ἔστι δὲ οὖν ἐκ τούτου [191δ] ὁ ἔρως ἔμφυτος ἀλλήλων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ τῆς ἀρχαίας φύσεως συναγωγεὺς καὶ ἐπιχειρῶν ποιῆσαι ἐν ἐκ δυοῖν καὶ ἰάσασθαι τὴν φύσιν τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην. ἕκαστος οὖν ἡμῶν ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπου σύμβολον, ἅτε τετμημένος ὥσπερ αἱ ψῆτται, ἐξ ἐνὸς δύο· ζητεῖ δὲ αἰεὶ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἕκαστος σύμβολον. ὅσοι μὲν οὖν τῶν ἀνδρῶν τοῦ κοινοῦ τμήμα εἰσιν, ὃ δὴ τότε ἀνδρόγυνον ἐκαλεῖτο, φιλογύναικές τέ εἰσι καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν μοιχῶν ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γένους

191c *pause*: from their quest for their other half, according to Dover (1980 p. 117).

191d *love*: sexual.

191d *and every one*: this is my idiomatic rendering here of the emphatic particle *oun*.

191d *stub*: a ticket stub is the closest parallel I can find for the *symbolon* (from which we get the word 'symbol') – any half-object used as a token to prove the credentials of the bearer, through comparison with its counterpart.

191d *fornicators/adulterers*: Dover (1980 p. 118) explains that whereas Greek marriage is a matter of convention and obedience, 'adultery requires positive sexual initiative'.

have been created, and [191e] again those man-fond women and
 <fornicatrixes
adulteresses> from this kind have been created. those of the
 women that are a cutting of the woman, these don't <at all
altogether>
 give their mind over to men, but <rather
more> are turned towards
 women, and <companionizeresses
womanizeresses> from this kind are created.



γεγόνασιν, καὶ [191ε] ὅσαι αὖ γυναῖκες φίλανδροί τε καὶ μοιχεύτραι
 ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γένους γίνονται. ὅσαι δὲ τῶν γυναικῶν γυναικὸς
 τμῆμά εἰσιν, οὐ πάνυ αὖται τοῖς ἀνδράσι τὸν νοῦν προσέχουσιν,
 ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰς γυναῖκας τετραμμένοι εἰσὶ, καὶ αἱ ἐταιρίστραι
 ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γένους γίνονται.

191e *those of the women that are a cutting of the woman...*: the discussion of Gaia's children is the shortest of the three, and reads more as a logical extrapolation of the three types of sexuality than as an observation from reality. Blondell and Boehringer (2014 p. 241) diagnose the lack of details about the half-women as part of 'the dialogue's privileging of male homoeroticism'. Boehringer (2021 pp. 103–4) sees Plato's brevity here as acknowledging that 'relations between women' are 'erotic relations in their own right' but 'have no impact on the social life of Athenian men'.

191e *at all / altogether ... rather/more*: the ambiguity of *panu* and *mallon* allow two understandings of the half-women: as either *entirely* or *mostly* uninterested in men; in context, the former reading makes most sense, but the latter cannot be ruled out.

191e *ἑταιρίστριαι*; *companionizeresses/womanizeresses*: it is likely that Plato coined the word *hetairistriaí* in mimicry of the real Aristophanes, who frequently used neologisms in his plays 'to surprise his audience and make them laugh' – especially as the word is so long and hard to pronounce (Boehringer 2021 p. 96). My translations echo these qualities of *hetairistriaí*.

Translating *hetairistriaí* is very tricky, since this is the word's first and virtually only appearance in extant Greek literature – its meaning may not even have been clear to a contemporary audience. Its only other appearance is a quote of Plato in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* 5, where the courtesan Klonarion defines *hetairistriaí* thus: 'such [f], they say, are on Lesbos, man-faced women: under men they don't want to take it / experience it / be passive, but with women they [f] get close / have sex just like men do' (Lambert, LESBIANTIQUITY 25).

Translators have taken various approaches to *hetairistriaí*. Lamb (1925 p. 141) opts for 'she-minions' (!). Dover (1980 p. 118) chooses 'lesbians', acknowledging however that this is a 'modern idiom'. Rowe (1998 p. 156), rather than translating, makes the safe choice to transliterate it as 'hetairistriaí'. I find all these translations unsatisfactory: too bizarre, too sweeping, too obscure. So in the rest of this note I will go through the reasoning that has led me to my translation choices.

The noun *hetairistria* derives from the verb *hetairizein*, ‘to be a *hetairos* or *hetaira*’ or ‘to be with a *hetairos* or *hetaira*’, which in turn derives from the nouns *hetairos* [m], ‘companion, comrade, fellow, mate’ (Liddell & Scott p. 276) and *hetaira* [f], which bears the additional – and often primary – meaning ‘courtesan, mistress’. The masculine version of *hetairistria*, *hetairistēs*, only appears in the second century AD, glossed as ‘a man with a great sexual appetite for women (prostitutes or mistresses)’, and cannot be straightforwardly feminised to translate its feminine predecessor (Boehringer 2021 pp. 96–7).

The standard definition of a *hetaira* (as a woman ‘supported by one or two men alone, serving as their companion at symposia and revels, as well as servicing their sexual desires’, as opposed to a *pornē* or prostitute, who provided ‘sex for payment to a large and anonymous clientele’) is elaborated by Kurke. She finds that ‘the *hetaira* is an invention of the symposium [...] this is her proper sphere’, and that because ‘aristocratic sources well disposed to the institution never use the term *hetaira*, preferring polite periphrases’, *hetaira* must be ‘a term of derision, applied by those outside the aristocratic symposium to mock the sympotic equality of prostitute and elite participant (*hetairos*)’ (Kurke 1997 pp. 107–8, 111, 113). This context for a word used in a text that plays extensively with the sexual conventions of the symposium should not be overlooked.

Looking at the *hetairistriaí* in their context generates good working definitions. Blondell and Boehringer (2014 pp. 240–1) conclude that *hetairistria* ‘clearly does not correspond to the modern categories of “lesbian” or “homosexual woman” [...] such translations [...] are anachronistic and [...] obscure the fact that Aristophanes uses the word ἑταιρίστρια not for all the women who desire women but for a sub-group. They are parallel [...] to the μοιχοί and μοιχεύτριάι, male and female subgroups resulting from the androgyne (Symp. 191d–e), whose lusts drive them to shocking violations of social and moral norms. [...] ἑταιρίστρια is, then, probably an intensive term referring similarly to a subgroup of women who desire women – a group whose attraction to other women is exceptionally strong.’ Rowe (1998 p. 156) speculates that ‘*hetairistria* could have the specialized sense of [...] a “respectable” woman who preferred the company of, and sex with, *hetairai*’.

I think that both meanings are intended by Plato: that *hetairistriaí* seek sex with other women – their natural (by gender) ‘friends, companions, fellows’ – and that those sexual partners could be courtesans. So for my primary translation of *hetairistriaí*, I have chosen the word ‘companion’ as the base, since it foregrounds the root meaning and can also be used euphemistically of a courtesan. For my secondary translation, I have chosen ‘womanizer’ as the base, to convey Aristophanes’ jibe that the half-women are behaving like men (*hetairoi*-esses?) by pursuing courtesans (*hetairizein*-ers?).

those that are a male's cutting chase the males, and so long as they be boys, as being slices of the male, are fond of men and enjoy lying with and entwining with [192a] men, and these are the best of boys and youths, as being manliest in nature. those indeed who declare that they are shameless are lying: for it's not from shamelessness that they do this, but from boldness and manliness and masculinity – what is like them, they are embracing. a great proof: for, having matured, the only ones who succeed in politics are men such as these. whenever they become men, [192b] they < love boys
are pederasts > and to marriages and child-makings do not give their mind over by nature, but from custom are forced:



ὅσοι δὲ ἄρρενος τμημά εἰσι, τὰ ἄρρενα διώκουσι, καὶ τέως μὲν ἂν παῖδες ᾧσιν, ἅτε τεμάχια ὄντα τοῦ ἄρρενος, φιλοῦσι τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ χαίρουσι συγκατακείμενοι καὶ συμπεπλεγμένοι [192a] τοῖς ἀνδράσι, καὶ εἰσιν οὗτοι βέλτιστοι τῶν παίδων καὶ μειρακίων, ἅτε ἀνδρειότατοι ὄντες φύσει. φασὶ δὲ δὴ τινες αὐτοὺς ἀναισχύντους εἶναι, ψευδόμενοι· οὐ γὰρ ὑπ' ἀναισχυντίας τοῦτο δρῶσιν ἀλλ' ὑπὸ θάρρους καὶ ἀνδρείας καὶ ἀρρενωπίας, τὸ ὅμοιον αὐτοῖς ἀσπαζόμενοι. μέγα δὲ τεκμήριον· καὶ γὰρ τελεωθέντες μόνοι ἀποβαίνουσιν εἰς τὰ πολιτικά ἄνδρες οἱ τοιοῦτοι. ἐπειδὴν δὲ ἀνδρωθῶσι, [192b] παιδεραστοῦσι καὶ πρὸς γάμους καὶ παιδοποιίας οὐ προσέχουσι τὸν νοῦν φύσει, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀναγκάζονται·

192a *manliest in nature*: this same logic would make the half-women the most feminine women (with the half-androgyne women being manlier) (Boehringer 2021 p. 99).

192a *the only ones who succeed in politics are men such as these*: Aristophanes' praise of political pederasty is intentionally ironic. Aristophanes riffs on two earlier speeches at the symposium, by Phaedros and Pausanias, praising the institution of pederasty; ostensibly, Aristophanes agrees with them, but undercuts his agreement with irony. The idea that a boy playing the passive – female – role in sex could be deemed manly would have been ludicrous to an Athenian, but Aristophanes gets there through a series of puns/synonyms: 'shamelessness' to 'boldness' to 'courage/manliness'. Plato even puts in Aristophanes' mouth allusions to Aristophanes' own comedy *Knights* (324–5, 423–8, 875–80, 1240–3), where he lampoons politicians for prostituting themselves as boys to older men for advancement (see Ludwig 1996).

192b *love boys / are pederasts ... boy-lover/pederast*: the Greek, *paidērastousi* and *paidērastēs*, carries no note of disapprobation, and my translation should likewise be read as entirely neutral.

but it is enough for them to go with each other through life unmarried. totally, though, really such a <sup>boy-loverpederast> also becomes <sup>lover-fondfond of lovers>, always embracing what's akin. whensoever really each <sup>happenedhit> upon his very own half – both the <sup>boy-loverpederast> and everyone else – then wondrously they are struck by fondness and [192c] familyhood and <sup>loveeros>, not wishing – so to say – to be parted from each other, not even for a short time. and those who carry on to the end with each other through life are these – who would not be able to say what they want for themselves from each other to be created. for to no one would it seem this was the (sup>togetherness) intercourse sex of <sup>love-makingsaphrodite-ings>, so surely not for this reason the one with the other enjoys coming together with such



ἀλλ' ἔξαρκεῖ αὐτοῖς μετ' ἀλλήλων καταζῆν ἀγάμοις. πάντως μὲν οὖν ὁ τοιοῦτος παιδεραστής τε καὶ φιλεραστής γίγνεται, ἀεὶ τὸ συγγενὲς ἀσπαζόμενος. ὅταν μὲν οὖν καὶ αὐτῷ ἐκείνῳ ἐντύχη τῷ αὐτοῦ ἡμίσει καὶ ὁ παιδεραστής καὶ ἄλλος πᾶς, τότε καὶ θαυμαστὰ ἐκπλήττονται φιλῖα τε καὶ [192ξ] οἰκειότητι καὶ ἔρωτι, οὐκ ἐθέλοντες ὥς ἔπος εἰπεῖν χωρίζεσθαι ἀλλήλων οὐδὲ σμικρὸν χρόνον. καὶ οἱ διατελοῦντες μετ' ἀλλήλων διὰ βίου οὗτοί εἰσιν, οἳ οὐδ' ἂν ἔχοιεν εἰπεῖν ὅτι βούλονται σφίσι παρ' ἀλλήλων γίγνεσθαι. οὐδενὶ γὰρ ἂν δόξειεν τοῦτ' εἶναι ἢ τῶν ἀφροδισίων συνουσία, ὥς ἄρα τούτου ἔνεκα ἕτερος ἐτέρῳ χαίρει συνὼν οὕτως ἐπὶ

192c *love: sexual.*

great urgency: but something else is wanted by each's spirit, [192d] clearly, what – it cannot say, but it <divines
oracles> what it wants, and <hints
riddles> at it. and if, stood over them as they are lying down, Hephaistos, holding his tools, asked: “what is it that you want, o humans, for you from each other to be created?” and if, with them at <a loss
an impasse>, again he asked: “well, is it this you set your hearts on, to become in yourself the most in each other, so as both night and day not to be left apart from each other? for if it's this you set your hearts on, I am willing to <melt
smelt> you together and [192e] <blow
weld> you together into the same self, so that two beings become one and so long as you may live [pl], as one being, both of you to live jointly, and whenever you may <die
perish> [pl],



μεγάλης σπουδῆς· ἀλλ' ἄλλο τι βουλομένη ἐκατέρου ἡ ψυχὴ [192δ] δῆλη ἐστίν, ὃ οὐ δύναται εἰπεῖν, ἀλλὰ μαντεύεται ὃ βούλεται, καὶ αἰνίττεται. καὶ εἰ αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ κατακειμένοις ἐπιστὰς ὁ Ἥφαιστος, ἔχων τὰ ὄργανα, ἔροιτο· “τί ἔσθ' ὃ βούλεσθε, ὦ ἄνθρωποι, ὑμῖν παρ' ἀλλήλων γενέσθαι;” καὶ εἰ ἀποροῦντας αὐτοὺς πάλιν ἔροιτο· “ἄρά γε τοῦδε ἐπιθυμεῖτε, ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ γενέσθαι ὅτι μάλιστα ἀλλήλοις, ὥστε καὶ νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν μὴ ἀπολείπεσθαι ἀλλήλων; εἰ γὰρ τούτου ἐπιθυμεῖτε, θέλω ὑμᾶς συντῆξαι καὶ [192ε] συμφυσῆσαι εἰς τὸ αὐτό, ὥστε δύο ὄντας ἓνα γεγονέναι καὶ ἕως τ' ἂν ζῆτε, ὥς ἓνα ὄντα, κοινῇ ἀμφοτέρους ζῆν, καὶ ἐπειδὴν ἀποθάνητε,

192d *Hephaistos*: the blacksmith god.

192e *blow/weld you together*: with bellows.

there again in Hades to be instead of two – one, jointly dead [21]: but see [pl] if this is what you love and enough for you should you < ^{happen}_{hit} > upon this”: one who heard this, we know, would not outright deny it, nor would appear to want something else, but artlessly would suppose he’d heard the very thing that of old he had set his heart on: coming together and melting together with the < ^{beloved}_{erōmenos} > [m], from two – one to become. for this is the cause, that our original nature was the same and we were whole: the heart’s-desire [193a] and chase of the whole really has the name < ^{love}_{eros} >. and before this, like I tell, we were one, nowadays through the wrongdoing we were (^{separated}_{dispersed}) by the god, just like Arkadians by Lakedaimonians: fear there really is, if we are not



ἐκεῖ αὖ ἐν ᾿Αΐδου ἀντὶ δυοῖν ἓνα εἶναι κοινῇ τεθνεῶτε· ἀλλ’ ὁρᾶτε εἰ τούτου ἐρᾶτε καὶ ἐξαρκεῖ ὑμῖν ἂν τούτου τύχητε,” ταῦτ’ ἀκούσας ἴσμεν ὅτι οὐδ’ ἂν εἰς ἐξαρνηθείη οὐδ’ ἄλλο τι ἂν φανείη βουλόμενος, ἀλλ’ ἀτεχνῶς οἴοιτ’ ἂν ἀκηκοέναι τοῦτο ὃ πάλαι ἄρα ἐπεθύμει, συνελθὼν καὶ συντακεῖς τῷ ἐρωμένῳ ἐκ δυοῖν εἰς γενέσθαι. τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ αἴτιον, ὅτι ἡ ἀρχαία φύσις ἡμῶν ἦν αὕτη καὶ ἡμεν ὅλοι· τοῦ ὅλου οὖν τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ [193a] καὶ διώξει ἔρωσ ὄνομα. καὶ πρὸ τοῦ, ὥσπερ λέγω, ἐν ἡμεν, νυνὶ δὲ διὰ τὴν ἀδικίαν διωκίσθημεν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθάπερ Ἀρκάδες ὑπὸ Λακεδαιμονίων· φόβος οὖν ἔστιν, ἐὰν μὴ

192e *one, jointly dead* [21]: in his speech Hephaistos addresses the half-humans / lovers in the plural, except at this one key point, where the participle *tethneōte*, 'dead', is in the dual, emphasising the unity he could give them.

192e *he'd heard*: though the people in this sentence could be of any gender, the Greek genders them as male.

192e *beloved/erōmenos*: traditionally, the younger and passive member of a male homosexual pair.

193a *love*: sexual.

193a *the wrongdoing*: humanity's rebellion against the gods.

193a *dispersed / separated / forced to live separately*: the Greek *dioikisthēmen* literally means 'apart-householded' or 'apart-familied'.

193a *like Arkadians by Lakedaimonians*: in 385 BC the Spartans (Lakedaimonians/Lacedaemonians) destroyed the city-wall of the Arkadian (Arcadian) city Mantinea and dispersed its people into four separate settlements (Dover 1980 p. 119).

<orderly
well-behaved> towards the gods, that yet again we will be split
 apart, and go around being like the reliefs engraved on slabs, sawn
 apart down the noses, becoming like half-dice. but for these reasons
 all men must in all-all things exhort <good-reverence
piety> around [193b]
 gods, so we may flee from these, <happen
hit> upon those, as <love
Eros>
 is our leader and general. no one act opposing him (whoever acts
 opposing gods is hated [by them]): for having become friends and
 reconciled with the god we'll find and <happen
hit> upon the
 <babes
darlings> of our very own, which now few do. and don't take me
 up, Eryximachos, comedising the speech, like it's Pausanias and
 Agathon I tell about: for perhaps [193c] they too happen to



κόσμιοι ὦμεν πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς, ὅπως μὴ καὶ αὐθις διασχισθησόμεθα,
 καὶ περίμεν ἔχοντες ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν ταῖς στήλαις καταγραφὴν
 ἐκτετυπωμένοι, διαπεπρισμένοι κατὰ τὰς ῥίνας, γεγονότες ὥσπερ
 λίσπαι. ἀλλὰ τούτων ἔνεκα πάντ' ἄνδρα χρὴ ἅπαντα παρακελεύεσθαι
 εὐσεβεῖν περὶ [193β] θεοὺς, ἵνα τὰ μὲν ἐκφύγωμεν, τῶν δὲ τύχωμεν,
 ὡς ὁ Ἔρως ἡμῖν ἡγεμὼν καὶ στρατηγός. ᾧ μηδεὶς ἐναντία πραττέτω
 (πράττει δ' ἐναντία ὅστις θεοῖς ἀπεχθάνεται)· φίλοι γὰρ γενόμενοι
 καὶ διαλλαγέντες τῷ θεῷ ἐξευρήσομέν τε καὶ ἐντευξόμεθα τοῖς
 παιδικοῖς τοῖς ἡμετέροις αὐτῶν, ὃ τῶν νῦν ὀλίγοι ποιοῦσι. καὶ μὴ
 μοι ὑπολάβῃ Ἐρυξίμαχος, κωμῶδων τὸν λόγον, ὡς Πausανίαν καὶ
 Ἀγάθωνα λέγω· ἴσως μὲν [193ξ] γὰρ καὶ οὗτοι τούτων τυγχάνουσιν

193a *the reliefs engraved on slabs*: such reliefs – three-dimensional but of only one side of the figure – were found on memorial stones, like graves or monuments.

193a *half-dice*: the adjective which the noun *lispai* derives from, *lispos*, means ‘smooth, polished’. A die was cut in half by friends as a friendship token, much like the *sumbolon*, ‘stub’, above (191d) – and then presumably polished.

193b *reconciled*: literally, ‘changed’.

193b *babes/darlings*: the Greek *paidikois* is the adjective of *pais*, ‘child’, which was a common endearment used by the *erastēs* (adult male lover) of his *erōmenos* (young male beloved). The endearment may also have been used between female lovers.

193b *comedising*: Eryximachos, a doctor, gave the speech before Aristophanes’ at the symposium. Between their speeches, Aristophanes and Eryximachos debated whether humour had any place in a serious speech. Aristophanes’ request to Eryximachos not to ‘comedise’ (mock or turn into mockery) his speech is an allusion both to this earlier exchange and to his profession as a comedian – bringing into doubt whether his speech is not already ‘comedised’.

193b *like it’s Pausanias and Agathon I tell about*: the couple Pausanias and Agathon, both present at the symposium, have remained together past the usual span of a pederastic relationship, since Agathon is now a young man. Aristophanes’ remark that Pausanias and Agathon may be former children of the sun who have found their other halves not only mocks Agathon’s effeminacy but is also ironic, since in the *Symposium* Agathon has already been seen flirting with Socrates, apparently prepared to move on to other lovers. Again, Plato alludes to the real Aristophanes: in his play *Women at the Thesmophoria* Aristophanes had satirised Agathon (see Ludwig 1996 pp. 548, 557).

be of these and are both by nature males; I am really telling, for my part, about all-all ones, both men and women, that thus our kind would become <fortunate
happy>, if we attained our end - <love
eros>, and each would <happen
hit> upon his own of the <babes
darlings>, going back to the original nature. if this is best, perforce also of the things now present that nearest to this must be best: this is to <happen
hit> upon <babes
darlings> in mind natured to oneself: hymning the god who is indeed the cause of this, [193d] rightly we would hymn <love
Eros>, who in the present most <benefits
gratifies> us, leading us to the familial, and for the hereafter offers greatest hopes, with us offering <good-reverence
piety> towards gods, of setting us down in the original nature and healing us to make us blessed and <fortunate
happy>.



ὄντες καὶ εἰσιν ἀμφότεροι τὴν φύσιν ἄρρενες, λέγω δὲ οὖν ἔγωγε καθ' ἀπάντων καὶ ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, ὅτι οὕτως ἂν ἡμῶν τὸ γένος εὐδαίμον γένοιτο, εἰ ἐκτελέσαιμεν τὸν ἔρωτα καὶ τῶν παιδικῶν τῶν αὐτοῦ ἕκαστος τύχοι εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἀπελθὼν φύσιν. εἰ δὲ τοῦτο ἄριστον, ἀναγκαῖον καὶ τῶν νῦν παρόντων τὸ τούτου ἐγγυτάτω ἄριστον εἶναι· τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ παιδικῶν τυχεῖν κατὰ νοῦν αὐτῶ πεφυκότων· οὐ δὴ τὸν αἴτιον θεὸν ὑμνοῦντες [193δ] δικαίως ἂν ὑμνοῖμεν Ἐρωτα, ὃς ἔν τε τῷ παρόντι ἡμᾶς πλεῖστα ὀνίνησιν εἰς τὸ οἰκεῖον ἄγων, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἔπειτα ἐλπίδας μεγίστας παρέχεται, ἡμῶν παρεχομένων πρὸς θεοὺς εὐσέβειαν, καταστήσας ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν φύσιν καὶ ἰασάμενος μακαρίους καὶ εὐδαίμονας ποιῆσαι.

193c *love: sexual.*



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