Pseudo-Libanius as Novelist?: A Study of Ekphrasis 30

Greek text of Ps.-Libanius (sections indented for ease of following along) and relevant citations of Achilles Tatius. Passages quoted in English in the paper are marked in bold.

Pseudo-Libanius, Ekphrasis 30: κάλλους

(1) Τήμερον εἶδον κόρην ἐκ θυρίδος προκύπτουσαν καὶ ἰδὼν **ἑαλώκειν εὐθύς**. ἔμπνουν γὰρ ἐδόκουν τὴν Σελήνην ὁρᾶν ἐπὶ γῆς ἢ μεταπεπλάσθαι τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εἰς ἄνθρωπον καὶ πείθειν εἶχον ἐμαυτὸν **ὡς ἀΰλῳ κάλλει** τὸ πρόσωπον ἰνδαλμάτισται.

(2) **Ἔρως γὰρ ἐκ τῶν ἐκείνης ὀμμάτων ἐτόξευε.** καὶ προκατελάμβανε τὴν θέαν ἡ τόξευσις. καί πως ὀφθαλμοὶ μὲν τὸ κάλλος ἐθαύμαζον, ψυχὴ δὲ τῆς ὀδύνης ᾐσθάνετο καὶ **βλέπειν ἐθέλων ἀπέθανον**. καὶ τὸ μὲν κάλλος γλυκύ, ἡ δὲ τρῶσις πικρά.

(3) καί πως γλυκύτερον ἦν τὸ λυπεῖν. τῶν γὰρ ὀφθαλμῶν λιχνευομένων εἰς ὅρασιν **τὸ κάλλος εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν διωλίσθαινε** καὶ πῦρ ἐρωτικὸν τὸ πᾶν ἐλυμαίνετο. τίς γὰρ ἂν ἐκείνης τὸ κάλλος ὑπογράψαιτο; τίς παραδοίη γραφῇ; τίς διαμορφώσειε τοῖς χρώμασι;

(4) καλὸς Ἀπελλῆς καὶ λόγος τούτου πολύς, ἀλλὰ μέχρι ταύτης καλός. καί πως ἐπιγραφέτω τῇ Τύχῃ καὶ χάριτας, ὅτι πρὸ ταύτης ἠρίστευσε καὶ τῆς ζωγραφικῆς ἐδείκνυ τὸ ἔντεχνον καὶ κάλλος οὐκ εἶχεν

(1) Yesterday I saw a girl peeping out of a window, and upon seeing her I was immediately captivated; for I seemed to be seeing the moon alive and breathing on earth, or Aphrodite changed into human form, and I was able to convince myself that her face appeared like immaterial beauty.

(2) For Love shot his arrows at me from her eyes. And his shooting preoccupied my sight. And somehow my eyes marveled at her beauty, but my soul felt grief, and I died, wishing to look at it. And her beauty was sweet, but the wounding bitter.

(3) And the pain was somehow sweeter; for as my eyes greedily desired to see, her beauty slipped into my soul, and the fire of love began to cause my complete ruin. For who could sketch out her beauty? Who could commit her to painting? Who could give her form with paint?

(4) Apelles was a fine painter, and there is much discussion of him, but he was fine only up until her. And let him somehow also inscribe his thanks to Fortune, that he had his heyday before her and revealed the

ὁρᾶν ὑπερνικῶν χειρὸς ἔντεχνον μίμημα. ἀλλ’ ἔσχεν ἂν κἀκεῖνος τῆς συμφορᾶς παρηγόρημα τὸ κάλλος ὁρᾶν **ἐπὶ γῆς εὐτονοῦν** καὶ τῶν ὀμμάτων τὴν δύναμιν καὶ ταὐτὸν ὑπομένειν τοῖς πειρωμένοις κάλλος ἡλίου παραδοῦναι τοῖς χρώμασι.

(5) **κάλλιστος οὖν ζωγράφος** καλλίστης κόρης ἡ ἐμὴ ψυχή. **ἀχρωματίστως** γὰρ τὸ κάλλος ὁρᾷ παρ’ ἑαυτῇ <καὶ> συμμεμόρφωται. καὶ νῦν ὁρᾶν τὴν **εἰκόνα** πεφάντασται. καὶ πολέμιον ὁ τεχνίτης ἔχει τὸ τέχνασμα. μεμψαίμην <ἂν> τοῖς ἐμοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἀμόρφου κόρης ἠράσθησαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ψυχῇ, ὅτι πέπονθεν, ἀλλ’ ἡδὺ τὸ πάθος καὶ τοῦ πάθους μᾶλλον ὁ θάνατος, ἵν’ ἔχῃ στεφανηφορεῖσθαι τῷ Ἔρωτι τοιούτου γενόμενος κάλλους ἀγώνισμα.

(6) ἔγωγε οὖν ἐξ εὐπορίας ἠπόρημαι καὶ λέγειν ἔχων πολλὰ ταῖς τῶν πολλῶν ὑπερβολαῖς ἀνακρούομαι καὶ τὴν εὐπορίαν τοῦ λόγου ἀπορία σιγῆς διαδέχεται. οἶδε τὸ πάθος ψυχὴ κἀκείνη σοφιστεύει τὸν ἔρωτα καὶ **δι’ ὧν ἐπεπόνθει δείξει τοῦ κάλλους τὴν δύναμιν.**

(7) δοκῶ τὴν κόρην τὸν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης κεστὸν διαζώννυσθαι καὶ διὰ ταύτης τοὺς νέους θηρᾶν ἢ **μεταπλασθῆναι** **τὴν ἄϋλον πρὸς παχύτητα σώματος**, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἦν τὸ κάλλος ἐκεῖνο θεᾶς, κόρης ἦν καὶ καλῆς.

artistry of painting before her, and that he did not have to see beauty triumphing over an artistic imitation made by his hand. But even that man, as a consolation for his misfortune, would have had to see beauty being vigorous on earth and the power of her eyes, and to endure the same thing as those who try to commit the beauty of the sun to paint.

(5) So, my soul is a most beautiful painter of a most beautiful girl; for it sees beauty by itself without color <and> has conformed to it. And now it has imagined that it sees an image. And the artist has his artwork as an enemy. I <would> blame my eyes, but they fell in love with a not unlovely girl; rather, I would blame my soul, because it suffered, but the suffering was sweet, and death more so than the suffering, so that it might be able to be worn as a victory wreath by Love, having become the feat of such beauty.

(6) So, from my former abundance, I have been left lacking, and though I can say many things, I stop short of the exaggerations of the masses, and a silence brought on by lack takes over from my former abundance of speech. My soul knows suffering, and it gives expert performances on love, and it will reveal the power of beauty through what it has suffered.

(7) I think that the girl puts on Aphrodite’s girdle and through it hunts young men or transforms the immaterial into corporeality; but that was not the beauty of the sight—it was of a girl also beautiful.

(8) ἐκεῖνό τις ἰδὼν ἐπεύξαιτο ἂν θανεῖν, εἰ προσψαύοιτο. ἐπηυξάμην τοῦτο κἀγώ, ἀλλ’ ἀτέλεστος ἦν ἡ εὐχή. περὶ ἐκεῖνο τὸ πρόσωπον περιεχόρευον Χάριτες καὶ μεταρσίους τοὺς πόδας ἐκούφιζον, ἵνα μὴ τοῦ κάλλους προσψαύοιντο, καὶ πλέον αἱ παρειαὶ τοῦ συνήθους ἐφοινίσσοντο. αἱ Μοῦσαι περὶ τὴν κόρην ὡμάρτουν καί τι λέγειν τοῦ Κάλλους οὐκ εἶχον ἐπάξιον. Ἔρως εὐτύχει παρ’ αὐτῇ τὰ τόξα τείνων καὶ πικρὸν ἐπαλείφων τοῖς βέλεσι φάρμακον καὶ ταῖς βολαῖς τῶν ἐκείνης ὀμμάτων ἐμπιστεύων τὴν τόξευσιν.

(9) ἵστατο γοῦν ἡ κόρη μέσον Μουσῶν καὶ Χαρίτων καὶ Ἔρωτος ταῖς μὲν παγκάλως συμπαίζουσα, τοῦ δὲ τὴν βελοθήκην κενοῦσα ταῖς τῶν ὀμμάτων τοξεύσεσιν. ἔνθα γὰρ εἶδεν, ἐκεῖ τὸ βέλος πικρὸν προσεπήγνυτο, καὶ μάτην ἐδείκνυτο Πάνδαρος φιλοτίμῳ λόγῳ ἐπικεκλημένος ἀντίθεος. ἐκείνη γὰρ ὑπερενίκα τὰς Χάριτας καὶ Μοῦσα μᾶλλον ἦν τῶν Μουσῶν καὶ δέσμιον εἶχε τὸν Ἔρωτα.

(10) δοκῶ πως κἀκεῖνον τὰς τοῦ Κάλλους **μαρμαρυγὰς** ἐκπληττόμενον. εἰ γὰρ οὑτωσὶ τὴν φύσιν οὐσίωτο ὥστε διολισθαίνειν μικρὸν πρὸς ἐμπάθειαν, ὅλος ἂν ἐκεῖνος τοῦ ἔρωτος καὶ ἔρως ἂν ἕτερος ἐγεγόνει τῷ Ἔρωτι.

(8) Someone upon seeing that would pray to die, if only he could touch it. I, too, prayed this, but my prayer was unfulfilled. Around that face the Graces danced and raised their feet up in the air, so that they might not touch her beauty, and her cheeks were redder than the usual. The Muses walked around the girl and were unable to say anything worthy of her beauty. Love is successful in bending his bow beside her and smearing the bitter poison on his arrows and entrusting his shooting to the bolts from her eyes.

(9) The girl, at any rate, stands in the middle of the Muses and Graces and Love, joking around very beautifully with the first two, but emptying the third’s quiver by the shootings of her eyes; for wherever she looked, there the bitter arrow stuck, and Pandarus was shown to have been nicknamed in vain with the ambitious epithet “equal to the gods.” For she triumphed over the Graces and was more of a Muse than the Muses, and she held Love in bond-age.

(10) I think that even he was somehow astounded by the sparklings of her beauty; for if he could give nature substance in this way, so that he could slip a little toward physical affection, he would be entirely intent on love, and “love” would have become something distinct from “Love.”

(11) Ἔγωγ’ οὖν τὰς πλατείας διερχόμενος ἔφιππος μέχρις ἐκείνης εἶχον **τὸ εὔτονον**, τὸ πᾶν γὰρ ἐκεῖσε νενάρκωτο, καὶ τῆς ἡμιόνου τὸ ἄτακτον χεὶρ ἐπαφῶσα βιαίως ἐκόλαζε. κἀκείνη τὸν χαλινὸν ἐνδακοῦσα πρὸς ὕψος ἐκύρτου τὸν τράχηλον καί πως ἀτακτεῖν περὶ τὴν πάροδον ἤθελεν.

(12) εἶδον γὰρ Κάλλους καλὸν ὄμμα προσμειδιῶν καὶ ταῖς διαλόξοις στροφαῖς χαριτούμενον, ὀφρῦν ἑλικοειδῆ τὴν ἀψῖδα περιτορνεύουσαν, παρειὰς τῷ συμμέτρῳ τῆς χροιᾶς καὶ μηλέας ὑπεραυγαζούσας τὸ φοίνιγμα, βόστρυχον πρὸς τὼ ὦτε περικλώμενον παρασύροντα τοὺς ἀνθέρικας κἀκείνους οὔλους καὶ χρυσοειδὲς ἐπαυγάζοντας.

(13) τὸ δὲ τῆς κόμης ξάνθουλον <ἐν> ταῖς παρειαῖς εὐναζόμενον πρὸς μὲν τὸ συγγενὲς τοῦ φοινίγματος καί τι χρυσαυγίζον ἐμίγνυε, πρὸς δέ γε τὸ λευκόχρουν χρυσοειδῆ τὰ πάντα παρέτεινεν, ἐδέχετο δὲ καὶ αὐτὸ ἐκ τῆς τῶν ἐκεῖθεν χρωμάτων αὐγῆς καί πως ἀντέχρωζεν ἡδέως πρὸς ἕκαστα.

(14) **καὶ παράδεισος ἀνθέων ἐδόκει τὸ πρόσωπον.** εἶδον καὶ χείλη καὶ νῦν λειποθυμῶ πρὸς τὴν ἔκφρασιν. γυρόθεν γὰρ ἡ λευκότης θαυμασίως πρὸς τὸ φοίνιγμα διετόρνευσε, μέσον δ’ ἐκεῖνο καθαρῶς ἐφοινίττετο. καὶ ῥόδον εἶχον ὁρᾶν περιτετειχισμένον ταῖς κάλυξι μόνον μὴ φέρον τὴν ἄκανθαν. ἱκανὸν γὰρ ἡ ἐμὴ ψυχὴ προανήρπασε καὶ ἡ γνῶσις ἐξ ἀρχῆς προσεπέπηκτο.

(11) So, passing through the streets on horseback, I had vigor up until her; for my whole body has grown numb there. And my hand, touching the she-mule lightly, began forcefully reproving her misbehavior. And she, biting into the bit, bent her neck upwards and wanted somehow to misbehave as we passed by.

(12) For, as I smiled at the girl, I saw the eye of beauty, beautiful and with grace shown to it by its sidelong turns; a winding eyebrow, fashion-ing a circle as it turned; cheeks in right measure with her complexion, and outshining the redness of an apple tree; a lock of hair curling around at her ears, sweeping away the beards on ears of grain; and those tight curls, shin-ing even like gold.

(13) The golden curls of hair sleeping <on> her cheeks also combined something gleaming like gold with the natural character of redness, and extended everything golden over her white complexion, and also received it from the gleaming of the colors from there and somehow sweetly tinged it with each color in turn.

(14) And her face seemed like a park filled with flowers. I also saw her lips, and now I despair of the description; for the whiteness marvelously rounded off to redness, but that middle part was pure red. And I was able to see a rose surrounded by buds, only not bear-ing a thorn; for my soul had fully plucked it already, and knowledge of it had been stuck in me from the beginning.

(15) ὅσον δὲ εἰκὸς ἦν ἐκ τῶν χειλέων τεκμαίρεσθαι, μαλθακὸν ἂν εἶχον ἴσως τὸ φίλημα, σίμβλον γὰρ ἦν μελισσῶν. καί πως εἰ ἔφθη μικρὸν ὑποφθέγξασθαι, εἶδον ἂν τάχει καὶ μέλι καταρρέον ἐκ στόματος καὶ γλῶσσαν περιλιχμαζομένην τὸ γλύκυσμα καὶ τὸ φοίνιγμα καθυγραίνουσαν.

(16) Κάλλος οὖν τοιοῦτον ἰδὼν πόθου παντὸς διεστάλαξα δάκρυον, ᾤκτειρον γάρ μου τὸ πάθος καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοί. ἀλλ’ οὐκ εἶδεν ἡ κόρη τὰ δάκρυα. εἰ γὰρ εἶδεν, ἠλέησεν ἂν τὸν διὰ τὸ κάλλος ἐκείνης δακρύσαντα. σοβαρὸν γὰρ οἷον πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐνητένιζε. **καὶ τὸ βλέμμα θάνατος ἦν**. τὸ γὰρ ὄμμα πρὸς τὸν τῆς ἡμιόνου διαλοξεύσασα πάταγον ἕτερον εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἐπέτεκε πάταγον.

(17) ἤθελον οὖν ὁρᾶν τολμηρῶς καὶ ζόφος εἶχε τὸν ὀφθαλμόν, καὶ θέλων βλέπειν οὐκ ἔβλεπον. ἀντωθούμην γὰρ πρὸς ἔλεον, ἐβουλόμην ἀφιέναι φωνήν, ἀλλ’ ἐπεῖχε ταύτην αἰδώς. καί ποτε τὸ πάθος ἐνίκησε καὶ τῇ γλώττῃ τόλμαν ἐνέθηκε. καί τι λιγυρὸν ἠβουλήθην προσφθέγξασθαι, ἀλλ’ ἡ κόρη πρὸ τῆς φωνῆς, ὡς ὄρθιος <φιλεῖ> περικλασθῆναι κυπάριττος, λειποψυχεῖν με τὸν τολμηρὸν παρεσκεύασεν.

(15) But so far as it was reasonable to judge from her lips, I would perhaps have gotten a soft kiss; for they were a hive of bees. And if they had somehow first made a faint, small sound, I would quickly have seen both honey flowing from her mouth and her tongue licking the sweet stuff all around and moistening down their redness.

(16) So, when I saw such a beauty of every desire I shed a tear; for even my eyes lamented my suffering. But the girl did not see my tears; for if she had seen them, she would have pitied the one shedding them on account of her beauty; for she directed a rather haughty gaze at us. And her look was death; for having turned aside her eye toward the clattering of the mule, she engendered a different sort of clattering in my soul.

(17) So, I wanted to look at her boldly, and gloom held my eye, and though I wanted to look, I did not look; for I was pushed instead toward pity; I wanted to let loose my voice, but shame kept preventing it. And at some point my suffering won out and inspired my tongue to be bold. And I wanted to utter something melodious, but the girl made me, the bold one, lose heart before my voice, just as a straight cypress <is wont> to be bent and broken.

(18) ᾠκτείρησεν Ἔρως τὴν συμφορὰν καὶ παρὰ τῇ κόρῃ τὸ πτερὸν ἡδίστως ὑπέσεισε καί πως ἔρωτι τὰς παρειὰς ὑπηνέμωσε. τῆς δὲ σπασάσης καὶ λοξευσάσης τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν

πρὸς τὸν Ἔρωτα τὸ πτερὸν διερρύη καὶ τῆς χειρὸς τὸ τόξον ἐκπεπτώκει καὶ δοῦλος κόρης καλῆς ὁ πολλῶν δεσπότης ἐδείκνυτο.

**(19) ἐγὼ δὲ τοσαῦτα κατιδὼν πεπονθότα τὸν Ἔρωτα δειλὸς ἀριστεὺς ἐγεγόνειν εὐθὺς καὶ καθορῶν τὸν δεσπότην δουλούμενον δρασμὸν αὐτὸς ἐβουλευόμην ὑπότρομος. μόλις οὖν ἐκεῖ καταλιπὼν τὴν ψυχὴν οἴκαδε τὸ σῶμα νεκρὸν ἀπεκόμισα.**

Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*

**I.4.2-5:** **Ὡς δὲ ἐνέτεινα τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπ̓ αὐτήν, ἐν ἀριστερᾷ παρθένος ἐκφαίνεταί μοι, καὶ καταστράπτει μου τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῷ προσώπῳ**.

(3) Τοιαύτην εἶδον ἐγώ ποτε ἐπὶ ταύρῳ γεγραμμένην Σελήνην: ὄμμα **γοργὸν** ἐν ἡδονῇ: κόμη ξανθή, τὸ ξανθὸν οὖλον: ὀφρὺς μέλαινα, τὸ μέλαν ἄκρατον: λευκὴ παρειά, τὸ λευκὸν ἐς μέσον ἐφοινίσσετο καὶ ἐμιμεῖτο πορφύραν, οἵαν εἰς τὸν ἐλέφαντα

(18) Love felt pity for my misfortune and very sweetly shook his wing beside the girl and somehow breathed gently over her cheeks with love. But when she drew her eye and cast it sideways at Love, his wing fell away and the bow fell out of his hand, and the master of many things was shown to be a slave of a beautiful girl.

(19) But having seen that Love had suffered so badly, I immediately became a cowardly hero, and as I watched the master being enslaved, I became somewhat afraid and wanted to run away myself. And so, with difficulty, leaving my soul behind there, I carried my dead body home.

Winkler Translation:

I.4.2-5: But as I kept my eyes on her, a maiden appeared on the left and flashed her face as lightning onto my eyes.

(3) Such beauty I had seen once before, and that was in a painting of Selene on a bull: delightfully animated eyes; light blond hair—blond and curly; black eyebrows—jet black; white cheeks—a white that glowed to red in the center like the crimson laid on ivory by Lydian craftswomen. Her mouth

Λυδία βάπτει γυνή: τὸ στόμα ῥόδων ἄνθος ἦν, ὅταν ἄρχηται τὸ ῥόδον ἀνοίγειν τῶν φύλλων τὰ χείλη.

(4) Ὡς δὲ εἶδον, **εὐθὺς ἀπωλώλειν: κάλλος γὰρ ὀξύτερον τιτρώσκει βέλους καὶ διὰ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐς τὴν ψυχὴν καταρρεῖ: ὀφθαλμὸς γὰρ ὁδὸς ἐρωτικῷ τραύματι.**

(5) Πάντα δέ με εἶχεν ὁμοῦ, ἔπαινος, ἔκπληξις, τρόμος, αἰδώς, ἀναίδεια: ἐπῄνουν τὸ μέγεθος, ἐκπεπλήγμην τὸ κάλλος, ἔτρεμον τὴν καρδίαν, ἔβλεπον ἀναιδῶς, ᾐδούμην ἁλῶναι: τοὺς δὲ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀφέλκειν μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς κόρης ἐβιαζόμην, οἱ δὲ οὐκ ἤθελον, ἀλλ̓ ἀνθεῖλκον ἑαυτοὺς ἐκεῖ τῷ τοῦ κάλλους ἑλκόμενοι πείσματι, καὶ τέλος ἐνίκησαν.

**II.7.6:** Ὡς δὲ συνῆκεν ὃ λέγω καὶ ἐμειδίασε, θαρρήσας εἶπον ‘οἴμοι, φιλτάτη, πάλιν τέτρωμαι χαλεπώτερον: ἐπὶ γὰρ τὴν καρδίαν κατέρρευσε τὸ τραῦμα καὶ ζητεῖ σου τὴν ἐπῳδήν. **Ἦ που καὶ σὺ μέλιτταν ἐπὶ τοῦ στόματος φέρεις: καὶ γὰρ μέλιτος γέμεις, καὶ τιτρώσκει σου τὰ φιλήματα.’**

was a rose caught at the moment when it begins to part its petal lips.

(4) As soon as I had seen her, I was lost. For Beauty’s wound is sharper than any weapon’s, and it runs through the eyes down to the soul. It is through the eye that loves wound passes,

(5) and I now became a prey to a host of emotions: admiration, amazement, trembling, shame, shamelessness. I admired her generous stature, marveled at her beauty, trembled in my heart, stared shamelessly, ashamed I might be caught. My eyes defied me. I tried to force them away from the girl, but they swung back to her, drawn by the allure of her beauty, and finally they were victorious.

II.7.6: Since she understood my meaning and even smiled, I went on boldly. “Oh dear, my dearest, I’m stung again and this time still more harshly. The wound has spread to my heart and still needs your magical remedy. There must be a bee inherent in your lips, for they taste sweet as honey, and their kiss leaves a wound.”

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