

Community Connection in the *Ephesiaca*

In Xenophon's *Ephesiaca*, the protagonists' return to Ephesus itself is presented entirely in summary rather than full scene. This leaves the bulk of the closural work in the reunion scene in Rhodes. The Rhodian scene contains the requisite crowd, who contribute causally to the reunion of the lovers. The homecoming scene includes the emotional reaction of the Ephesians to their return but no mention of any community action, leading some scholars to argue that the lovers are distanced from external society in the closural scenes of the novel. However, the centrality of emotional reaction to crowd function in the closural scenes of the novels as a genre suggests that the mention of the Ephesians' reaction itself in such a short summary is significant and a sign of connection between the lovers and their home community. This is not to say that the prominence of the full scene with the Rhodian crowd over the summary presence of the Ephesian crowd is not significant. Xenophon treats them as interchangeable, a phenomenon that will be repeated by Achilles Tatius. This shows that the genre does not place as much emphasis on the internal audience being from the home city of the protagonists as might be expected; the crowd's primary function lies elsewhere. There is evidence to suggest that their class as citizens is more important than the *polis* of which they are citizens.

Both Tagliabue 2017 and Montiglio 2012 find the brevity of the Ephesian community's role at the end of the novel to be an indication of a lack of connection between the lovers and Ephesus. Montiglio calls the Ephesian crowd's role "unmarked and muted," comparing it to the scene of acclamation in *Callirhoe* and the full scene of the Rhodians responding to the romantic reunion in 5.13, and notes that the plot is functionally resolved in the scene at Rhodes. She argues that this shows that Xenophon emphasizes the restoration of the marriage over the protagonists' reintegration into the community. Tagliabue also focuses on the lack of action by

the Ephesian crowd, noting the pattern that in previous scenes the Ephesian and Rhodian crowds always performed a communal prayer or sacrifice, which is conspicuously lacking here; the emotional reaction is given, but not followed by any communal religious activity. Instead, the final lines of the novel discuss the lovers' religious activity and the happily-ever-after endings of themselves and their companions. He argues that this shows the protagonists forming an "exclusive society of love" together, disassociated from the Ephesian community. Whitmarsh goes another direction with his interpretation and finds the primary circularity to be between the two Rhodian episodes instead (Whitmarsh 2011, 49). The circularity between these scenes is indisputable, but the first Rhodian episode at 1.12.1-2 is in summary, much like the final Ephesian episode in 5.15, which weakens its ability to build plot tension.

The brevity of the final mention of the Ephesian people, and the lack of any ritual component, is indisputably aberrant, but it is not as critical to the scene as Montiglio and Tagliabue suggest. It is important to note that the final scene is not a scene, but rather a summary, which means that some assumed actions are left out of the description. The emotional reaction role of the crowd is more consistently present in the parallel scenes in other novels than the ritual action, so while a pattern internal to the novel is broken, a larger pattern across the genre is preserved. In addition, although Montiglio says "the circle is drawn uncompleted" (Montiglio 2012, 54) in reference to the plot beginning in Ephesus and ending in Rhodes, there is substantial circularity between the closural reunion scene in Rhodes and the beginning of the adventure in Ephesus. The *Ephesiaca*'s ending is thus not as strange as it seems. What appears to be a lack of connection to the community in Ephesus is, in fact, Xenophon treating the communities of Greek cities as functionally the same. Once the lovers have been reintegrated back into it in Rhodes there is no need to repeat the scene in Ephesus.

Bibliography

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