

## My “Unmanly” Lament: Gender and the Lament in Xenophon of Ephesus

In the lament scenes of Xenophon of Ephesus’s *Ephesiaca*, Anthia and Habrocomes define the reasons why they continue to remain true to each other in the face of misfortunes and other potential lovers. Throughout the novel, Anthia and Habrocomes find their status questioned due to changes of fortune. In these situations, Anthia and Habrocomes re-define and re-fashion their gender identity through their laments.

This paper will consider Habrocomes’s sense of his loss of traditional masculine identity because of his misfortunes. In these lament scenes, Habrocomes attempts to re-establish and re-define his masculinity through his laments which, in turn, confirm his resolve to stay true to Anthia in the face of misfortunes. Because of his status as a novelistic hero (Konstan 1994: 15–26), Habrocomes does not actively strive to better his circumstances, but instead seeks to better understand his resolve to endure.

For example, in the beginning of Xenophon of Ephesus, after he has seen Anthia and fallen in love with her at first sight, Habrocomes laments that Eros has made him lose his manliness and be a slave to a virgin (Xen. Eph. 1.4.1–3). Habrocomes laments, in short, the inversion of traditional gender roles. Habrocomes, who as a man is used to being superior in the Ancient Greek patriarchy, now is being subordinated. This turn of events is only temporary, as he and Anthia are soon married, which allows him to regain his status as a man and husband. Throughout the novel, Habrocomes continues to reflect on his gender identity throughout the novel as he is faced with various obstacles.

Through close-reading of these lament scenes, I seek to orient Xenophon of Ephesus’s *Ephesiaca* within a body of scholarship which describes how self-fashioning of gender was very

prevalent within Imperial Greek literature, especially those facets associated with the Second Sophistic (Gleason 1995; Whitmarsh 2005: 23–40). Recent scholarship which sees these trends within the novel (Haynes 2003; Jones 2012) has applied this scholarship well, but where Xenophon of Ephesus is covered, it is usually brief. By focusing exclusively on Xenophon of Ephesus, we will understand better how the fashioning of gender identity happens in this novel and how it relates to the trends in imperial Greek literature and the novel noted above.

#### Bibliography

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