

Aristaenetus as a Reader and Corrector of Plato: A Greek Erotic Writer of Late Antiquity and Michel Foucault's "Une nouvelle érotique"

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PROGRAMME

Under the name of "Aristaenetus" is known an unidentified Greek-speaking erotic writer, whom we date around 500 AD. A corpus of fifty love stories in the form of fictional letters has been preserved as his unique work. At a time when Christianity was almost fully established in the Eastern Roman Empire, Aristaenetus wrote erotic literature, and even dealt with eros in many versions other than marriage and monogamy. However, homosexuality is excluded. This paper explores one of Aristaenetus' fascinating literary tricks: How the author manages to compose love stories between men and women using passages from Platonic dialogues in which homosexual eros prevails. An attempt is made to interpret Aristaenetus' literary technique in the context of the transition of erotic ethics from pagan Classical Antiquity to the Christian Middle Ages, drawing on Foucault's position in the *History of Sexuality*.

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