

PLATO'S LYSIS: APORIA AND DIALECTIC LOGOI FRIENDSHIP «REALIZED» ALL THROUGHOUT THE DIALOGUE*

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The last words in the *Lysis* are eloquent enough and induce us, at first, to feel disappointed: «what a friend is, we have not yet succeeded in discovering»¹ (Οὐπω δὲ ὅτι ἔστιν ὁ φίλος οἰοί τε ἐγενόμεθα ἐξευρεῖν: 223b7-8). Just before these words, after Socrates' summary of what had been said in that part of the dialogue (a summary like those that orators used to pronounce before tribunals), we hear from Socrates' own mouth, and in just as conclusive a way: «If none of these is a friend, I am at a loss for anything further to say» (εἰ μηδὲν τούτων φίλον ἔστιν, ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκέτι ἔχω τί λέγω: 222e6-7). The failure of the quest seems evident enough. Accordingly, many scholars have reached a definitive conclusion: the *Lysis* is a dialogue without an outcome. The *aporia*, to which we have been led by the different examinations to which the question about friendship asked to Menexenus has been subjected, is finally witnessed in 223b7-8. At the beginning of his conversation with Menexenus, when the latter was on his way back after having helped in a religious ceremony, Socrates asked him this question following *Lysis*' request: «When one person loves another, which of the two becomes a friend of the other, the loving of the loved, or the loved of the loving? Or is there no difference?» (ἐπειδάν τις τινα φιλή, πότερος ποτέρου φίλος γίγνεται, ὁ φιλῶν τοῦ φιλουμένου ἢ ὁ φιλούμενος τοῦ φιλοῦντος ἢ οὐδὲν διαφέρει; 212a8-b1). With this question starts that part of the dialogue whose direct aim is to answer with arguments the question about friendship. However, at the end of the dia-

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1. *Plato. III. Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*. English translation by W. R. M. Lamb (Loeb Classical Library), London 1925, p. 71 (223b 7-8). From here on, we will quote from this translation. As regards the original Greek text, we will use J. Burnet's edition.

logue, we reach a cul-de-sac. We could well say, with W. K. C. Guthrie that «the Lysis is not a success. Even Plato can nod»². If he is not deeply attentive to the literary and philosophical aspects of the dialogue in its entirety, the reader is bound to be left with the bitter aftertaste caused by a disappointing reading. In these pages we intend to explain what, to our understanding, is precisely one of the hermeneutical clues that allows us to comprehend the Lysis. We will try to do so, in a necessarily brief way, by making, first of all, place for some considerations about the so-called «final aporia»³ of the Lysis and will then proceed to emphasize the importance of accomplishing and comprehending friendship –of realizing it and also of realizing what it is - all along the three discourses that Plato's Lysis offers us. With this, we believe that we will be able to uphold our thesis: the Lysis is a dialogue where, in spite of the fact that we cannot succeed in discovering (ἐξευρεῖν in 223b8), by means of the logical discourse, 'what a friend is', we can, nonetheless, succeed in bringing about friendship and in comprehending it –realizing it and realizing what it means– as the same dialogue advances. As a consequence, friendship can only be comprehended in the cours of the process that leads to its accomplishment and, at the same time, it can be accomplished only insofar as it is comprehended.

Comprehension and accomplishment are both parts of a whole in the exercise of the virtues and, consequently, in the exercise of friendship. However, comprehension will never, in Plato's first dialogues –the aporetical ones– give way to a «definition», at least in its *modo aristotelico*⁴. This is the reason why,

2. W. K. C. GUTHRIE, *A History of Greek Philosophy. IV. Plato. The Man and his Dialogues*, Cambridge 1975, p. 143. Since ancient times, the Socratic tradition used to regard the Lysis as a Socratic misinterpretation on the part of the young Plato (cf. DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *De clarorum philosophorum vitis, dogmatibus et apophthegmatibus libri decem*, I, 3, 35).

3. We analysed the «final aporia» of Plato's Lysis in a paper presented the 18th setember 1997 in the Seminar «Hermenèutica i Platonisme» at the «Societat Catalana de Filosofia» (Institut d'Estudis Catalans - Barcelona), published under the title *Notes per una lectura de l'«aporia final» del Lisis platònic (Notes for a reading of the 'final aporia' in Plato's Lysis)*, Barcelona, Edicions KAL-Universitat de Barcelona, 1998. Regarding to the 'final aporia' we read in V. GOLD-SCHMIDT, *Les dialogues de Platon*, Paris 1947, p. 62: «C'est improprement qu'on peut intituler ainsi ("L'Essence et l'Aporie finale") la dernière partie des cinq dialogues (Euthyphron, Hippias Majeur, Charmide, Lachès, Lysis). Car si jamais l'enquête dialectique parvient à l'Essence, ce doit être par l'ascension jusqu'au principe inconditionné, donc, nous l'avons vu, à un moment qui se place entre la notion définitionnelle et la détermination (...) L'essence apparaîtra au cours de cette critique, mais il est probable qu'elle ne se montrera pas en pleine lumière, puisque aussi bien l'entreprise se terminera par un échec.»

4. Here we mean the Aristotelian comprehension of «definition» which, we believe, has had such an important influence on the reading of Plato's aporetical dialogues. See *Metaphysics*, 13, 4, 1078b, where the quest for «definition» is attributed to Socrates (ὀρίξεσθαι καθόλου) and *Posterior Analytics* II 3, 90b and ff., where Aristotle analyzes the universal definiton and works out its typology. If the dialogues receive the name of aporetical, it is for the reason that they don't succeed in establishing what the «what is» of any of the values X under examination is. The absence of definition is generally attributed to Plato's younger age. In fact, Plato is aiming at comprehension rather than at the Aristotelian «definition».

in spite of the fact that it has not been possible to define what a friend is, it is indeed possible to succeed in comprehending and accomplishing friendship.

If we focus again on the last words of the *Lysis* (223b7-8), quoted at the beginning of this paper, we will notice that they are part of a wider context, a particularly relevant one. When Plato says: «What a friend is, we have not yet succeeded in discovering» (223b7-8), we cannot leave aside the immediate context where we can read: «However, just as they were moving off, I remarked: To-day, Lysis and Menexenus, we have made ourselves ridiculous –I, an old man, as well as you. For these others will go away and tell how we believe we are friends of one another –for I count myself in with you– but (what a friend is, we have not yet succeeded in discovering)» (ὅμως δ' ἔγωγε ἤδη ἀπιόντων αὐτῶν, Νῦν μὲν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ Λύσι τε καὶ Μενέξενε, καταγέλαστοι γεγόναμεν– ἐγώ τε, γέρων ἀνήρ, καὶ ὑμεῖς. ἐροῦσι γὰρ οἶδε ἀπιόντες ὡς οἴομεθα ἡμεῖς ἀλλήλων φίλοι εἶναι –καὶ ἐμὲ γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν τίθημι– οὐπω δὲ ὅτι ἔστιν ὁ φίλος οἷοί τε ἐγενόμεθα ἐξευρεῖν: 223b3-8).

From the aforementioned text, we would like to note the following points: a) Socrates, once the reunion has come to an end (διελύσαμεν τὴν συνουσίαν: 223b3⁵) and the participants are about to leave, speaks to Lysis and Menexenus (and to the readers!) to summarily explain what has occurred and this is, in our view, one of the hermeneutical clues to the dialogue, just as we will explain further on; b) Socrates' verification of the ridiculousness of the situation of the participants in the conversation (καταγέλαστοι γεγόναμεν: 223b4-5), as it has been put forward by the reflection (or logical discourse) on the relationship existing between the friends, marks a very important point for the comprehension of the structure of the dialogue and the explanation of its contents; c) even though Socrates narrates the scene (and the whole dialogue) in the first person, here he plays the literary game that consists in making others («these others will go away and tell»: 223b 5-6) say what they think concerning the ridiculousness of Socrates, Lysis and Menexenus' situation. These others may be metaphorically taken as «the readers», attentive to the conversation but still not skilful enough to be able to take part in it and understand it⁶.

5. We must remark the closeness between the name of the protagonist Λύσις and the διελύσαμεν at the end of the dialogue. A closeness achieved by making use of a verb that has to do, like Lysis' name, with «realising» and with «dissolving». After the meeting, a metaphorical «realising» has been accomplished, and with it the ability to think without help from that moment on has been obtained. Socrates, the friend, has made it possible insofar as he has taken the role of a mentor in directing the accomplishment of friendship.

6. Here, as well as in other places, the personality and name of the sophist Miccus (204a5) acquires its full sense; it is a sophist named Miccus (someone of little importance; derived from the Greek Μίκκος) who is described as a «no slight person, but a qualified professor» (οὐ φαυλός γε ἀνήρ, ἀλλ' ἱκανὸς σοφιστής: 204a6-7). This sophist, «comrade» and «supporter» of Socrates (Σὸς ἐταῖρός γε, ἦ δ' ὅς, καὶ ἐπαινέτης, Μίκκος: 204^a5) is the person who teaches in the palaestra where the conversations take place in this dialogue. Accordingly, the young men who attended it were taught by a sophist «of little importance» and, as a consequence, could not

In the text, they are simple listeners that eventually go away and draw their own conclusions about the meeting. By making a note of the fact that these others do tell, Plato means to warn us about their partial conclusion: *d*) the contents to which «the others» make reference, are precisely the confirmation of the absence of an outcome in Socratic investigations: «what a friend is, we have not yet succeeded in discovering» (223b7-8).

From the above-mentioned text, namely from 223b3-8, we have reserved until now an excerpt which, according to our judgment, is a capital passage, only to deal with it in detail now. It is the following one: «we believe we are friends of one another –for I count myself in with you– but ...» (ὡς οἴομεθα ἡμεῖς ἀλλήλων φίλοι εἶναι –καὶ ἐμὲ γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν τίθημι–: 223b6-7). Plato thought it essential to place this passage here. It is an excerpt which consists of two propositions: the first one, ὡς οἴομεθα ἡμεῖς ἀλλήλων φίλοι εἶναι, sets down Socrates' self-awareness, which can be extended to Lysis and Menexenus, (οἴομεθα) of reciprocal friendship (ἀλλήλων) among the interlocutors of the scene; the second one reasons Socrates' specific self-awareness: καὶ ἐμὲ γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν τίθημι, and puts forward Socrates' primacy when it comes to realizing an already-realized friendship, that is comprehending an accomplished friendship.

We would like specifically to underline the importance of οἴομεθα in the first proposition. Plato does indeed make Socrates use a present of the indicative mood and, in doing so, stresses the verbal aspect of continuousness. When Socrates says: «we believe», he intends to let it be known that, at the end of the dialogue, neither he nor his interlocutors have been able to discover what a friend is, but still trust their already-established friendship. In this way, that already-accomplished friendship, which has been comprehended through the dialogue, finds its confirmation. It is true that Socrates had not met Lysis nor Menexenus; this can be deduced from the initial scene of the dialogue, one that is full of news, and from the way in which both Lysis (204e1-8) and Menexenus (206d3-6) are introduced. The whole situation makes us aware of Socrates' unfamiliarity with the two youths or, at least, we are allowed to sustain that between both of them and Socrates there was no friendship, even though there might have been some previous knowledge. Furthermore, as we have said before, this friendship, as it has been conveyed to us by the text, is characterized by its reciprocity (ἀλλήλων), which is precisely one of the characteristics of which Socrates talked when he explained *friendship as a relationship*, after inquiring about *this relationship* while he was addressing Menexenus (cf. 212a8-b1).

succeed in perceiving that a friendship among Socrates, Lysis and Menexenus had been attained. Miccus' worthlessness can be appreciated after seeing that Menexenus' dialectical tutorship has been taken care of by Ctesippus. Thus, Menexenus has become a formidable person (δεινός γὰρ ὁ ἀνθρώπος: 211c5) and a keen disputant (ἐριστικός ἐστιν: 211b8) because he has been Ctesippus' disciple (Κτησίππου μαθητής: 211c5).

Of the second proposition (καὶ ἐμὲ γὰρ ἐν ὑμῖν τίθημι), we would like to underline the explanation (γὰρ) of the Socratic self-awareness of friendship. It is Socrates himself who states that he, for one, sees himself as a friend within (ἐν ὑμῖν τίθημι) the friendship shared by Lysis and Menexenus and, as a consequence, he himself knows that he is their friend. We must notice that, in spite of Socrates' advanced age (see γέρον ἀνήρ in 223b5) and despite the fact that both young men are the same age, or nearly the same age (207c1-2), and that it seems evident that they are both friends, there is no impediment to Socrates' stating his friendship with the youths. In fact, in Plato's view, friendship is not a matter of age, but a matter of sharing the will to know, and this will is not determined by age⁷.

In short, we may affirm that the context of the so-called «final aporia» does not allow us to perceive only the unsuccessful end of the dialogue and leave it at this point⁸. The apparent final failure of the *Lysis* entails, if we take into account the whole context, a very valuable achievement in the field of human relational attitudes: the reciprocal relation that produces friendship. In the same paragraph, the experience of an accomplished friendship asserts itself; it is a friendship that has been achieved as the dialogue proceeded, a friendship that, according to «the others», it has not been possible to express. Friendship is a human experience, a comprehensible one, but, at the same time, one that it is difficult to conceptualize, a hardly «definable» experience. Friendship is a human experience, which means that it exists in order to be lived. It is a «doing» that is difficult to «say». It looks as if between «doing» and «saying» (cf. 206c2-3) a disharmony had arisen, but it is only an apparent disharmony. Plato wishes to show that this disharmony is a hindrance that has to be overcome: there must be no imbalance between «doing» and «saying»⁹, they have to be complementary. This is the great lesson that Plato learned from his mentor Socrates. Socrates was indeed ready to die (doing) for what he said (saying). The *Apologia* and the *Crito* reveal it in a very forceful way. In the *Apologia*, we can read the most clear model of «aporia»: Socrates' logos finds no way out before the tribunal that will sentence him to death. But it is with his death that his logos is fulfilled. This apparent contradiction of «aporia» is what gives sense to the same «aporia». Plato has perfectly internalized Socrates and a good proof of that is the fact that Lysis himself echoes Plato's adoption of Socrates in his three speeches, where he shows to us his accomplishment and comprehension of human friendship.

7. Cf. the reflection on age in 209a4 and ff.

8. In the dialogues named aporetical and, in a similar way, in the *Lysis*, a definition is not reached, but the realization of something that has to do with the subject under examination is eventually achieved.

9. Cf. H. G. GADAMER, *Logos und Ergon im platonischen «Lysis»*: H. G. GADAMER, *Kleine Schriften*. III: *Idee und Sprache*, Tübingen 1972, pp. 50-63.

Starting from the consideration that, at the end of the dialogue, the friendship which has been accomplished as the dialogue advanced is clearly stated, we must now proceed to a second reading and pay special attention to the three speeches, which are preceded by an important scene where news¹⁰ is brought in; in these speeches, we are shown the accomplishment of this friendship which is, in its turn, confirmed in Socrates' own words in the final scene of the *Lysis*, a scene where *aporia* is taken to its highest degree. These three speeches, together with the initial and the final scenes, shape the whole dialogue.

There are three main discursive parts in the *Lysis* where Plato analyzes dialectically different ways of establishing a human relationship. Once these have been duly appraised, they eventually come together in the comprehension of the human friendship accomplished by those who have devoted themselves to philosophical research with Socrates as their true mentor. Socrates will thus become the friend insofar as he has interpreted and situated *Lysis* and *Menexenus*' friendly love, as well as *Hippothales*' erotic love for *Lysis*, anew. Their relationship, spurred on by the will to comprehend that they all share, will give birth to a friendship which Socrates eventually presents as a human experience undefinable by means of logical schemata, but comprehensible in its dialectic completion.

The conversations (ἡ δὲ διατριβὴ τὰ πολλὰ ἐν λόγοις; 204a2-3) that give shape to our dialogue are three. They all have their specific function. Plato aligns them in a given order as follows. First, *the conversation with Hippothales* (and *Ctessipus*) in (203 a1)204a8-206d7, a scene that cannot be separated from the initial scene that precedes it and that introduces the whole dialogue in 203a1-204a7(206d7); secondly, *the conversation with Lysis* in 207d5-211a1, preceded by a scenic framing in 206d7-207b7 and an introductory conversation with *Menexenus* and *Lysis* in 207b8-207d4; and thirdly, *the conversation with Menexenus (and Lysis)* in 211a1-222e7. After that, we arrive at the final scene in 223a1-223b8¹¹.

There are two extraordinarily relevant considerations about these conversations. Firstly, all three conversations are «*Lysis-centric*», inasmuch as they unequivocally make of *Lysis* their central point of reference. And *Lysis* does indeed appear as being «*tied*» to the others, as much in the relationship *Hippothales* has established with him as in the one *Menexenus* and he have. As his own name reveals¹² –*Λύσις* means the one without ties– *Lysis* should become

10. See the interesting analysis of the introductory scene in F. J. GONZÁLEZ, *Plato's Lysis: An enactment of Philosophical Kinship: Ancient Philosophy* 15 (1995) 69-90.

11. We cannot justify this structure here. A detailed analysis of the structure of the *Lysis* may be consulted in E. SCHMALZRIEDT, *Platon. Der Schriftsteller und die Wahrheit*, München 1969, pp. 108-134.

12. The play on meanings that is made possible by the names which Plato uses in his dialogues is particularly remarkable in the *Lysis*. Cf. D. WENDER, *Letting go: Imagery and Symbolic Naming in Plato's Lysis: Ramus* 7 (1978) 38-45.

Lysis, that is to say, he should be free of the ties that bind him, and the same thing could be said of all those that want to become friends of others in a process through which human relations come to be relations of true friendship only after they have been freed (or untied) from the other false relations, which in our dialogue are present through Hippothales' relationship with Lysis (ἔξωως non-authentic), on the one hand, and through that of Menexenus with Lysis (φιλία non-authentic), on the other. Secondly, Plato's appraisal of these conversations is, in our view, a capital datum. We can observe it in the use that he makes of the adjective (καταγέλαστος) in the dialogue, a fact that gives us the clue to the *logos* that, according to Plato, constitutes the authentic φιλία. In accordance with this, Plato describes Hippothales' relationship with Lysis as «ridiculous» in its literary manifestation: the verses, which are sometimes sung, and Hippothales' prose are «ridiculous», and both Ctessipus first and Socrates later, in 205b7.c2.d5, 206a1, testify to that. And the same will be said of the third conversation, foreseen as ridiculous (cf. 211c2: «...that is why I want you to have a talk with him [Menexenus]. So that I make myself *ridiculous*») and characterized as ridiculous at the end of the dialogue (cf. 223b4: «To-day, Lysis and Menexenus, we have made ourselves ridiculous –I, an old man, as well as you»). On the other hand, the central conversation with Lysis in 207d5-211a1 is never said to be *ridiculous*. It will be in this central conversation with Lysis where we shall look for a relationship of true φιλία. Socrates will, at this central point, become both the mentor and the friend, making of Lysis a young man open to a true filial relationship, one that involves acknowledging his own ignorance and his wish to know and thus acquire the *phronesis* that will allow him to escape from all his ties, to truly unbind himself and set himself free for all the others, ready to establish links of authentic friendship.

We would also like to make a brief reference to the first conversation; we are told there about an erotic friendship that becomes ridiculous because the admiration for the loved one –here Lysis– transforms this relationship in one of *excessive* friendship and, as such, one lacking in reciprocity. Hippothales admires Lysis so much that he places himself too far away. Admiration always entails distance rather than approach, since a person is admired for the reason that he or she is not like the admirer; on the contrary, the admirer thinks the admired one is far superior to him or her and this is why he or she admires that person.

The verses, the prose, the songs only help to increase the distance and, with so much (excessive) admiration, the friendly reciprocity of true friends is denied. It is the very admiration that makes the relationship fade away. This distance is pointed out by Plato himself by making Hippothales stand apart from the interlocutors out of shame (cf. 207b4-6). Plato makes it clear that poetry and prose can hardly succeed in «saying» a friend's relationship. The criticism of a flattering and blurring poetry and prose is therefore manifest.

In the third conversation (we will skip for the moment, the second one), Plato wants to reveal that one type of friendship, the filial (φιλία) one, is also

a non-authentic relationship because it is a friendship that occurs *by default*. It is a friendship that is presented from the beginning as having been established between equals, but we are soon informed of the constant comparison that both friends (Menexenus and Lysis) make between themselves, and of the constant rivalry that it has created (cf. 207b8-d4, ...). The use of the Greek comparative adjective clarifies Plato's intention. Rivalry is indeed an evidence of distance, but it is a distance seen from the perspective of *default*. Plato's text makes this distance all the more clear when he has Menexenus leave the scene under the pretext that he is to help in a religious ceremony, which is taking place at the new palaestra on the occasion of a festivity to honour Hermes (cf. 207d2-4). It is remarkable that, while the qualities of both friends are being compared, there should be no time to ask about their attitudes towards *justice* (δικαιοτέρος; in 207d1) and towards *wisdom* (σοφώτερος; in 207d2), things that both, far from any comparison, would permit a true friendship. *Justice* and *wisdom* are the two virtues that, according to Plato, constitute the pinnacle of a virtuous attitude in the (Athenian) polis. It is thus that friendship confers a political dimension on human existence. All throughout this third conversation, there is a dialectic effort aimed at «defining» friendship and, as the *logos* moves on in its logical discourse¹³, the fact that logical reason cannot succeed in expressing the human experience of a true friendship begins to dawn on us. We may surmise here a criticism of sophistic, of a perception of reality that reduces it to a logical language that hides its polychromy.

We will now make a final reference to the second conversation, which was *not* described as *ridiculous*, because it shows us the learning process of a true friendship. The *logos* that lies within is an *educating logos*. Socrates, the mentor (cf. 210d6), becomes step by step the friend as he causes Lysis realization of his own lack for knowledge and of his will to know; it is only thus that his thinking can be the thinking without arrogance (Οὐδ' ἄρα μεγαλόφρων εἶ, εἴπερ ἄφρων ἔτι; in 210d7) of a man well on his way to becoming his own self, namely, the «man without ties». Here there are no verses (aedes), prose (rhetoric teachers) or dialectic exercises in logic (sophistics); there is only the naked word (*logos*) woven in conversation from the will to study in depth one of the most structuring dimensions of human existence: the relational dimension. All the first examples are taken from the relations in daily life (father, mother, slaves, coachman, muleteer, pedagogue, ...: cf. 207d5) since it is both a learning process and an experience of happiness (εὐδαιμονέστατον εἶναι; in 207d7); after that, we are led to reach the conclusion that putting one's trust in others (cf. 209c3) is not a matter of age, but of wisdom (φρονεῖν; in 209c5; cf. also 210b1); and finally, there is a statement concerning the necessity of know-

13. The analysis of the logic in the dialogue has been studied with scientific rigour in A. W. BEGEMANN, *Plato's Lysis. Onderzoek naar de Plaats van der Dialoog in het Oeuvre*, Amsterdam 1960, p.207 and ff.

ledge because knowledge make us freer (αὐτοὶ τε ἐλεύθεροι ἐσόμεθα: in 210b4) and more useful (ἂν ὦμεν ἀνωφελεῖς: in 210c6). But this is a usefulness that is exercised from a knowledge that allows us to unbind ourselves from all the false friendship ties and which, by doing so, makes us become wise, useful and good (Ἐὰν μὲν ἄρα σοφὸς γένη: in 210d1; and χρήσιμος γὰρ καὶ ἀγαθὸς ἔσῃ in 210d2) for the others. We can see here the contour of a fundamentally relational human being. It is for this reason that his or her relational aptitudes are the ones that must prepare him or her to be able to reciprocate and, as a consequence, achieve lasting and true friendship relations. In the conversation between Socrates and Lysis, Plato has laid down the base from which to start in order to attain that human fundamental attitude which makes a harmonious, true friendship possible (neither an excessive friendship, linked to ἔξωσ nor a friendship by default, in rivalry).

Both the scenography of the conversations and the dialectic that is expounded in them allow us to perceive a perfectly-structured reasoning, the objective of which is to make the human experience of friendship comprehensible. It is an experience of which we are given three sufficiently-determined typologies that enclose possible ways of establishing a human relationship. Plato's criticism of the fake friendship models, those failing either for their excess or their default, brings with it, at the same time, a conceptual position with regard to the values transmitted by certain (Athenian) Greek traditions that, however dazzling they might be for the citizens (poetry, prose, sophistic), break the structure of the relational sphere of the political life because they create an imbalance in the human relational dimension and disjoint the individual and collective fabric of the polis.

The range of themes of our dialogue is very vast. Here, we have only tried to present an aspect that we believe to be relevant in all the polyhedric immensity of this brief but rich dialogue. The quick look we have taken of the aporia and the dialectic conversation of Plato's Lysis has made evident the forcefulness of expression contained in Plato's dialogic narrative, which, in collusion with the reader and conversing with him or her too, allows him or her to comprehend *the accomplishment of friendship* as the Socratic dialogue proceeds. The dialogue becomes a vehicle of friendship since it involves a mutual acknowledgment of an *I* and a *you*. The dialogue is one of the original ways of *doing* and *saying*. It is in the Socratic dialogue where the necessary presence of the *you* is manifest; it is where we are shown the impossibility of self-sufficient thinking and the need to establish a reciprocal friendship relation, which will thrive on the mutual experience of true affection (ἔξωσ) and of the word (λόγος). Plato has offered us its setting and its accomplishment.

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Summary

En aquest article es vol posar en relleu, a través de l'estudi de l'anomenada *aporia final* del *Lisis* platònic (223b7-8) i del seu context (223b3-8), el caràcter no aporètic del conjunt de l'obra. Si bé és cert que el diàleg no arriba a concloure respecte de la *definició –modo aristotelico* (*Met.* 13,4,1078b; i *Anal. Seg.* II, 390b i ss.)– d'allò que *és* l'amic, no és menys cert que al final de l'obra s'afirma que s'ha realitzat l'amistat entre els interlocutors del diàleg (Sòcrates, *Lisis* i Menexen) [cf. 223b6-7]. Aquesta *realització* suposa que al llarg del diàleg s'ha anat teixint entre els dialogants una *comprensió* (no una *definició*) i, alhora, un *acompliment* de l'amistat. En aquest sentit, Plató ens escenifica tres converses (λόγοι) que expliciten tres formes possibles de relació humana: a) la *conversa amb Hipotales* ([203a1]204a8-206d7), una relació d'amistat *per excés* (d'admiració), qualificada per Plató de *ridícula* (καταγέλαστος); b) la *conversa central amb Lisis* (207d5-211a1), una relació d'amistat que es va construint en l'encaminament vers l'autèntica saviesa de la relació d'amistat, *deslligada* [= Λύσις] de tot fals lligam, la qual no és qualificada de *ridícula*; i c) la *conversa amb Menexen (i Lisis)* (211a1-222e7), una relació d'amistat *per defecte* (de rivalitat), qualificada també de *ridícula*. Hi són, també, implícitament tractades tres formes possibles d'educació de la relació d'amistat: a) la dels aedes i dels prosistes; b) la dialogal socràtica; i c) la dels sofistes. El *Lisis* ens mostra com només la forma dialogal constitueix el camí que permet d'acostar-se a una relació autèntica d'amistat. La filosofia, considerada així essencialment com a diàleg, suposa el reconeixement del tu en la construcció d'un pensar i actuar veritablement humans, els quals possibiliten l'harmonia dins la polis.