

Chariton's Syracuse and its histories of empire

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The ancient Greek novels tell their stories of young love and high adventure in a realm apart from the everyday world inhabited by their authors and audiences. In his marvellously bold project of constructing a history of novelistic discourse that would embrace the novel's earliest beginnings, Bakhtin describes the 'chronotope' or setting in time and space, of the Greek novels as an 'alien world in adventure time' in which largely passive and unchanging characters endure experiences brought upon them by chance. In Bakhtin's insistent formulation the novels depict their characters in a time and space wholly divorced or abstracted from social, historical and geographical reality (Bakhtin 1981, 100):

The world of these romances is large and diverse. But this size and diversity is utterly abstract. For a shipwreck one must have a sea, but which particular sea (in the geographic and historical sense) makes no difference at all. For escape it is important to go to another country; for kidnappers it is important to transport their victim to another country – but which particular country again makes no difference at all....The nature of a given place does not figure as a component in the event; the place figures in solely as a naked, abstract expanse of space.

Bakhtin's larger point is that as a character moves unchanged through this 'alien world in adventure time' he 'keeps on being the same person'; the novels thus function as a 'test of the heroes' integrity, their selfhood' (Bakhtin 1981, 105, 106). The 'abstract expanse of space' of the Greek novels – so different from the historically contextualized topographies of Bakhtin's beloved 19th century realistic novels – serve as the background against which an individual, private identity is constructed and affirmed: we could

say that for Bakhtin in the Greek novels *space reveals identity*, an identity increasing organized around private, rather than political, life.

For a long time the Greek novels have been understood, along the same lines sketched by Bakhtin, as artifacts that represent and enact a turn away from engaged political life and toward the secluded pleasures of private life. We are coming now to see this 'private life', the identity affirmed on Bakhtin's testing ground of abstract space, itself more and more as a complex ideological negotiation. At the same time, space too is becoming more complicated. Modern geographers and philosophers use the term space to describe an abstraction that can be measured and charted, whereas place is used to mean a realm that is constructed, narrated, situated in time; as the ideological assumptions which inform even the most abstract representations of space are being increasingly made explicit, all space becomes place.¹ Accordingly, although the novels themselves give generally scanty descriptions of places and peoples, the shared body of geographical and historical knowledge and lore available to educated audiences in antiquity ensured that novelistic travels did not in fact unfold in a *space* that was 'naked' and 'abstract'. Instead, novelistic characters move through a world of geographically significant and specific *places*. Within this broader (post-Bakhtinian) critical framework, we could now say that in the Greek novels *representations of places construct identities*. Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*, with its sophisticated problematization of the construction of identity and its focus on the immensely fascinating world of the Nile, is perhaps most responsive to this sort of approach. Tim Whitmarsh and Judith Perkins have each excellently analysed how the progress of Heliodorus' characters up the Nile argues that Greek identity is an individual response to situation and context rather than an unchanging essence.² I hope to demonstrate here that Chariton's novel too – especially its historical setting in Syracuse – can contribute to our understanding of constructions of Greek identity under the Roman empire.

Chariton's novel sets romance in an historical frame to tell the story of Callirhoe, daughter of Hermocrates, the Syracusan general who led the defeat of the Athenian expedition against Syracuse in 413. The name of Hermocrates' daughter is not given in the historical sources; Chariton's name for her, Callirhoe, meaning 'beautiful-flowing', figures her as an embodiment of Syracuse's famous spring Arethusa. Callirhoe's swift marriage to Chaereas

¹ On these terms see: Casey 1997, esp. 75-78; Tuan 1979, and Clarke 1999, 1-45.

² Perkins 1999; Whitmarsh 1998, 1999.

in Syracuse ends in apparent tragedy when he is tricked by her rejected suitors into a jealous rage and kicks her, evidently to death. Buried and then awakened from her coma, she is abducted from her tomb by the robber Theron who sells her to the fabulously wealthy Dionysius in Ionia; in time she bears Chaereas' child but pretends Dionysius is the father. Dionysius becomes embroiled in a dispute over her with a Persian satrap named Mithridates, which is ultimately brought to court before the Persian king Artaxerxes in Babylon only to be interrupted by news of an Egyptian revolt. Reunited with Chaereas in the aftermath of the revolt (in which the Persians are defeated) Callirhoe entrusts the child to Dionysius (keeping the secret of his paternity from Dionysius but not from Chaereas) and she and Chaereas return to Syracuse in triumph.

The novel's opening sentence imitates the openings of Herodotus' history of the Persian Wars and Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian war, and the precise relations of the novel's plot and settings to historical fact have been charted in detail.³ The tender-hearted Perry maintained that the violent attack on Callirhoe and the decision to leave the child with Dionysius are too cruel not to be derived from historical anecdotes: the next man to emerge as a leader in Syracuse after Hermocrates was named Dionysius; he married the daughter of Hermocrates, who we are told, was attacked by a Syracusan mob and so violated that she committed suicide (Plut. *Dion* 3,1; cf. Diodorus Siculus 13,112).⁴ Once we suspect a connection between Callirhoe's child and the historical Dionysius it is easy enough to speculate that Callirhoe's child was named Dionysius after his putative father.⁵ Chariton's privileging of atmosphere and theme over historical accuracy could simply be an index of the novel's detachment from real events, its existence in Bakhtin's 'adventure time'. But to ignore the implications of Chariton's history entirely would be a mistake. Even works that do not engage substantially and

³ On Chariton's uses of history see: Hunter 1994; Alvares 1993; Bompaire 1977; Billault 1981, 1989; Bartsch 1934. Chariton is untroubled by anachronisms: for example, the Persian king Artaxerxes did not begin his reign until 405, after the death of Hermocrates in 407; Chaereas' military encounter at Tyre resembles narratives of Alexander's siege of Tyre in 332 (or a later siege: see Jones 1992). Some features of the text display an outlook characteristic of Roman imperial times but this is not so obtrusive as to seriously undermine the coherence of the story's setting in the classical period: Reardon 1996, 327; Baslez 1992, 203-204.

⁴ Perry 1967, 137-140.

⁵ It was more customary for boys to be named after a grandfather; however, the historical Dionysius was succeeded by his eldest son Dionysius (Plut. *Dion* 6).

directly with historical facts of empire can still illuminate for us the discourses that uphold and justify empire in the things they take for granted – what Raymond Williams calls their ‘structures of feeling’ or what Edward Said calls their ‘structures of attitude and reference’.⁶ In other words, just because Chariton’s novel doesn’t mention Rome doesn’t mean that it is not about – or at least a response to – Rome.

Hermocrates’ Syracuse

At first sight, Chariton’s historical setting seems typical of much Greek literary and rhetorical discourse during the Roman period: the narrative creates a Greek world where the only real rivals to Greek power are not Roman but Persian, where Greeks always come out on the winning side.⁷ Here, readers can find refuge from a contemporary reality where Rome is the supreme global power. So, Chariton repeatedly stages the Greek-Persian conflict, – to the advantage of the Greeks, naturally. Greeks are democratic, Persians ruled by a king; Greeks are free, Persians are slavish, and so on. The celebration of Greek values over Persian ones is positively Herodotean.

Yet the precise setting of the novel in Syracuse in the aftermath of the defeat of the Athenians by the Syracusans under Hermocrates in 413 brings Thucydidean complications to this picture. Hermocrates’ victory over the Athenians is a constant point of reference, starting in the novel’s second sentence (1,1,1). Saving Chaereas from his lovelorn melancholy will be the best of Hermocrates’ ‘trophies’ (1,1,11). As his daughter, Callirhoe is the embodiment of his success and the Athenian defeat; the Syracusan celebrations of their wedding were greater than their celebrations of victory (1,1,13). Callirhoe’s funeral procession puts on display the entire civic and military community of Syracuse and includes cavalry and infantry bearing *semeia* of the victory; Hermocrates added many of his war spoils to the funeral offerings (1,6,4). When abducted from the tomb by Theron Callirhoe sees her future as a tragic reversal of the Athenian defeat (1,11,2-3). When Dionysius learns that she is the daughter of Hermocrates, he acknowledges that the king of Persia admires Hermocrates for his victory over the Atheni-

⁶ Williams 1973, 12; Said 1993, 52.

⁷ Compare the representation of the Persian wars by Pausanias: see Alcock 1996. On the general plausibility of Chariton’s representations of the Persians see Alvares 1993, 180-198.

ans and is reluctant to force himself on Callirhoe (2,6,3); the king later mentions his own admiration for Hermocrates (5,8,8). When Theron is crucified, he overlooks the sea ‘over which he had carried off the daughter of Hermocrates, she whom even the Athenians had not captured’ (3,4,18). When the Great King’s eunuch Artaxates rebukes Callirhoe for preferring the enslaved Chaereas to the King himself, Callirhoe retorts: ‘Chaereas is well-born, a leading citizen (*protos*) of the city that defeated the Athenians, the ones who had defeated even your great king at Marathon and Salamis’ (6,7,10). Chaereas offers the Syracusan victory as his credentials when he offers his services to the Egyptians in their revolt against Persia (7,2,3-4). Memories of the defeat of the Athenian expedition culminate in the return of the couple to Syracuse, when the numerous ships that sail out to escort them into the harbor make the harbor look like ‘the appearance (*schema*) it had after the battle with Athens’ (8,6,10). The world Chariton invites his readers to linger in is not the Herodotean world of the spectacular Greek repulsion of the Persian invasion, but the Thucydidean world where Athens has just come out on the losing side of what Thucydides ‘the greatest battle of Greek history, the most brilliant for the winners and most unfortunate for those destroyed’ (Thuc. 7,87,5). Even though it took another eight years for Sparta to seize control of Athens, the defeat at Syracuse was seen to mark the end of Athenian aspirations to exert control over distant territories (Thuc. 7,56,2, 7,66,2). Syracuse, then, is not just any Greek city, but a place with imperial stories to tell, stories of one empire giving way to another.

Dionysius’ Syracuse

At Syracuse the Athenian empire crumbles and a Syracusan empire emerges. Although democratic institutions are valorized in the novels’ version of Hermocrates’ Syracuse and its contrast with the Persian court, in historical fact democracy did not long survive the defeat of the Athenians. Hermocrates himself attempted to seize sole power in 407 and was killed in the conflict he provoked. Subsequently, Dionysius builds an autocratic and extensive rule lasting from 405-367. He controlled most of Sicily, and his power extended into Italy and the Adriatic as far north as Ancona. As we have noted, the child of Callirhoe and Chaereas, whom Callirhoe has pretended is Dionysius’ child (3,7), is left at the end of the action to be raised by him in Ionia (8,4,5), but there are clear prophecies of his future: he is to come to

Syracuse and be received in triumph (2,11,2; 3,8,8; 8,4,6; 8,7,11-12).⁸ The child's projected life story would dovetail roughly with some of the facts audiences might remember about the historical Dionysius I: that there were conflicting stories about his origins,⁹ and that he was connected to Hermocrates through Hermocrates' daughter, who suffered a violent attack.

Certainly, Chariton rewrites history. The historical daughter of Hermocrates does not emerge alive from her tomb, and the historical Dionysius was her husband, not her son. Yet, despite the fact that the historical and fictional Dionysius-stories don't match up exactly, the novel's open-ended ending offers an aition for the re-emergence of tyranny in Syracuse. Dionysius' childhood in wealthy Ionia and the links of his 'foster-father' Dionysius to the Persian king serve to 'explain' both his name and his tyrannical and non-democratic rule, while his ultimate status as the child of the true Syracusans Callirhoe and Chaereas –whose wedding was requested and celebrated by the entire demos of Syracuse (1,1,11, 14) – imaginatively legitimates his position. Where Bakhtin would say that the 'adventure time' of the novel is totally sealed off from the historical time and circumstances of author and audience, I think we might say instead that this child's implied future as Dionysius I of Syracuse serves as a portal between the 'adventure time' of the novel's action and historical time. In contrast to the typical view of Dionysius as a bad tyrant,¹⁰ Chariton's optimistic imagining of the arrival of Callirhoe's child in Syracuse presents an altogether sunnier picture of the tyrant's future.

⁸ So Naber 1901, 98-99. On Dionysius himself our main source is Diodorus Siculus 14-15; see further Caven 1990, 50-58.

⁹ Diod. Sic 13,96,4 says that Dionysius started out as a grammateus and an ordinary citizen; in a passage deriving from Philistus, Cicero (*Tusc.* 5,57) describes his birth and social position as *bonus* and *honestus* but mentions that others characterize Dionysius less favorably; cf. Caven 1990, 19-20.

¹⁰ Certainly Diodorus Siculus, writing in the 30 years that precede the battle of Actium, is almost unrelievedly hostile (e.g. 14,2), and Cicero in the *Tusculan Disputations* uses Dionysius as paradigm of the moral evils of tyranny (*Tusc.* 5,57-63). The only known ancient biography of Dionysius (now lost) paired him with Domitian: see Caven 1990, 1, citing Photius cod. 131.

Augustus' Syracuse

It remains to ask how this might reflect Chariton's own historical situation. As a Latinist, I can't help noticing that Chariton's optimistic rewriting of the stories of Dionysius I as a bad tyrant parallels Augustus' own process of controlling the script of his rise to power, doing everything he could to dissociate himself from the paradigms of tyranny and monarchy while actually gathering sole power unto himself and his successors. Is it reasonable to suppose that a Greek novelist working sometime between mid first and mid second centuries CE would be interested enough in the Roman emperors to construct such an allegorical dimension of his work? Yes, if he comes from Aphrodisias, a city with exceptionally strong links to Rome and its emperors because of its cult of Aphrodite, mother of Rome's legendary founder Aeneas.¹¹ Aphrodisians were granted freedom from taxation and other special privileges in 39 BCE under the sponsorship of Octavian, who traced his descent back to Aeneas and Aphrodite through his adoptive father Julius Caesar.¹² The Sebasteion, a monumental portico complex erected by two wealthy local families, begun under Tiberius and completed under Nero, celebrated the empire, the emperor and the imperial family in an elaborate program of relief sculptures which combined Greek myth with Roman history (itself claiming origins in myths of Troy).¹³ The prominence of Rome's mythic Trojan origins in Aphrodisian civic consciousness, perhaps only fully evident with the publication of the Sebasteion sculptures in the mid -1980's, brings a new immediacy to the question of Chariton's uses of Trojan myths,

¹¹ See Erim 1986; documentation of links to Rome is set out in full in Reynolds 1982. The tradition of honoring Rome's patron goddess Venus and the eastern origins of her founder Aeneas by making gifts to Aphrodite at Aphrodisias extends as far back as Sulla, who was directed by an oracle to make a dedication of a double axe to her: Appian *BC* 1,11,97, on which see Reynolds 1982, 3. Julius Caesar dedicated a golden statue of Eros to the goddess which no doubt advertised his claim to descend from Aphrodite via Aeneas: Reynolds 1982, doc. 12 lines 13 ff. He probably gave the right of asylum to the temple: Reynolds 1982, doc. 8 lines 41 f and Tacitus *Ann.* 3.69, with Reynolds 1982, pp. 5 and 79. Some attention has been paid to Chariton's Aphrodisian origins: Schmeling 1974, 20-21; Alvares 1993, 172-175; Jones 1992b, 161-7, highlights nuances in the novel by his attention to social history from an Aphrodisian perspective; Edwards 1985 argues that since Aphrodisias claims a special closeness to Aphrodite, the role of Aphrodite in directing the action of the novel operates as an expression of Aphrodisian civic pride; he makes the case in more detail in Edwards 1996, 20-2, 33-6, 60-1, 80-1, 95-100, 130-1.

¹² Reynolds 1982, docs. 6-8

¹³ On sculpture in the Sebasteion see Smith 1987, 1988, 1990.

already suggestively traced by Marcelle Laplace in 1980. She points to the ways that Callirhoe at some times plays a role similar to Helen's (especially in Euripides' *Helen*) and at others is an Aphrodite figure. In particular, Laplace argues, Callirhoe is like Aphrodite in leaving her child to be raised in the east without her: like Aphrodite's Aeneas, Callirhoe's child is destined for a westward journey that founds an empire.¹⁴ Indeed, she views the novel as an '*histoire symbolique*', concluding, 'Rome, the hope and future of Greece, such is the destiny that Chariton extols'.¹⁵ On this allegorical level, Chariton's novel, like the Sebasteion itself, uses Trojan myth to celebrate both Aphrodisian civic pride and the coming of Rome.

The shifting function of Syracuse in the Roman political and historical imaginary supports this allegorical interpretation. Syracuse, reputed to be the most beautiful of all Greek cities (Cic. *Verr.* 2,4,117), was defeated by Marcellus in a siege in 211; he adorned Rome with Syracusan spoils and was said to have boasted 'even to Greeks,' that in this way 'he taught the ignorant Romans to honor and marvel at the beautiful and wondrous works of Greece' (Plut. *Marc.* 21,5). This Marcellan narrative traces what is Greek and beautiful in Rome back to a Syracusan source. In the aftermath of Octavian's conflict with Sextus Pompeius, Syracuse takes on another meaning: for Augustus, as for Chariton, Syracuse is a place where you solve a pirate problem and begin an empire. In the realm of fiction, the events of the novel's 'adventure time' are set in motion when the bandit Theron (apparently based at Syracuse¹⁶) abducts Callirhoe from her tomb and it ends when the disruption caused by Theron has been restored to order and the couple returns to Syracuse. In the realm of history, the waters off Syracuse are the scene of events that make way for Augustus' assumption of sole imperial powers. In a series of campaigns variously characterized as piracy and as political opposition to Octavian, Sextus Pompey had gained control of the

¹⁴ Laplace 1980, 120. Even the name Callirhoe, Laplace adds, may subtly reinforce the imaginative link to Troy: the scholiast to Persius 1,134 says that Callirhoe is the name of a daughter of Scamander 'abducted by Paris before Helen'; she cites Hermann 1976-1977 on this point (Laplace 1980, 123). On the parallel between Aphrodite as protectress of Callirhoe and her child and Aphrodite as mother and protectress of Aeneas see Edwards 1996, 35, 131 and, with emphasis on parallels between Aeneas and Callirhoe's child as founders of a dynasty, Edwards 1991, 195-196.

¹⁵ Laplace 1980, 125.

¹⁶ Theron knows local men well (1,7) and is eventually recognized by a fisherman who has seen him before down on the docks (3,4,10).

sea around Sicily, and thus interrupted the flow of grain to Rome.¹⁷ Octavian took steps to contain Sextus Pompey's activities; these were only finally successful when his 'lieutenant' Agrippa defeated the Pompeians in 36.¹⁸ In the *Res Gestae* Augustus refers to his war against Sextus from 42-36 as suppression of piracy.¹⁹ Appian marks the end of his narrative of the civil wars with the breaking of Sextus Pompey's hold on Sicily and surrounding waters in 36 BCE.²⁰

The suppression of Sextus Pompey's Sicilian piracy was physically commemorated by Augustus in the restoration of Syracuse. Strabo writes:

In our own time, since [Sextus] Pompey had mistreated other cities, and especially Syracuse, Augustus Caesar sent out a colony and restored a great part of the old settlement. For in earlier times there was a city of five towns with a wall of one hundred and eighty stadia. While it was not necessary to complete the full circuit, he thought it was necessary to improve only the settled part, which was near the island of Ortygia and which had a perimeter sufficient for a significant city. For Ortygia, which lies near the mainland, is joined to it by a bridge and has the spring Arethusa which sends out its stream straight into the sea. (Strabo 6,2,4)

Like the closure of the gates of the temple of Janus at Rome in 29, at Syracuse the newly refurbished walls and buildings themselves mark a point of closure for civil strife. The full details of the Augustan building program – what exactly was rebuilt, what was a new construction – are difficult to recover and need not detain us here.²¹ After all, there's no evidence that Chariton ever actually saw Syracuse. But he probably knew the bare fact that Augustus did some building that was described as restoration. The high point of Syracuse's past, the time when it received its most notable fortifications and buildings, was the reign of Dionysius I: he fortified the island Ortygia (which he made into a gated community for his court and its protectors),

¹⁷ Appian *BC* 4,11,83; 5,3,18; 5,9,77; 5,9,80. See de Souza 1999, 185-195.

¹⁸ Appian *BC* 5,121.

¹⁹ Augustus *Res Gestae* 25: *mare pacavi a praedonibus*. It was elsewhere characterized as the *bellum Siculum* or the *bellum servile*.

²⁰ Octavian's conflict with Antony culminating in the battle of Actium was to be treated in Appian's 'Egyptian Wars' which is lost to us (cf. Appian *BC* 1,pref. 6).

²¹ For detailed discussion see Wilson 1990, 33-45.

erected public buildings just in front of this wall (Diod. Sic. 14,7,1), and built strategic fortification walls to Epipolai (Diod. Sic. 14,18).²² Augustus' restoration of Syracuse effaces the traces of its decline after the death of Dionysius. But recent history –the defeat of Sextus Pompey and the rise of Augustus – is clearly legible too. Even though there is little topographic detail in Chariton's renderings of Syracuse, in offering readers a view of classical Syracuse and pointing forward to its Dionysian future Chariton engages in a project that is parallel to Augustus' own.

In fact, Chariton plants a verbal signal of the playfully allegorical relation between his novel and Roman history at the beginning of the narrative. After Theron sees Callirhoe's funeral, he spends a sleepless night and asks himself why he should keep risking his life at piracy when he could get rich enough to retire just by robbing her tomb (1,7,1): well might we wonder why it takes a pirate so long to decide on robbery! Putting an end to his reflections he resolves on action with the words ἀνερρίφθω κύβος, 'let the die be cast', and after thinking overnight about which men to recruit for his venture he assembles the group, 'an army fit for such a general' (1,7,3). The military parody here is all of a piece with Chariton's project of historicizing the novel and novelizing history, while the image of a dice game sounds the theme of *tyche* (chance), a common feature of the novels, and one of the themes that they take over from New Comedy.²³ Indeed, when Athenaeus has his dinner-sophists discuss the evils of marriage, one of them cites a passage of Menander that contains exactly this expression. Two men discuss the prospect of marriage for one of them; the man embarking on marriage insists that he must go through with what he has started while the other warns of the dangers ahead (*Deipn.* 13,559d-e):

– If you have any sense, you won't marry and leave behind this life of yours. For I myself have married and that's the reason I advise you against it.

²² It is clear from what Strabo says that Augustus did not rebuild everything that Dionysius had built, but the fact that Strabo goes into such detail about his reasoning suggests that there may have been a perceived need to explain why Augustus didn't comprehensively rebuild the Dionysian city. That is, the model of Dionysius may have been felt so strongly that Augustus (or Strabo) needs to explain the logistical reasons why it is not being followed in every particular.

²³ On the relation of the novel to New Comedy see Fusillo 1989, 43-55; and on Chariton's use of comic elements: Laplace 1971, 103-111; Borgogno 1971; Corbato 1968.

- It’s all settled. ‘Let the die be cast [ἀνερρίφθω κύβος].’
 – Go ahead then. But I hope you survive. You’ll be casting yourself now on a real sea of troubles, not the Libyan or Egyptian... where three ships of thirty survive; not even one man who has married has survived.

Menander ironically reverses the typical contrast between the safe stay-at-home world of the household and the dangerous world of merchant adventuring. Given this Menandrian context, Theron’s words are more than just a piece of the sententious comic furniture of which the novels are so fond. In a nicely judged ironic reversal of Menander’s already ironic description of the dangers of marriage, Theron chooses the ultimate merchant adventure—piracy. And in the end, chance does destroy Theron when he is discovered at sea through the agency of *tyche* (3,3,8) and executed for his abduction of Callirhoe (3,4,18).

Amid the general atmosphere of military parody in the account of Theron’s decision and action, the specific target of Chariton’s parody is Julius Caesar’s decision to cross the Rubicon, and begin his civil war with Pompeius Magnus, in 49. In Plutarch’s account, Caesar rides eagerly to the Rubicon at night, but slows as he draws near and

when he came to the river dividing Cisalpine Gaul from the rest of Italy (it’s called the Rubicon) awareness came over him as he got closer to the terrible deed and was overcome by the magnitude of what he was daring to do, and he halted his swift course and stopped his progress. For a long time he argued in silence with himself, changing his mind in turn, and making repeated changes to his plans. And he talked over his doubts with those friends who were there (one of whom was Asinius Pollio), calculating how great the troubles which the crossing would unleash would be for all men and what great fame for the deed they would leave to posterity. In the end, with some passion, as though hurling himself away from calculation and toward the future, and prefacing it with the expression men usually use when they take difficult and reckless chances, ‘let the die be cast’ [ἀνερρίφθω κύβος], he rushed toward the crossing; he went full speed the rest of the way and rushed into Ariminum before daybreak and seized it. (Plut. *Caes.* 32,5-6)

Plutarch specifies elsewhere that Caesar said ἀνεργήθω κύβος in Greek (*Pomp.* 60,2). Whether or not Caesar (or Plutarch, or Plutarch's source, probably Asinius Pollio) feels this to be a quote from Menander, when Chariton makes it the opening of the action of his novel, he gives his mixture of the historical/comic/erotic a mischievously Caesarian precedent. Look there, says Chariton, Caesar had been messing about on the boundaries between the historical and the erotic long before I got down to work. And in terms of the novel's structure, just as Caesar's plunge across the Rubicon initiates the civil strife that is only fully brought to an end in Augustus' empire, Theron's decision initiates the travels of Callirhoe; it is in this sense the foundation of her adventure, an adventure whose happy ending in Syracuse restores to order what Sicilian piracy brought into chaos. Chariton's 'pathos erotikon' (1,1,1) tells the story of one young love but its allusions to history tell stories of empire.

Is it too bold to view Chariton's Greek novel as engaging in the kinds of allegorical and playfully allusive responses to Rome's imperium that have been traced here? Consider the long and vigorous tradition of writing about Roman history in Greek. In their various ways, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Plutarch, Appian and Dio make narratives of Rome available to two sorts of audiences: Greeks interested in Roman history and Romans interested in reading Greek versions of their history. Each group of readers could find piquant pleasures in Chariton's allusions to Roman imperium. We know too, through papyri, that there was an audience for Latin literature translated into Greek, particularly the works of Vergil and Cicero.²⁴ Chariton might not expect every reader to appreciate the Roman resonances of his erotic history, but he could certainly imagine that some – especially those aware of Aphrodisias' special links to the founders of Rome's empire – would enjoy this additional layer in his historical collage. Swain has characterized the world of the novels as a self-confident elite affirmation of imperviousness to Roman influence, an 'expression of their cultural hegemony',²⁵ Chariton's novel demonstrates that an elite Greek response to Roman imperium could also include playful mastery of Roman history.

I'd like to close with a deliberately provocative question which relates to the problem of dating Chariton's novel. The papyrological evidence indi-

²⁴ Rochette 1997, esp. ch. 4.

²⁵ Swain 1996, 109.

cates that Chariton cannot have composed the novel much after mid-second century CE,²⁶ while the relative lack of Atticist forms and language may suggest that he wrote before the Atticist fashion had really taken hold, perhaps in the first century CE rather than the second.²⁷ Nothing I have said so far depends on assigning the novel to a particular time within this relatively short period, for an awareness of the civil wars and Augustus' consequent establishment of peace would have continued to be central for understanding the history of Roman rule in the Greek east throughout the period. My question pertains to the tantalizing evidence for an early date for Chariton's novel in the last line of the first satire of Persius, who died in 62. The poem sharply condemns Rome for the popularity of inconsequential literary forms and for the fact that Persius' biting and harsh satire has no place there. He closes with a sneer of contempt: '*his mane edictum, post prandium Callirhoen do*' (To these men I leave the morning's magistrate's decree [announcing upcoming entertainments], and *Callirhoe* after lunch, 1,134). Perhaps this bare reference cannot be definitive proof for an early date for Chariton. But just suppose this *is* Chariton's *Callirhoe* being read after lunch at Rome:²⁸ what did Persius hate about it? Just its escapist pleasures? or did Persius, a fierce critic of the principate who laments the loss of the days of the republic when a man could speak his mind, see the novel's aition for the rise and legitimation of a tyrant's empire in Syracuse and its allegorical support for Augustus' version of empire? We'll never know for sure, but the more we understand the imperial stories Chariton tells at Syracuse the more sense it would make for Persius to hate them.²⁹

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²⁶ Lucke 1985; Petri 1963, 46-51, quoting correspondence from E. G. Turner.

²⁷ Arguments for an early date on stylistic grounds: Papanikolaou 1973, on which see the cautionary remarks of Giangrande, 1974. Arguments for a date in the late first or early second century: Ruiz-Montero 1989, 1991, 1994, 1008-1012.

²⁸ Among recent critics those who believe Persius is referring to Chariton's novel include Goold 1995, 4-5, and Reardon 1996, 316-317.

²⁹ I am grateful to audience members at ICAN 2000, and to Denis Feeney, Alain Gowing, Sandra Joshel, Mark Nugent and David Scourfield for their helpful advice.

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