

Metaphor and politics in John Barclay's *Argenis* (1621)

CATHERINE CONNORS
University of Washington, Seattle

On May 25, 2001, an article appeared in *The New York Times* under the headline: 'Is Baghdad's tiger a literary lion?'¹ It discussed the publication in Iraq of a novel in Arabic titled *Zabibah wal Malik, Zabibah and the King*. The novel was published anonymously, but its author was said to be Saddam Hussein (or at least, indications were that he wanted to be known as its author). Set in pre-Christian times in what is now northern Iraq, the novel tells the allegorical story of Zabibah, an everywoman who stands for the Iraqi people, her cruel husband, who stands for the decadent west, and the king, who stands for Saddam himself. The king is much taken with Zabibah's wisdom, and speaks at length with her about politics and other issues. Not surprisingly, she endorses the king's authoritarian rule, saying, 'the people need strict measures so they can feel protected by this strictness.' The central event of the novel is the rape of Zabibah by her husband. The king vows vengeance, and in the subsequent battle both Zabibah and her husband are killed. The battle takes place on January 17, which commemorates the date on which the United States-led coalition began bombing Baghdad in the first Gulf War in 1991. Zabibah's tale uses the familiar metaphor in which the bodily integrity of a woman stands for the integrity of a political entity. As the *Times* notes, Zabibah herself makes this point, after she has been raped. 'Zabibah says to herself, "Rape is the most serious of crimes, whether it is a man raping a woman or invading armies raping the homeland or the usurpation of rights."' Here we have perhaps the most extreme case we can imagine of the novel as political document: – to justify his authoritarian rule, Saddam

¹ Sciolino 2001. Thomas Keneally's *The Tyrant's Novel* (2004) is a fictional imagining of the adventures of Saddam's ghostwriter.

aims to be seen to speak – through fiction – intimately to the Iraqi people, just as the king speaks intimately to Zabibah.

Consider next Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*, a four-novel sequence which also uses fiction organized around the bodily integrity of a woman as a metaphor for the integrity of a political entity. Set in India, it tells of the events of August 9, 1942, on which an English woman (named Daphne Manners) first slept with her Indian lover and subsequently was raped by a group of Indians; her lover is arrested and he is subsequently punished by a sadistic British official in what amounts to a non-literal version of rape. These events took place on 'the day after the Indian National Congress endorsed Gandhi's resolution for the British to quit India,'² and through various sorts of flashbacks, Scott intricately constructs his narrative to embrace the whole history of the English presence in India. Scott positions this four-novel cycle as an extended anti-imperialist meditation on the idea that England's rule over India has constituted a kind of rape. Yet, as Jenny Sharpe has argued in her *Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text*, what Scott presents as an anti-imperialist allegory does not in itself transcend imperialist assumptions about the hierarchical relations of men and women, colonizers and colonized, haves and have nots.³

Now, no one would want to make the argument that the ancient Greek novels are explicitly political in the same obvious way as Zabibah's tale, or Scott's *Raj Quartet*. But the ancient Greek novels too invite readers to see connections between bodily integrity and the territorial and political integrity of a region and culture. The heroines' process of preserving physical and psychological integrity in the Greek novels can be read as a metaphor for the experience of continuing to be (or enact being) Greek in the Roman empire. That is to say, the ways the novels – and elite Greek culture in general – position themselves as impervious to Rome find a metaphorical equivalent in the way the heroines are impervious to the villains who threaten them.⁴

Explicitly political allegory is found in the *Argenis*, an idealizing romance novel in Latin by John Barclay published in 1621. The noted neo-Latin scholar IJsewijn has thrown down the gauntlet, provocatively calling Barclay's *Argenis* 'without a doubt the best novel written in Latin.'⁵ Dozens

² Sharpe 1993: 144.

³ See especially Sharpe 1993: 23.

⁴ Haynes 2003: 161–2; cf. Whitmarsh 1998, 1999.

⁵ IJsewijn 1983: 5.

of editions and translations of the novel appeared in the century following its initial publication;⁶ interest in the *Argenis* waned in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but an excellent edition by Mark T. Riley and Dorothy Pritchard Huber appeared in 2004. The *Argenis* is fascinating in its own right, both for its sophisticated allusions to, and transformations of, classical texts, and for its engagements with issues that are central concerns these days in early modern studies: it operates within, and reveals the operations of, ideological assumptions about race, gender, religion and ethnicity that were and are crucial for establishing and maintaining the power structures of Europe and the West. What Zabibah's tale does in a crude and overly explicit way, what Scott does in an intricate, almost apologetic way, and what the Greek novels do in a subtly encoded way, Barclay's *Argenis* does in a supremely confident and resonant way: they each use fictions set in the distant past and organized around the metaphor of woman as country to comment on the political present.

I Political discourse in Barclay's *Argenis*

Scottish on his father's side, Barclay was born in 1582 in France, where his father William was professor of law at the Jesuit University of Lorraine. His literary career began with a commentary on Statius' *Thebaid*, and went on to include politically advantageous occasional poems and pamphlets, theological tracts, and a comprehensive survey of human and national character, the *Icon Animorum*. Barclay also wrote two Latin novels: in each he mobilized fiction to comment on the political circumstances of his own day. Barclay himself, evidently a man of supple persuasion and agile wit, moved in the highest political circles. Catholic throughout his life, he secured the patronage of the protestant King James I of England (he served as a Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber) and Pope Paul V in turn, and was cultivating Louis XIII of France when he died in 1621.⁷ His first novel, *Euphormio's Satyricon*, as its name would suggest, models itself on Petronius' *Satyricon*. Barclay surely saw Petronius's *Satyricon* as a political satire directed at Nero, and took it as a model for his own ambitions to create literarily sophisticated

⁶ Schmid 1904.

⁷ On Barclay's life, see Fleming 1973: ix–xiv; Riley and Huber 2004: 4–11. On the study and writing of Latin in Elizabethan and Jacobean England see Binns 1990, esp. 291–306.

political satire. Keys claiming to explicate the contemporary political references concealed in the fictional narrative were circulated. In response Barclay published his *Apologia pro se* in 1610 insisting that his targets were human failings in general, not particular individuals; nevertheless, keys continued to be included in most subsequent editions of the novel.⁸

The *Argenis*, published in Paris in 1621 just after Barclay died in Rome, is quite different from *Euphormio's Satyricon*, for it is constructed on the model of the idealizing Greek romances – particularly Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*.⁹ Set in Greek Sicily, Barclay's novel tells of Argenis, daughter of the benevolent though ineffectual King Meleander, and four men who wish to marry her. There are two villains: Lycogenes, a rebel, and Radirobanes, king of Sardinia; and two heroes: Archombrotus, a mysterious stranger who turns out to be the son of Meleander by Anna, sister of the rather Dido-like Queen Hyanisbe of Mauritania; and Poliarchus, who turns out to be a French king. The plot twists and turns relentlessly: intrigues and adventures include disguise, feigned death, mistaken identity, secret passages, a poison bracelet, a purloined letter, and rampaging elephants, to name only a few. In the end, Poliarchus is united with Argenis and offers his sister in marriage to Archombrotus, whereupon everyone looks forward to a happy future, in which Poliarchus and Argenis will rule in France and Archombrotus and his bride will rule in Sicily.

Barclay uses the court poet Nicopompus to articulate his didactic purpose in writing the novel. In Book Two Nicopompus asserts that he would like to allay civil strife in Sicily by instructing the Sicilian king and the rebels to avoid destructive passions. Warned of the pitfalls of criticizing king

⁸ Fleming 1973. I have discussed Barclay's use of Petronius at Connors 1995: 64–72; on the Keys, see Fleming 1973: xxvi–xxxii, 359–78; Riley and Huber 2004: 45–48.

⁹ The editio princeps of Heliodorus had appeared in 1534, Warschewiczki's Latin translation in 1552, and Thomas Underdowne's vigorous English version in 1577. See further Carver 2002: 344–47; Wilson 1991: 20–23. The Key in the 1636 edition of the *Argenis* announces its idealizing qualities, in contrast to *Euphormio*: 'The scope of that Satyricall book [called Euphormio] is to taxe the world with a certain harmlesse violence (they are the author's owne words) more for its own praise, than to blame others. But this Booke is all full of a Regall and Heroicall Spirit; there is nothing in it either base, or meane; but all things excellent, aspiring to the highest pitch of a super-eminent Majestie. In the Satyrist therefore, there is a manifold mixture of all kinde, both of things and persons: but in Argenis, you shall alwayes meet constantly with one and the same kind of thing, namely, an institution or ordering both of King and Kingdome; and that not more effectually in Precepts, than in Examples.' For extended discussion of Barclay's relation to the Greek novel, see Bardino 1939: 32–98.

and people directly, he proposes instead to write a 'some stately fable, in manner of a Historie' (*grandem fabulam historiae instar*): readers will learn wisdom while being entertained by a plot that mixes together 'Armes, Mariages, Bloodshed, Mirth' (2.14.5).¹⁰ He even calls for writing tablets right then to get started. Nicopompus' instructional aims mirror Barclay's own intentions.¹¹ As one critic puts it: 'the political world depicted in the *Argenis* is not simply a neutral picture of disguised historical events, but an interpretation of the use and abuse of power' (Salzman 1985:152). As with Barclay's earlier *Satyricon*, despite Barclay's claim not to attack particular targets, Keys to the *Argenis* were circulated and, from 1627, included in its editions.¹²

As the presence of the syllable 'arch' in the names of the two heroes Poliarchus and Archombrotus might indicate, from the outset it is clear that Barclay has politics on his mind.¹³ The novel begins with the arrival of Archombrotus in Sicily. After Archombrotus attempts to help Poliarchus, who has come into conflict with some of the men of Lycogenes, they repair together to the house of the widow Timoclea, where Poliarchus fills Archombrotus in on the political picture in Sicily: the king Meleander is genial and well-intentioned but weak (1.2.3–6). Later on, Archombrotus tries to ask for more details about government and court life in Sicily (1.14); this is interrupted by a band of country men who think he is Poliarchus and demand to take him to the king. Once he is brought to the king and recognized as not Poliarchus, further discussions of government ensue. Over dinner, a certain Anaximander, nephew of Lycogenes, asserts that bees have no king, and in fact all animals prefer liberty to being ruled (1.18.1). The experienced and wise political advisors who populate Meleander's court are anagrammatic versions of Barclay's friends.¹⁴ Religion and politics are closely intertwined, and pagan realities are tweaked to make it clear who stands for which kind of

¹⁰ Quotations of the *Argenis* are taken from Riley and Huber 2004; translations are taken from Barclay 1636. Translations of other Latin texts are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹¹ So Riley and Huber 2004: ad loc.

¹² On the Keys to the *Argenis*, see Collignon 1902: 61–9; Bardino 1939: 99–119; Riley and Huber 2004: 22–26, 45–48. In the copy of Martin Opitz's 1644 German translation of the *Argenis* in the University of Washington Library Rare Book Room, an early reader wrote his own copy of a Key in the form of an alphabetical list into the blank pages at the end of the book.

¹³ For an overview of the novel's most explicitly political passages, see Riley and Huber 2004: 16–22.

¹⁴ IJsewijn 1983: 12; Collignon 1902: 80–87.

Christian. Archombrotus hears a report that Lycogenes is contracting an alliance against Meleander with a faction known as the Hyperephanians (Greek for ‘arrogant ones’) and asks about them; they turn out to be very Protestant-sounding followers of a man named Usinulca, whose name is an anagram of Calvinus. These Hyperephanians do not worship the gods in the old ways; under their influence vestals and priests, tiring of their chastity, abandon their old rites and marry each other (2.5.3).¹⁵ There are discussions of the role of royal advisors (3.14), of law and judges (3.22), of keeping peace (4.4), and of the roles of ambassadors and secretaries of state (5.3). All of these political discussions are distinctly pro-monarchist and embrace the same political ideas set out in Barclay’s survey of human and national character, the *Icon Animorum*, which was published in 1614, and was, like the *Argenis*, dedicated to Louis XIII of France. There Barclay repeatedly asserts that nations thrive best when they are united under a benevolent monarch. The height of pro-monarchist sentiment is reserved for Poliarchus. He gives advice to the Queen of Mauritania as she faces a threatened invasion. She worries about the delay that will ensue if she has to summon Parliament to levy a tax for war preparations; he responds coolly that monarchs should not have to summon Parliament to raise taxes, and furthermore, taxes are good in themselves since the necessity to work productively to pay them prevents the people from falling into idleness (4.18). Poliarchus is no fool though. When he comes of age and is first introduced as a ruler in his native France, his initial action is a people-pleasing tax cut (4.13.5). In all these ways then, Barclay constructs his novel to teach subjects that benevolent monarchy is the best political system and to teach rulers how to be truly and successfully benevolent.

¹⁵ ‘Hee [Usinulca], slighting the worship of the gods, which flourished here in Sicily, presumed to bring in new Religions, and to inveigle the peace of such Consciences as were to be swayed by pride, or too much simplicitie. Some thought it a brave thing, after the leader, to fall from the opinion of their Ancestors: others, his eloquence deceived, mixt with the shew of pietie. To this may be added the force of Noveltie (*impetus novitatis*) with so great madnesse blinding men’s mindes, that the barbarous affections of Usinulca found commenders, not from the vast and remote parts of the Earth, but (which would strike you into amazement) out of the bowels of Sicily...’ (2.5.1) and ‘What shall I say of the Vestals? What of the Priests of the gods? When they are wearie of their Chastitie, they doe, without punishment, rayle at Religion, and to buy the enjoying of their incestuous Marriages, give up themselves to the Hyperephanians’ (2.5.3) Subsequent discussions of predestination and visits to the temple of fortune also intersect with contemporary religious debates, esp. 2.17, 4.7.

II Geopolitics and the classical past

Barclay sets the novel mainly in Classical Greek Sicily and Mauritania, when 'The World as yet had not bowed to the Roman Scepter' (*nondum orbis adoraverat Romam*), as the novel's first words say. In one way, Barclay closely follows the example of the ancient Greek novels, which themselves turn away from contemporary reality in their depiction of a past untouched by Roman *imperium*, though by mentioning Rome at all – and, of course, by writing in Latin – he dispenses with the Greek fictions of Rome's invisibility. At a strictly historical level, the setting in the pre-Roman classical past allows Barclay to seal his story off from the main axes of geopolitical conflict that shaped his world: Catholic vs. Protestant, and Christian vs. Moslem. Barclay gives himself an alibi against the charge that he is engaging in harsh political attacks; this all happened too long ago to be a specific attack on any modern rulers. Yet Barclay's allusive and metaphorical language clearly, if indirectly, conveys his contemporary political views to his audience. The word *adoraverat* in the novel's opening sentence, for example, signals the ascendancy of Catholic, papal Rome as much as or more than it refers to Classical Rome's domination of the mediterranean world. One of Barclay's central political causes was his support of the view that the Pope should not wield power over kings.¹⁶ By creating a world before the 'adoration' of Rome, Barclay gives an example of the political, diplomatic and religious structures that are his ideal. Within this overall strategy of metaphorical substitution of the past for the present, Barclay's rewriting of classical models establishes continuities between the mythical past of gods and legends, the time of *Argenis*' adventures, and Barclay's own time. In other words, allusions to classical texts are not a decorative add-on, they are the means by which Barclay uses metaphor to talk politics.

Rebellion and rape: Sicily and its metaphors

For Barclay and his readers, Sicily is the place where Ovid's Jove defended the cosmic order by piling Aetna on top of the rebellious Typhoeus (*Met.* 5.346–58, 14.1), where Pluto raped Proserpina (*Met.* 5.359–424), where

¹⁶ In 1609, Barclay edited and published *de potestate Papae*, by his father William Barclay, which argued that the Pope should not have authority over secular rulers, and in 1612 he published *Pietas*, his own response to objections raised to his father's view.

Daedalus paused in his flight from Minos under the protection of the Sicilian king Cocalus (*Met.* 8.260–62), and where Acis was loved by Galatea and slain by Polyphemus (*Met.* 13.724–897). In a set of interlocking references to Ovid's Sicily, Barclay repeatedly measures Lycogenes' rebellious actions and their consequences against Typhoeus' attack on Jove. Such mythical references to Jove's successful defense of his spot at the top of the divine political and cosmic world order are in pointed contrast to the struggles of Meleander to rule his Sicilian realm. The accumulation of references which cast Lycogenes as a second Typhoeus is evidence both of the novel's narrative aesthetic (why say something once if you can say it again, and yet again?) and of Barclay's thorough and subtle mastery of his Ovidian models.¹⁷ When Archombrotus and Poliarchus are at Timoclea's house, they see that the beacons which are used to send signals from the king have been lit. Before they know the reason for the signal, they worry that civil war may have broken out. Timoclea brings out a copy of some verses by Nicopompus in which Lycogenes' actions against Meleander are compared to (among other attacks on Jove's power) the assault of the Giants on Jove which resulted in Aetna being piled on top of the giants (1.3.8). Here Barclay conflates Jove's defeat of the giants who pile Pelion on Ossa to mount an assault on the heavens (told by Ovid at *Met.* 1.151–55) with Jove's defeat of Typhoeus by piling Aetna on top of Typhoeus (told by Ovid at *Met.* 5.346–58, 14.1). The conflation is a useful one for Barclay: Lycogenes' name, which means 'Wolf-born,' signals his literary descent from another of Jove's challengers, Ovid's Lycaon (from Greek *lykos* 'wolf'), whose tale Jove tells at *Metamorphoses* 1.209–98, just after he wins his battle with the Giants. Barclay 'footnotes' the allusion when Poliarchus compares the trouble which Lycogenes has caused him with what he says is the moral of the tale of Lycaon: 'What else doth the Fable intimate of Lycaon's intent to murder Jupiter as then his Guest; than that Princes come to untimely ends, by trusting themselves to strangers' (1.5.3). In an amusing flourish typical of Barclay, actual traces of the mythical Sicilian past subsequently emerge from the ground: during preparations for open warfare with Lycogenes, large bones are found

¹⁷ Compare Barkan 1989: 171–241, a spacious discussion of the reception of the *Metamorphosis* during the renaissance; see too Burrow 2002. On the use of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as an inspiration for the design and interpretation of gardens in the renaissance, see Hunt 1996: 42–58, Hinds 2002: 142–47.

in digging for Meleander's tent, and are presumed to be traces of the Cyclopes (2.22.1).¹⁸

Barclay alludes to another Sicilian mountain-piling-up-narrative when he describes a palace of Meleander's at Magella (cf. Plin. *Nat.* 3.91), where Argenis hears a false report of her beloved Poliarchus' death. In the palace there lies a fountain whose statues are said to have been carved by Daedalus as a gift for his host Cocalus, under whose protection Daedalus avoided the vengeance of Minos (*Argenis* 1.10.2; cf. Ov. *Met.* 8.260–62). The statues depict Galatea mourning over the body of Acis after his death at the hands of Polyphemus and subsequent transformation into a spring. As told by Ovid in book 13 of the *Metamorphoses*, the Acis-Polyphemus myth rings changes on the main elements of the Typhoeus-Jove myth: scorn for Jove followed by the Aetna toss. Polyphemus says that he fears only Galatea, not Jove: *Iovem et caelum sperno et penetrabile fulmen*, *Met.* 13.857. Polyphemus says that he feels he has Aetna – that is to say its fires, and that is to say in turn fiery struggling Typhoeus – within himself: *cumque suis videor translata viribus Aetnam / pectore ferre meo*, *Met.* 13.868–9. And then to kill Acis, he hurls a piece of the mountain itself at him (*partemque e monte revulsam / mittit*, *Met.* 13.882–83). Just as Ovid constructs the Acis story as a variant of the Typhoeus story, Barclay nests the Acis reference within a larger pattern of references to the Typhoeus story. Barclay revels in his post-Ovidian status: what was a story (told by Galatea) in the model text becomes a work of art – the fountain and statues – in Barclay's novel. Barclay's own novelistic model for this shift from a narrative register (Ovid has Galatea tell what happened to Acis) to an ecphrastic register (Barclay describes a fountain depicting the story) is probably Apuleius' transformation of Ovid's Actaeon narrative (Ov. *Met.* 3.138–252) into an ecphrastic description of an Actaeon fountain (Apul. *Met.* 2.4).¹⁹ Even Polyphemus' famous song to Galatea, with its echoing litany of comparisons (*candidior folio ... floridior pratis ... splen-*

¹⁸ A contemporary allusion, as well as a classical one. As Collignon 1902: 88 remarks, Barclay's publisher Peiresc had an interest in the 1613 discovery of large bones in Dauphiné, near the meeting point of the Rhône and the Isère: some claimed them to be the bones of an ancient giant Teutobochus, defeated by Marius, but Peiresc vigorously refuted them, arguing that the bones were probably those of an elephant. Evidently, Peiresc had the idea of sending to Sicily for confirmation of his theory because a similar finding had been reported there.

¹⁹ On Apuleius' refashioning of Ovid in this passage, see further Slater 1998 and Hinds 2002: 146.

didior vitro ... saevior indomitis eadem Galatea iuvenis, durior annosa quercu, fallacior undis ... Met. 13.789–807) is remade as verses (eight elegiac couplets) inscribed by the *artifex* which recount Galatea's resounding retort to Polyphemus,

Durior O saxo, quo nunc meus occidit Acis,
Asperior silvis et, Polypheme, tuis (1.10.3)

Seeing the fountain just after she has heard the (false) tale of Poliarchus' death, Argenis is altogether ready to see parallels between her own story of love and jealous rivalry and the fountain's Acis and Galatea and Polyphemus: *erat sibi Galatea* (1.10.4). But she cannot decide whether to cast Lycogenes or her father Meleander as her Polyphemus: *sed quis ille Polyphemus?* (1.10.4) She herself measures her plot against its mythical template and her delicious hesitation shows the extent to which Barclay constructs an encounter with the mythical past as a series of lively interpretive choices.

Because Barclay's Argenis lives in an Ovidian Sicily, there is always the danger that the fate of Ovid's Proserpina will befall her too. The political threats to Meleander's rule posed first by Lycogenes and subsequently by Radirobanes are expressed in attempts on Argenis; her safety is equivalent to the safety of the state: rape would equal rebellion. The juxtaposition of rebellion and rape itself comes from Ovid. In the contest between the Muses and the Pierides in the fifth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the Pierid sings of Typhoeus' assault on the gods (*Met. 5.318–31*); in the Muse Calliope's response, Pluto comes up from the Underworld to survey the results of Jove's burial of Typhoeus under Sicily, catches sight of Proserpina and carries her off (*Met. 5.346–61*). Barclay alludes to the Pierid song in one of his references to Lycogenes' rebellion. When Poliarchus is preparing to leave the cave where he has been hiding, his friend Arsidas shows him another of Nicopompus' poems which tells of the gods' flight to Egypt in the face of Typhoeus' assault and their concealment (as in *Met. 5.326–31*) in animal shapes (1.12.3). Barclay's poem makes the disguised gods' mythical journey to Africa into a precedent that his characters will re-enact in their own various journeys to Africa in disguise.

In Barclay's version, the rebellious Typhoeus and the rapist Pluto are collapsed into the single figure of Lycogenes. His dual identities are neatly on display when Lycogenes successfully besieges the forces of Meleander at

Enna, mythical site of Proserpina's rape (2.19.1 in Riley and Huber 2004 ; in Barclay 1636 it is printed at the end of book 18). After Meleander withdraws from Enna he regroups at Epeircte (2.19.1) and eventually preparations are made for battle. On the eve of the battle between the forces of Meleander and Lycogenes' rebels, Meleander is joined by his ally Radirobanes for dinner. After a discourse on the natural history of Mount Aetna, and the history of Sicily, 'then began the pleasingnesse of old Fables, to put them out of Historie,' *fabularum inde voluptas historiam abegit* (2.22.6). The stories listed are Ovid's: Scylla and Charybdis; Galatea, Acis and the Cyclops; Arethusia; Eryx (vs. Hercules) (cf. Eryx vs. Perseus in *Met.* 5.196–199); Pluto and Proserpina; Cyane, and the wanderings of Ceres in search of Proserpina. Barclay has already gone to great lengths to create parallels between Lycogenes' rebellious actions toward Meleander and the giants' rebellious assault on the heavens. This catalogue of Sicilian myths in the very last lines of Book 2 'footnotes' Ovid's Sicilian tales.²⁰ And in Book 3, Barclay will go on to present Argenis again and again as a Proserpina figure. As in *Metamorphoses* 5, a narrative of rebellious gigantomachic assault is the prelude to the tale of a Sicilian (attempted) rape, which Barclay tells in Book 3 in two nested and interlocking narratives.

Back in Book 1, one of the first things Archombrotus had been told about Lycogenes is that after having made an unsuccessful attempt to kidnap Argenis (in a castle where she was staying at the mouth of the river Alabus (1.2)), he is now fomenting a rebellion against Meleander. In Book 3 a full narrative of this earlier attempted assault on Argenis serves as the prelude to a second attempted abduction of Argenis, this time by Radirobanes. After Lycogenes has been defeated by the forces of Meleander and his ally Radirobanes of Sardinia, Argenis' servant Selenissa tells Radirobanes all about how Lycogenes persuaded two of his men to make their way by stealth into Meleander's palace, and Argenis' chamber. There, they were soundly defeated by a woman named Theocrine who displayed remarkable strength and swordsmanship (3.9–3.10). At 3.11, Argenis enters and interrupts Selenissa's tale; she happens to have with her (!) a copy of some verses praising a grove of trees nearby where she likes to walk and rest, and hands them to Selenissa for Radirobanes to read. The verses open with a catalogue of trees reminiscent of Ovid's catalogue of the trees that assemble at the sound of Orpheus'

²⁰ Silius Italicus offers a similarly comprehensive overview of Sicilian myths as a prelude to his account of the campaign of Marcellus in Syracuse (*Punica* 14.1–291).

song (*Met.* 10. 86–105). Then Barclay adds flowers to the scene, comparing the grove's blossoms to the flowers which Proserpina picked at Enna before her rape (3.11.2):

fecundaque puro
 fonte arbusta tepent. Tum floribus alma superbos
 vestit terra sinus, quales non blanda faventis
 aura creat Zephyri, Stygio nuptura marito,
 quos legat Enneis simplex Proserpina campis.

a Fount divine

Waters this Greene, clothing the ground beneath
 With Flowers produc'd by Zephire's favouring breath.
 With such, fayre Proserpina now neere her rape
 In Enna's Field had fill'd her Virgin lap.

When Argenis interrupts Selenissa's tale and hands over these verses, a reference to Proserpina is planted in the text just as Radiobanes is being inspired to try to kidnap Argenis by the story of Lycogenes' attempt on her. Barclay borrows the term *simplex* for Proserpina from Ovid's line *tantaque simplicitas puerilibus adfuit annis* (*Met.* 5.400), which describes Proserpina's sorrow, even in the midst of her abduction, at losing her flowers.

Next, Poliarchus secretly returns to Sicily from Mauritania and meets with Argenis. Poliarchus tells Argenis that he will now go to his own country, assemble an army and come back to her in three months (3.15). At this point, Selenissa meets again with Radiobanes and resumes her story (3.16). In Selenissa's tale, as in the events which interrupt its telling, Poliarchus turns out to have made his way to Argenis in secret: Selenissa proceeds to reveal that the exceptionally strong Theocrine is none other than Poliarchus in disguise (3.17.1–2). In the aftermath of the altercation with Lycogenes' men, Meleander mistakenly concludes that Theocrine, now nowhere to be found, is actually the goddess Pallas (3.18.2). Upon bringing Argenis back to Syracuse from Epeirete, Meleander appoints her a priestess of Pallas (3.19.1) to honor the rescue. Meanwhile, Poliarchus arrives at Syracuse, no longer in female disguise, and quickly is welcomed by Meleander (3.19.4). This sets up a scene in which Argenis and Poliarchus share secret laughter at the idea of offering sacrifices to Pallas in thanks for the rescue (3.19.11).

In telling the story to Radirobanes, the trouble-making Selenissa subsequently adds that Argenis now really wants Radirobanes to kidnap her: *Cogi optat Argenis. Et hoc quidem ut fidem exsolvat Poliarcho, cui promisit nunquam sponte consentire in alium*. 'Argenis desires to be forced: and for this reason, that shee may keepe her word with Poliarchus; to whom shee promised, never willingly to be married to another,' 3.21.2). Selenissa's ploy works: as a result of her inflammatory tale, Radirobanes will make a plot to abduct Argenis from her birthday celebrations. He will lure Argenis and her father down to the harbor to inspect his ship, and, after staging an elaborate masque of the sort that entertained the Jacobean court, he will keep them until dark with the promise of fireworks (3.21.6).²¹ His plot to kidnap Argenis will be the second time she is almost forced to play Proserpina.

There is one more Ovidian flourish in Barclay's Sicilian narrative. At the end of Selenissa's tale of Theocrine, Radirobanes is incensed at the idea of Argenis and Poliarchus sharing a laugh at the idea of the rescue being credited to Pallas. He fumes: 'but if (saith hee) Pallas had beene just, shee had wrapped this mimicke goddess, who usurped divine honors, in many more snares than ever Arachne hung her selfe' (3.19.11). The reference to Pallas' punishment of Arachne neatly punctuates Barclay's extended allusion to Ovid's Sicilian Proserpina. Pallas decides to punish Arachne precisely because of what she has just learned from the Muses: they punish the Pierids for refusing to concede that Calliope's song of Proserpina is superior to the Pierid's tale of Typhoeus (*Met.* 6.1–7).

All this classical Ovidian fun is designed to reinforce Barclay's contemporary political lessons. Repeated references to Sicily as the mythical site of Jove's suppression of rebellious giants are an emphatic part of the novel's overall pro-monarchy agenda. And intimations of the rape of Proserpina help focus attention on the extent to which the bodily integrity of Argenis is a metaphor for the safety of Meleander's rule. Argenis is repeatedly identified closely with the kingdom.²² In Barclay's political allegory, the safety of the state is vested in the safety of Argenis' person:

²¹ Fireworks are a diversion of the renaissance court, not the classical world. Barclay winks at the anachronism: *sed adhuc Radirobanes tenebat Melandrum expectatione ignium Recens inventum, quia nondum emanaverat ad multos, trahebat sui novitate audientes*. 'But Radirobanes held Meleander as yet in expectation of the fireworks This new invention allured the hearers by the novelty thereof, because many of them as yet had not heard of it' (3.24.3).

²² Lycogenes is said to be seeking Argenis and the skeptrum (1.3.8); Meleander tells her that she will inherit the kingdom, and he rules only for her (1.10); she blames herself for

state is vested in the safety of Argenis' person: rape is a metaphor for rebellion.

The Masque for Argenis

Throughout the novel, the preservation of bodily integrity against internal and external attacks is a metaphor for good political order. IJsewijn has astutely pointed out that Argenis' name contains an anagram of *regina*, and argued that therefore she stands for the general principle of monarchy (as opposed to those who see her as having a more limited allegorical significance, as, say, the throne of France.)²³ In the Greek novels, the physical integrity of the woman can be understood as standing for the cultural integrity of being Greek within the Roman empire. In a similar way, Barclay's heroine Argenis is a metaphor for the political safety of the state. But Argenis has a lot less to do than the heroines of the Greek novels: she is never actually abducted, so she spends all of her time at home, pining after Poliarchus and writing the occasional letter or undergoing real or feigned fainting spells at opportune moments (fainting: 1.9.2; 3.25.5). In fact, the physical and emotional testing of the female heroine which are such a big part of the Greek novel become displaced onto the character of Archombrotus. He is the one who thinks a lot about what he is feeling, who feels love for Argenis but cannot express it, and who goes through lots of emotional ups and downs. And he is the one who plays the Charicleia-inspired recognition scenes at the end of the novel. He, like Charicleia, inherits a kingdom as a result of his recognition: while Argenis and Poliarchus go to France to take up Poliarchus' patrimony, the storm cloud (Greek 'ombros') obscuring Archombrotus' ruling identity will lift and he will rule in Sicily as the newly recognized son and heir of its 'sun-king' Meleander.²⁴

the supposed death of Poliarchus, saying that she is why he was in Sicily: *quid illi cum Sicilia, nisi propter Argenidem, fuit?* (1.9.4); a poem praises her as *O virgo, o princeps, Siculorum o cura deorum* (3.11.2); Selenissa warns Argenis not to dismiss Radiobanes as a suitor lest she damage Sicily by doing so: *dolebis Hymenaei tui face Siciliam adhuc civilia excutientem incendia rursus ardere*, 'It would grieve you, that Sicily, having so lately quenched civil combusions, should with your wedding-Torch againe be set on fire' (3.11.4).

²³ IJsewijn 1983: 7–8.

²⁴ IJsewijn 1983: 11 notes that Meleander is identified with the sun at 3.4.10, and observes that Selenissa plays the 'moon' to Argenis' 'sun'. Note too that in the Heliodoran model Charicleia's father Hydaspes is descended from the sun (Hel. 4.8.2–3)

Poliarchus undergoes the travel and testing common to the heroes of the Greek novels. But Barclay's allegorical ambitions impose a kind of decorum on what he will and will not allow to happen to Poliarchus. The imaginative energy that the Greek novels devote to testing the heroines' virginity is channeled here into an obsession with the physical state of Poliarchus. Unlike heroes in the Greek novels, he is never captured. When he is incapacitated it is through being in hiding or being ill: he dallies in Mauritania on his first visit with a fever (2.13; 3.12.2); on his second visit he is wounded in battle (5.1) and then has another fever (5.11). Crucially, Poliarchus rejects or does not need professional medical care. He treats his wounds from the initial skirmish with Lycogenes' men with vinegar and St. John's Wort (1.2.1). In Mauritania, to recover from the fever precipitated by wounds he received from the pirates, and by the stress of hearing of Archombrotus' apparent interest in Argenis, he rejects medical care (over the strong objections of the doctors) and drinks a lot of wine, saying 'Bacchus would be his Physician' (3.12.3 in Riley and Huber 2004; it is printed at the end of 3.11 in Barclay 1636). When he lies mortally wounded in Mauritania after killing Radiobanes, he receives news that Radiobanes' forces have fled and Hyanisbe's state is safe: his immediate turn for the better astounds his physicians (5.1.11). The metaphor of the body politic was tremendously important in Barclay's period, and the illnesses and self-healing of Poliarchus dramatize the processes of recovery from military and political strife that Barclay was so concerned to teach through his fiction.²⁵ Indeed, in the same self-consciously programmatic passage quoted earlier, Barclay has his poet Nicopompus explain that in imparting his political lessons through fiction he provides a remedy for the state. In an easily recognized allusion to Lucretius' sweetening the medicine of philosophy with the honey of poetic invention (*de rerum natura* 1.935–950), Nicopompus says that he will use fiction to make his health-giving lessons sweet enough to be palatable, so that his royal audience will learn to wield power in peace: 'Know yee not, how sicke children are brought to take their Medicines? When they see the Physician with the Cup, they will none of that Health, that is to be got by bitter Potions. But those which have the keeping of them, either qualifie the bitterness with sweeter juices, or winne them by gifts, or flattering them with the faireness of the Cup, suffer them not to see, or to know, what they are to take....So

²⁵ On the 'body politic' in the renaissance and its classical and medieval antecedents, see Barkan 1975: 61–115; Hale 1971.

first bringing them in love with the potion I will after it put in wholesome hearbes' (*ita insinuato amore potionis addam salubres herbas*, 2.14.4–5). Here again, the crucial point is that Barclay distances himself from the (professional) Physician and allies himself with the child's regular caretaker, who uses common sense to sweeten the drink and achieve healing.

In the *Icon Animorum*, Barclay had argued that the best political order is found when various kings rule benevolently over their individual kingdoms. In the *Argenis* Barclay several times uses the myth of the division of the cosmos between Jove, Pluto and Neptune as a metaphor for this idea of political harmony. The myth first appears in Barclay's description of the cave adjacent to Timoclea's house, where Poliarchus hides near the beginning of the novel. The cave itself is closely based on Heliodorus' description of the cave in which Charicleia is concealed (1.29.1–2): each has an elaborately contrived stone to cover the entrance and allow access to those who know the secret.²⁶ Each cave also carries a programmatic significance: Heliodorus' cave, with its obscure entrance, its twisting and intersecting paths, and its gleam of light at the center, is a metaphor for his plot, with its obscure beginning, its interlocking plots, and its revelation of the 'lightness' of Charicleia at its Ethiopian heart. Barclay's cave programmatically expresses his political preoccupations at its entrance. As Archombrotus enters, he reads some barely legible verses inscribed on the wall: they ask for protection for good men in the cave, whether the cave be in Jove's or Pluto's or Neptune's realm (1.5.4–5).

The most extended treatment of the Jove, Pluto and Neptune myth as an expression of the larger allegorical ambitions of Barclay's novel can be found in the elaborate masque staged by Radirobanes for Argenis' birthday as part of his plot to abduct her. Like the masques of the English court, the masque for Argenis' birthday endorses the ideology of monarchy.²⁷ Barclay includes a poem recounting the *argumentum* of the spectacle: the poem reports that after the end of the reign of Saturn (when Natura had been unified under one king) there were disputes among Jove and his brothers (3.23.3).

²⁶ Bardino 1939:53–4.

²⁷ Limon 1990: 200: 'From James' accession in 1603 to the outbreak of the Civil War, the masque-in-performance served an important ideological function at the Stuart court. Basically it presented in an allegorical and emblematic form the doctrine of Divine Right, the fundamental component of Stuart ideology, expounded in James's *Basilikon Doron*.'

Quae bene Saturno steterat Natura sub uno,
 Spargitur in partes, exsectaque robora luget
 In plures heu! lapsa deos. Hinc Iuppiter instat:
 Germanos hinc ira tenet. Quae pugna? Quis ardor?
 Sic fratres certare decet? Sic regna petuntur?
 Ah potius revocate senem sceptrumque parenti
 Reddite. Privatos melior concordia iunget.
 Sed pacem Fortuna dabit.

Nature stood strong, when onely Saturn reign'd
 Now parted, and in Regiments contain'd
 Of many gods, shee loseth strength; heere Jove
 With Brothers fights: what ieres, what warres they move!
 Becomes this Brothers? Seeke you Scepters so?
 Rather restore your aged Sire, and bow
 To him: you'l sooner your fell discord cease
 In private states. But Fortune brings a peace.

During the masque, performers mime Jove, Neptune and Pluto each being assigned their realms in sky, sea and underworld by drawing lots from the lap of Fortune sitting on a globe. They wear elaborate costumes: heaven's gods in purple, sea-gods in blue, and 'infernal in a darke murrey, most majestically terrible' (3.23.5). Throughout, they dance (3.23.6):

In hoc quisque amictu convenientibus modis saltavit. Dii quidem caelestes hilarius; proceres maris paulo agrestius promovebatur, et descendentem ab inguine piscem interdum colligebant, rursusque iubebant in solo palpitare ad numeros. At umbrarum numinibus vestigia erant non abhorrentia a frontium rugis. Inter indignantium et iratorum severas species tamen saltabant. Tam dispar diversissimorum deorum disciplina eodem musices concentu regebatur.

Every one in those habits danced to the Musicke; but the heavenly gods more frolickly; the Sea-gods hopped a little more rudely, and sometimes gathered up their fishy part, growing from their middle; and made those parts dance on the ground againe. But for the gods of hell, their steps were not disagreeing from their frowning & wrinkled foreheads, yet they

danced in their rough shapes of anger and scorne. This so disagreeing fashion of the most differing gods, was ruled by one and the same accord in Musicke.

At the end of the dance, Radirobanes, who has been costumed as Jupiter, approaches Argenis and invites her to dance. She accepts the invitation and dances, and then after a brief coda the dance ends. Even though this is all part of Radirobanes' plan to abduct Argenis, the actions remain securely within the bounds of the music: he dances with her, he doesn't whisk her away – as Jove surely would have. Later on, Archombrotus hears soldiers talking about the plan, and is able to warn Meleander. To extricate themselves from the situation, they agree to have Argenis pretend to be sick. The ruse succeeds, after a slight problem when Radirobanes' personal physician keeps insisting that actually Argenis is fine! (3.25.6). For all that Argenis is put in Proserpina's position, she remains safe. In this ridiculously excessive but somehow sublime picture of the various but orderly dance of the gods staged for Argenis in Sicily, Barclay expresses his ideal political structure: a multiplicity of rulers co-existing in peace. Overtones of the Greek words *poly* and *arche* in Poliarchus' name (which is spelled Polyarchus on the frontispiece of Barclay 1636) may also suggest Barclay's ideal of a multiplicitous political world. Barclay is following Ovid in connecting his Proserpina figure with Olympian power-politics. But the politics at issue are markedly different. Ovid's Venus wants unchallenged power over the cosmos: as she puts it, she and Cupid already hold sway over Jove and Neptune; what happens to Proserpina will prove their power over Pluto too (*Met.* 5.369–72).²⁸ The Homeric notion of the gods receiving shares of the cosmos and holding the earth and Olympus in common (*Il.* 15.187–93) is transformed by Ovid into a vision of Roman imperial domination. Against this background, Barclay's dancing gods express all the more strongly his vision of various rulers ruling in harmony.

Mauritania and its metaphors

Mauritania, in North Africa, is the other main setting for the novel. Like Sicily, it has a rich classical background: Barclay's Africa cleverly incorporates elements of Heliodorus' Ethiopia, Virgil's Carthage, and Pliny's North

²⁸ See further Hinds 1987: 108–111.

Africa. At the same time, as the published Keys to the novel make clear, within Barclay's overall metaphorical substitution of past for present, in which *Argenis*' Sicily is renaissance France, Mergania stands anagrammatically for Germania, and so forth, Mauritania stands for contemporary England. These two elements in Barclay's Mauritania – allusion to classical texts and allusion to contemporary politics – are inseparable: in Mauritania, as in Sicily, Barclay expresses his political views through his close engagements with ancient models. I will take up his use of Heliodorus, Virgil and Pliny in turn.

Heliodorus and the performance of identity

By choosing to set his novel on an axis running between European Sicily and African Mauritania, Barclay imitates Heliodorus, whose novel the *Aethiopica* moves from Ethiopia to Delphi and back again. The geographical sweep and magnitude of Heliodorus' novel impressed Barclay's contemporaries; by setting up his novel in a similar way, Barclay aspires to bask in some reflected glory.²⁹ The distances are shorter – and Barclay writes only five books, as against Heliodorus' ten. The most important Heliodoran gesture is Barclay's handling of Archombrotus' African identity: he, like Heliodorus' Charicleia, does not look 'African' (*Argenis* 1.2.2), and like her he is fully recognized only at the very end of the novel when he is revealed to be the son of Meleander and Anna of Mauritania (5.19.3). Yet, in what amounts to a reversal of Heliodorus' geopolitical structure, Archombrotus knows he is African from the beginning: it is his European-ness, his status as son and heir of Meleander, that he fully comes to know at the end of the novel. Charicleia and Archombrotus each are 'passing' for non-Africans, but Archombrotus knows all the time that he is passing, while Charicleia learns of her Ethiopian past only when she meets Kalasiris at Delphi and he reads the embroidered band that is a token of her identity (4.11.4). The construction of Heliodorus' narrative has been understood as an expression of ways in which identity was a strategic performance rather than an unchanging essential

²⁹ For an overview of the relation between Barclay and Heliodorus see Riley and Huber 2004: 26–29; they also emphasize Barclay's debt to the political discourses of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. Cervantes modelled his novel *The Travails of Persiles and Sigismunda* after Heliodorus; in the Prologue to his *Exemplary Novels*, he says explicitly that the *Persiles* 'dares to rival Heliodorus' (se atreve a competir con Heliodoro): see further Wilson 1991: 3–23.

quality in the world of the Roman empire.³⁰ At his most classical Barclay is at his most contemporary: in his construction of a narrative about a hero who knowingly ‘passes’ from North Africa to Europe, Barclay shares with other authors and readers in his period, one of highly contested encounters between Christian Europe and Islamic North Africa, a widespread interest in using stories of ‘passing’ to explore the construction of identity.³¹

Hyanisbe, Elizabeth and the reinscription of Dido

The Queen of Barclay’s Mauritania is Hyanisbe. This name is meaningful on several levels. Its *-isbe* ending is a marker of Africanness – indeed, Carthaginian-ness – in its similarity to Sophonisba, the name of a famous Carthaginian princess who is the subject of John Marston’s 1606 play *The Tragedy of Sophonisba*.³² In addition, as was recognized in early keys to the novel, Hyanisbe is a figure for England’s Queen Elizabeth I. There are several similarities between the two queens: Hyanisbe rules a state with a Parliament, just as Elizabeth did (*concilio*, 4.18.1). Also, according to the keys, the unsuccessful invasion of Mauritania mounted by Radiobanes evoked the British defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.³³ For audiences used to the game of uncovering the hidden meaning of names, even the *-sbe-* sound in Hyanisbe may be a pointer toward **Elizabeth**.

Because she rules in North Africa and had a sister named Anna, Hyanisbe is also similar to Virgil’s Dido. In addition, both Hyanisbe and Dido are compared to Diana when they are first introduced to the reader: a grove (*lucus*) dedicated to Diana is a major feature of Hyanisbe’s estate (2.11.2–4), and the celebration of Hyanisbe’s privacy in the grove makes the comparison between her and the goddess plain; in the *Aeneid*, Virgil marks Aeneas’ first sight of Dido with an explicit comparison between her and Diana (*Aen.* 1.498–504) as she stands by the temple of Juno which she has built in a grove (*lucus in urbe fuit media*, *Aen.* 1.441). Elizabeth was prominently compared to Dido (or, to use the name she shares with Elizabeth, Elissa) – to be sure, in ways that celebrate Dido as ruler, rather than look ahead to Dido’s self-destruction. Consequently, what is classical about Hyanisbe is also what

³⁰ Perkins 1999, Whitmarsh 1999 and Whitmarsh 1998.

³¹ On Cervantes’ use of the motif of ‘passing’ in the *Persiles*, see Fuchs 2003: 87–110.

³² See further IJsewijn 1983: 12.

³³ Collignon 1902: 42.

is contemporary: the more Hyanisbe looks like Dido, the more she looks like Elizabeth.³⁴ Indeed, Hyanisbe's garden grove dedicated to Diana can be paralleled with a carefully constructed Grove of Diana which celebrated Elizabeth as Diana, complete with a fountain sculpture depicting the transformation of Actaeon, which was built at Nonsuch, estate of John, Lord Lumley.³⁵

Lixa-on-Thames?

Poliarchus plays Aeneas to Hyanisbe's Dido: he arrives in Mauritania after his ship is wrecked in a storm as he travels from Sicily to Italy; pirates pick him up, and after taking control of their ship in a fight he learns that the pirates have captured the jewels of the Queen of Mauritania, so he decides to proceed to Mauritania to return them (2.10). This travel to North Africa by way of shipwreck retraces Aeneas' arrival in Carthage after being shipwrecked on his way from Sicily to Italy in *Aeneid* 1. When Poliarchus is diverted off course from Sicily to Italy and ends up in Africa, he meets a queen who is both North African and Elizabethan, both classical and (relatively) contemporary. Lixa, Hyanisbe's home, likewise combines North African and Elizabethan elements. Barclay describes the scene this way (2.11.1):

Fluvius, quem et Lixam appellant, non repugnanti pelago misceretur, ut in utriusque undae confinio non fremitus discrimen faceret, non spuma, sed color. Arbores quaecunque fluviis gaudent ab utraque parte alvei, cum cetera riparum imagine in aquis ludebant. Urbs ingens et mercatorum commercio gravis ubi paululum esses a mari provectus uno dumtaxat stadio recesserat a flumine. In urbem ab litore euntibus dexter erat omnium qui sunt in Africa pulcherrimus collis et in eo reginae suburbanum, quam dicebant Dominae Villam. Illuc amabat regina divertere curis fessa et ad negotiorum tumultum post alternam solitudinem reditura hilarior.

³⁴ James 1997: 18. Purkiss 1998 discusses the multivalent identification of Elizabeth with Dido in the so-called 'Sieve' portrait of Elizabeth (which depicts Elizabeth against a background of illustrations of Dido), William Gager's Latin play *Dido* (1583), and the farce *Dido Queen of Carthage* (published 1594) by Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Nashe.

³⁵ See Strong 1979: 63–69.

The River, also called Lixa, so gently mingled itself with the unresisting Sea, that where both the Waters met, neither the noise nor the foame made any difference, but onely their colour. Many Trees, such as grow neere rivers, on both sides the Channell, with the other fruites growing upon the banke, seemed with their shades to sport upon the Waters. The Citie was great; and by the traffique of Merchants, wealthie and populous: it stood, after you were got a little from the sea, not above a furlong from the River. On your right hand, as you passe from the shore to the Citie, was a Hill, the pleasantest in all Africa; and on the same, a faire Countrey House, which they called the Queenes Mannour. There, when she was oppressed with cares, would she usually sojourn; and after some refreshment, by solitude taken in turnes, to return more chearefully to the troubles and broyle of business.

Poliarchus then makes his way uphill from the river's edge toward the Queen's estate; he passes small hills (*tumuli ... leves*) until the mountain rises up (*donec oblongum et spissis opacum arboribus supercilium montis subito tumore consurgeret*) and then reaches a plain (*planities*) where the house is located, from which there is a lovely prospect (*cum venisses, oblectabat oculos alia loci forma prospectusque in remota liberior*) looking over the river, the hills, the heights of the city and its temples (*pars potissima urbis, per suos colliculos & templorum fastigia elatae*), and Mount Atlas in the distance (2.11.2).

The river Lixus flows into the Atlantic; consequently, Poliarchus has to decide to go there, rather than just be carried to North Africa by a storm as Aeneas was to Carthage. Why then did Barclay pick Lixa for Hyanisbe's capital? It is easy enough to imagine Barclay turning to Pliny to find a likely spot for Hyanisbe's realm. The river Lixus would lie before him at the very beginning of Pliny's account of North Africa in book 5 of the *Natural History*. Pliny mentions stories that Hercules battled Antaeus there and that the garden of the Hesperides stood there, and describes the curving course of the river Lixus (Pliny *Nat.* 5.1.3):

adfunditur autem aestuarium et mari flexuoso meatu, in quo draconis custodiae instar fuisse nunc interpretantur: amplectu intra se insulam, quam solam e vicino tractu aliquanto excelsiore non tamen aestus maris inundant.

As a matter of fact an arm of the sea stretches inland here with a winding channel which, as people nowadays explain the story, had some resemblance to a guardian serpent; it embraces within it an island which, although the neighboring district is considerably elevated, is nevertheless the only portion not flooded by the tides (translation from Rackham 1942).

Barclay takes the estuarial riverscape from Pliny, and adds to it the suburban royal estate, with its lovely prospect, and the busy commercial center. It is clear too that the arrangement of Hyanisbe's estate displays the major features of renaissance landscape design, that is to say, a strongly defined overall plan, gardens which blend art with nature, and an emphasis on a prospect with a commanding view.³⁶ But I think Barclay is doing something even more specific: as part of his overall metaphorical substitution of Mauritania for England, Barclay models this part of the landscape on Greenwich: it too contains a royal residence situated on a river's serpentine curve, a short distance from a busy commercial city. I think this because Barclay described that English scene himself in some detail in a programmatic introduction to his *Icon Animorum*, his study of the character of nations. He begins by stating that there is a royal residence at Greenwich:³⁷ *Grenovicum pervetusta Regum Britannicorum domus est*. The description of the viewpoint, the place where Barclay is inspired to contemplate the variety of nations, shares several features with Hyanisbe's prospect (IA 2, p. 24–25):

mons imminet Regiae modo supercilio subiectum oppidum fluviumque despiciens. Brevibus tumulis in illum ascenditur; verticemque deinde ingenti ambitu planicies extendit. Forte in eum bene mane conscenderam.

³⁶ Strong 1979: 9–22.

³⁷ This 'very old house' at Greenwich is the Tudor palace, now gone, which was the birthplace of Elizabeth I. In 1616 James I commissioned Inigo Jones to build another palace at Greenwich, known as the Queen's House, for his wife, Anne of Denmark. This was to be the first Palladian building in England. Construction halted after the death of Anne in 1619; the building was finished in 1636 for Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles I (to whom Martin Opitzer's 1644 German translation of the *Argenis* was dedicated). Although Barclay moved to Rome in 1615, given his close links to the court of James I, where he served as a Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber from 1605, perhaps an awareness of the commission given to Inigo Jones to build the Queen's House lies behind Barclay's description of the estate at Lixa, *quam dicebant Dominae villam* (2.11.1).

He is pleased by the view, 'not only the loveliest in Britain but perhaps in all of Europe.' He then describes the fertile land and the curving river: *Tamesis laetissima ubertate in viciniam exudat, & ad radices montis redeuntibus in girum fluctibus insulam pene molitur* (p. 25). He argues that the beauty of the prospect at Greenwich lies in its combination of hills, river busy with merchant ships (*passim toto alveo naves, & omnis generis onerariae*), and city views. He then asks himself why the view is so beautiful, and decides that it is the variety of nature. Just so, he continues, the world itself combines all sorts of men and nations in splendid variety (p. 28). By having Poliarchus enjoy a view from the house of a queen very like Elizabeth, in a spot very like Greenwich, Barclay exposes Poliarchus to very much the same view that he presents as a metaphor for his political ideals.

Pirates and parliamentarians

Hyanisbe's Lixa is both North African and English, both classical and contemporary. The Carthage of Hyanisbe's literary ancestor Dido is full of activity because it is being built (*Aen.* 1.418–440); Hyanisbe's Lixa is already a thriving commercial center (*urbs ingens et mercatorum commercio gravis*, ('the city was great, and by the traffique of Merchants, wealthie and populous' 2.11.1). The vigorous commerce at Lixa reflects both Hyanisbe's historical ancestors, the Phoenician traders who established settlements on the North African coast, and the parallel world of Barclay's Greenwich, with its riverway full of merchant ships (*passim toto alveo naves, et omnis generis onerariae, Icon Animorum* 2 p. 25).

Pirates are a compulsory element of the ancient novels which Barclay is imitating. But his representation of pirates extends beyond an attempt to replicate the ancient conventions of the novels. The piracy stories in Barclay's novel would also be mapped onto seventeenth century perceptions of and responses to the strong presence of pirates in the Mediterranean. The powerful commercial networks of Moslem North Africa were an important presence during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly in the extent to which they impinged on English attempts to exert mastery over the Mediterranean.³⁸ From the early seventeenth century, Sallee (or Salé, just

³⁸ For an overview of encounters between Britain and Islam in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Matar 1998: 1–20; Matar 1999:90–91 gives this summary: 'Between 1603 and 1615 100 English and Scottish ships were taken by North African pirates. Be-

north of Rabat) grew to be a particularly infamous center of piracy and slave-holding. This was a settlement of Moriscos (Moors who had remained in Spain after the reconquista of 1492 and ostensibly converted to Christianity) who were expelled from Spain in 1609. From Salée they vigorously preyed on maritime trade. In mapping the Atlantic coast, Pliny says that Sala is 100 miles south of Lixus (*Nat.* 5.1.5).³⁹ When Barclay's audience thought about the real place he calls Mauritania, they thought about it as the Barbary Coast, home of pirates who captured, enslaved, and ransomed or converted Christians.

In Barclay's novel too, the vicinity of Mauritania is bristling with pirates. Poliarchus meets with pirates after his shipwreck (2.10.1). These pirates had seized the ship of a merchant trading between Africa and Spain by posing as passengers and boarding in twos and threes in Spain (2.10.4). Later on his friend Arsidas is robbed of a pouch he kept on his person containing a letter for Poliarchus from Argenis and some jewels. The thief, Phorbas, one of Arsidas' servants, brings the letter to Poliarchus with a tale that he has been captured by pirates and is being held for ransom (5.7.5). The ransom demand is a typical practice of renaissance piracy, but not prominent in the ancient novels.⁴⁰ Barclay may archly signal the anachronism by describing the pirates' desire for exacting ransom with the word *novae* (*novae praedae studio*, 5.7.6). Poliarchus pays the ransom to Phorbas, who makes away with it (5.8). When Arsidas arrives and meets Poliarchus, they laugh about what Phorbas did. What is most important is that the ruse succeeds with Poliarchus because it sounds so plausible: Poliarchus, like Barclay and his audience, is sure that pirates holding captives for ransom are everywhere in the vicinity of North Africa.

By contrast, in Barclay's novel, those who are settled in Mauritania themselves are *not* pirates but parliamentarians. Barclay thus offers his 'Englished' Mauritania, with its Parliament, its Elizabethan queen, and her estate

tween 1616 and 1620 the number is 150 ships; between 1622 and 1642, the number is 300.' Fuchs 2001: 118–38 perceptively discusses early seventeenth century literary representations of encounters between England the Barbary Coast pirates. Clissold 1977 gives an account of Europeans taken into slavery by Barbary pirates; contemporary first-hand accounts are available in Vitkus 2001.

³⁹ See Bookin-Weiner 1990: 318 on the growth of corsair rading from Salée in the years 1616–1626; see also Matar, in Vitkus 2001:7.

⁴⁰ On the practice of ransom demands in the early seventeenth century, see Clissold 1977: 102–103, 106–107.

at Lixa(-on-Thames), as a fictional counterpart to the contemporary Barbary coast, home to pirates, their enslaved captives, and their freed converts to Islam. In his recent study *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685*, Nabil Matar traces the varied British responses to and representations of the Islamic world. On the one hand at a pragmatic level, Britons clearly recognized the military and cultural power of the Islamic world. Over and over again, British ships and British subjects were captured by Muslims; many of those who came under Muslim influence converted to that faith (these were known as ‘renegades’). As a result, Matar argues, fictions of various sorts are devised to tell a different story, one of British encounters with Islam which the Britons always win (Matar 1998: 19):

Converts to Islam both embarrassed and provoked some of the most important writers and theologians of the European Renaissance. While the ‘direct encounter’ with Islam affected the ‘small men’ of Christendom – sailors, fishermen, merchants and soldiers – the intellectual and religious impact of that encounter challenged men whose writings and influence have been instrumental in defining early modern European culture.

In particular, Matar argues (1998: 20),

The way that English dramatists, preachers, theologians and others confronted Islam and Muslims was by fabricating images about them – by arranging protagonists and geography in a manner that was disembodied from history and cultural surroundings. In the imaginatively controlled environments of the theater and the pulpit, Britons converted the unbelievers, punished the renegades, and condemned the Saracens. As long as the sphere of action was fabrication, the victory was won by Christians. Outside that sphere, however, Englishmen and other Britons treated Islam as a powerful civilization which they could neither possess nor ignore.

It seems clear that Barclay’s Mauritania should be considered alongside the influential fictions Matar describes above. The Elizabethan and recognizably English features of Hyanisbe herself, her estate, and her parliamentary government clothe the Moorish queen in English garb. In an even greater transformation, the North African Archombrotus is welcomed into Europe, his

Europeanness recognized and confirmed; he will rule Sicily as Meleander's heir. The story of Europeans who convert and become dangerous North African renegades is replaced by the tale of a Mauritanian who becomes a wise European ruler.

Barclay's *Argenis* is a lively (though long!) read, full of interesting and thoughtful responses to the classical texts he had been brought up to read from childhood. It is an important part of the history of the novel, and a superb example of the freshness, intellectual excitement, mastery and delight that characterize the renaissance encounter with the classical past. At the same time, despite its sunny picture of political bodies that heal themselves and harmonious international relations, it reveals the operations of deep religious and ethnic rifts, conflicts and prejudices that persist today. In 1614, Barclay had concluded his *Icon Animorum* with a spirited disparagement of mere antiquarians in favor of those more practical learned men 'who imbued in addition with civil disciplines avoid the complacent worthlessness of scholastic habits' (*sed qui praeterea civilibus disciplinis imbuti, incuriosam scholasticorum morum vilitatem effugerint*). It is a good bet that Barclay saw this spirit of civic and political engagement in Petronius, the model for his satirical first novel, *Euphormio's Satyricon*. A less satirical, more idealistic, political engagement is central to the didactic mission of the *Argenis*. One of Poliarchus' interventions in Mauritania is to force Hyanisbe to abolish the practice of human sacrifice (4.20), just as it is abolished in Meroe at the end of the *Aethiopica* (10.39.3). Reading this scene over Barclay's shoulder makes Heliodorus seem like the kind of sensible religious moderate Barclay would admire.

Still, despite the idealistic decor, traces of a recognizably Petronian spirit are still present. The role of the court poet Nicopompus is based to some extent on Barclay's own literary career, but the prominent role of verse in the *Argenis* probably also owes something to the prosimetric form Barclay borrowed from Petronius for his *Euphormio*. Perhaps the most Petronian moment in the *Argenis* happens when Poliarchus' faithful friend Arsidas is invited to dinner in Mauritania by Iuba, the local governor. Arsidas is amazed to see apples covered in ice, and asks how the ice was procured from Scythia. Iuba replies, very pleased with himself, that the apples and the ice are both local products. Next the wine is served, and when it has been drunk, the Egyptian boy who is serving dashes the cup to the ground and shatters it. Shocked, Arsidas is told that this too is ice, and that new cups are made for

every meal. Iuba goes on to show Arsidas the molds in various shapes which are filled with water and then frozen in a wooden contraption containing snow from Mount Atlas ‘which we have always at hand, kept pure in straw the whole yeere long in the bottom of deep Sellers’ (5.6.7). Although the manuscript containing the complete text of the *cena Trimalchionis* was not rediscovered until 1650, the beginning of the *cena* (*Sat.* 27–37.5) was available to Barclay, and the motif of a gastronomic marvel is borrowed from there. The Egyptian serving boy is likewise borrowed from Trimalchio’s staff (*Petr. Sat.* 35.6, *Aegyptius puer*), which also includes Alexandrian serving boys who bring ‘snowy water’, (*aquam ... nivatam*) to pour onto the diners’ hands as they settle themselves for the meal (31.3). The broken glass motif also alludes to Petronius. Trimalchio’s slave boy drops a serving dish (*paropsis*); when the boy retrieves it, Trimalchio commands that he be punished and has the dish thrown back onto the floor so that it can be swept out as trash (34.2–3). The story that Trimalchio tells of the inventor of unbreakable glass later in the *cena* (51) seems to be in the background too; it was transmitted separately (Isidore of Seville, *Origines* 16.16.6, and John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* 4.5), and Barclay probably knew it. Barclay rearranges these Petronian fragments into something totally his own: the Neroian novelty of snow-cooled water becomes an even greater technical marvel of iced fruits and ice goblets. Collignon (1902: 90) suggests that Barclay is alluding to a recent Italian gastronomic invention. Here again, as with Protestant-sounding Hyperephanians, fireworks, and pirates demanding ransom, in Juba’s reply to Arsidas, Barclay seems to acknowledge the anachronism of the new-fangled gadget: *nova est, inquit, apud nos haec ratio revocandi arte hiemem sub medio sole*, ‘This, quoth the Governour, is a new tricke to call back Winter by Art, in the midst of Summer’ (5.6.2). Barclay’s Latin novels are his own ‘new tricke,’⁴¹ marvels of ingenuity that summon up the ancient past in the ‘middest’ of his own time, and vividly summon up his time in the ‘middest’ of ours.⁴²

⁴¹ IJsewijn 1983: 22: ‘when Barclay set out to write his *Argenis*, there was not, as far as I can see, in Latin a single long romance of that type.’

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