EDMUND P. CUEVA: *The Myths of Fiction. Studies in the Canonical Greek Novels*
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Reviewed by Tim Whitmarsh, Exeter

The interrelationship between the Greek novels and myth is a genuinely rich topic.[1] There are a number of *desiderata* within the field. First and foremost, the question of belief needs a proper study. Did the Greeks believe their fictions? John Morgan has influentially argued that the novels hide beneath a historiographical carapace of naturalistic plausibility.[2] When Achilles Tatius' Clitophon introduces his narrative with the phrase 'my story looks like *mythoi*' (1.2.2), however, readers will be immediately aware that the language of myth unsettles any neat, realist interpretation of the ontology of fiction. Even more complex is Daphnis' and Chloe's famous reading of Philetas' erotic instruction as a '*mythos* not a *logos*' (2.7.1). Clearly the narrator brandishes this opposition with a certain flourish, as though it is expected to puff his own knowingness as against the lovers' naiveté. But how normative is the narrator's perspective?[3] Are we 'supposed' to reject mythical readings of this narrative? And what in practice would that mean?

There is also a real need for a proper synoptic survey of the meaning and reception of mythical narrative among Graecophones of the Roman period. With Alan Cameron's recent book hot off the press, alongside substantial studies of Parthenius and Conon's *Diêgêseis*,[4] the path is broken for a thorough survey of Apollodorus, Antoninus Liberalis and the fragmentary mythographers and local historians of the period, both literary and epigraphic. The continuing importance to communities of local and panhellenic myth

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[1] I have not yet seen C. Ruiz-Montero, 'El mito en Caritón de Afrodisias y Jenofonte de Éfeso', in J.A. López Férez ed. *Mitos en la literatura griega helenística e imperial* (Madrid, 2003): 345–359.

[2] Cf. esp. 'Make-believe and make believe: the fictionality of the Greek novels', in C.J. Gill and T.P. Wiseman eds *Lies and fiction in the ancient world* (Exeter, 1993): 175–229.

[3] J.R. Morgan, 'Nymphs, neighbours and narrators: a narratological approach to Longus', in Panayotakis *et al.* eds *The ancient novel and beyond* (Leiden, 2003): 171–89.

[4] A. Cameron, *Greek mythography in the Roman world* (Oxford, 2004); J.L. Lightfoot, *Parthenius of Nicaea: extant works* (Oxford, 1999); M.K. Brown, *The Narratives of Konon* (Munich, 2002).

sits, to some extent, in tension with the centripetal forces of the era, particularly scholarly self-consciousness and appropriation by image-conscious emperors. Against the background of the fierce cultural politics of myth, the novelists would emerge as fascinating case studies. For example, near the beginning of Achilles Tatius' second book it is claimed that the myth of Dionysus' bestowal of wine upon humankind took place in Tyre, not in Athens, and hence that all wines are 'colonists' sent out by Tyre (2.2). Is this a strong claim staked for Tyre as a central producer of myth? Or an ironic ceding of primacy in all matters mythical to Athens? Or both?

This book, however, is much more limited in its ambitions, and indeed in its results. I shall have much to say about its shortcomings, but let me begin with what it does say. Cueva (C) takes us through all five of the 'canonical' novels in turn, noting and expounding upon various uses of mythical hypotexts. Chapter one begins with a version of his published article arguing that a specific version of the Ariadne story, derived from a certain Paeon of Amathus (*FGrH* 757 F2) via Plutarch's *Theseus* (20.3–5), underlies Chariton's Callirhoe narrative;[5] it then turns to a catalogue of named mythical allusions in the novel. Chariton's use of myth, he argues, 'is primarily limited to the depiction of character through mythological comparison' (p. 33). Chapter two turns to Xenophon. There is not much myth in Xenophon – only implied comparisons between Habrocomes and Hippolytus, and between Anthia and Artemis – so this is brief, only eight pages long.

Longus provides chapter 3 with more substance. This chapter has two sections, based around two published articles.[6] The first argues that the included tales incorporate a recurrent set of motifs that also apply to Chloe; hence the novel can be seen as a mythicisation of her. The second argues that Longus' phrase *ktêma terpnon* in the proem signals a rewriting of the Thucydidean historiographical mode. After identifying a series of allusions to Thucydides, C concludes that Longus inverts Thucydides' famous dismissal of Herodotus, by reintroducing the mythical (τὸ μυθῶδες) into his narrative (1.22.4).

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[5] 'Plutarch's Ariadne in Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*', *AJP* 117 (1996): 473–84.

[6] 'Longus as νυμφαγέτης: the myth of Chloe', *Humanitas* 21 (1997): 3–16; 'Longus and Thucydides: a new interpretation', *GRBS* 39 (1998): 429–40.

Chapter 4 surveys Achilles Tatius' various uses of myth, from the opening ecphrasis of Europa, through the various stories told throughout. Its centrepiece is, once again, a published article (pp. 69–73), discussing the oracle at 2.14.1.[7] In addition to generating the interpretation established in the narrative (i.e. the Byzantines should send a sacrifice to Heracles at Tyre), this poem, it is argued, is obliquely proleptic of the erotic narrative. Chapter 5 is the briefest of all (seven pages), though it deals with the most voluminous of the novelists. Here, C repeats his already published argument that the paradigm of Hippolytus underlies Heliodorus' representation of Theagenes.[8] There are two appendices: one surveys Greek views of myth (pp. 99–102), the other summarises the plot of *Anthia and Habrocomes* (but none of the other novels).

The myths of fiction, thus, is far from a complete survey of mythical allusions in the novels. Though it sometimes descends into descriptive catalogues that give the impression of totalising survey (particularly in the chapters on Chariton and Achilles), it is sometimes – as notably in the case of Heliodorus – extraordinarily cursory. Why no mention, in relation to that text, of Perseus and Andromeda, let alone Penelope and Odysseus? It is, indeed, hard to tell what this book is, other than a mosaic of published articles, hastily linked together. The target readership is unclear. Most undergraduates will be put off by large slabs of untranslated Greek, especially given the number of errors in it (see below). Scholars, on the other hand, will find much material here (e.g. plot summaries) superfluous or superficial, and the argumentation frustrating.

C's favoured method is to dig out analogies between mythical and novelistic narratives. The analogical method is always open to the charge of arbitrariness, and indeed many readers will find the desire for accusation hard to resist. The discussion of Callirhoe and Ariadne is a case in point. It would be wrong to deny Ariadne's significance to this text: she is name-checked as a *comparanda* four times in the text (1.6.3, 3.3.5, 4.1.8, 8.1.2), though it should be emphasised – as C does not – that the latter two cases specifically distinguish Callirhoe's story from hers. What is misleading is the implicit suggestion that Ariadne is the single most important mythical model for Chariton's heroine. It is an extraordinary argument that confines Helen

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[7] '*Anth. Pal.* 14.34 and Achilles Tatius 2.14', *GRBS* 35 (1994): 281–8.
[8] 'The analogue of the hero of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*', *Syllecta Classica* 9 (1998): 103–13.

(named at 2.6.1, 5.2.8, 5.5.9 – and hinted at on numerous other occasions) and Medea (2.9.3) to a single sentence (p. 33). In fact, C's project seems fundamentally to misread the role of these mythical hypotexts: the point is not that Ariadne or any other individual myth underlies the text in the form of a structural model, but that Chariton is explicitly demonstrating how the characters in this new form of literature are *not* reducible to mythical proto-types. It is, indeed, striking that most of the passages cited above where mythical heroines are named are exemplary in nature: myth offers a reper-toire of mythical personae, which characters and narrator alike try on as they try to comprehend the narrative situations. Invariably, they fail: Callirhoe is precisely not an Ariadne (or indeed a Medea or Helen). C., on the other hand, wants an exact fit: he is thus compelled to ransack different Ariadne traditions (pp. 17–20) to get a composite that approximates to Callirhoe.

There remain, of course, numerous irreconcilable tensions between the accounts, and C is compelled to cook the books to achieve convergence. C simply ignores, for example, the major differences between *Callirhoe* and Paeon's version of the Ariadne myth (supposedly the central one for Chari-ton): e.g. Ariadne dies away from home apart from a husband who loves her, whereas Callirhoe is only seemingly killed, at home, by a husband in a jeal-ous rage. Even C's summary of the similarities is tendentious. He claims that Paeon's Ariadne 'gives birth to Theseus' child' (i.e. as Callirhoe gives birth to Chaereas' son), but the text actually says she died before childbirth.[9] In Paeon's version, forged letters from Theseus are delivered to Ariadne – but although there are epistolary intrigues in Chariton, it is misleading to suggest that are any forged letters as such (pp. 20–1).

The analysis of the oracle in Achilles Tatius, and the similar poem at *Anth. Pal.* 14.34 (pp. 69–73), is open to similar objections. According to C, the point of this poem is to invite readers to ponder a mythological subtext: the allusion to Hephaestus' pursuit of Athene foreshadows Clitophon's failed attempt at bedding Leucippe. The unavoidable problem, though, is that the poem gives us a heterodox version of the story, in which Hephaestus is in fact said to 'enjoy having' Athena – this contrasts, obviously, with Clito-

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[9] The supposed linguistic similarities between Chariton and Plutarch (pp. 22–3) are to my mind inconclusive overall. The best example – the only one not to involve banal lan-guage – is τὰς ἀλλοτρίας γυναῖκας ἀναλαβών (Char. 8.1.2) ~ τὰς οὖν ἐγχωρίους γυναῖκας τὴν Ἀριάδνην ἀναλαβεῖν (Plut. *Thes.* 20.5). But even if this is accepted as an allusion, who can rule out Plutarch alluding to Chariton?

phon's failure with Leucippe. One could imagine arguments saving the proleptic reading, but C opts simply to ignore the problem. The other supposed connection is even more abstruse. The reference to 'the blood of Cecrops' in the *Palatine Anthology* version of the poem is said to allude to the snake-haired woman who appears in the dream at 1.3.4 – no matter that there is no mention of Cecrops' snaky form in the oracle (not to mention the fact that the line does not appear at all in Achilles). The final problem with C's reading is that it concentrates on 8 out of 34 words of the *Palatine Anthology* poem, and 6 out of 26 words in Achilles' version. Ancient readers would have known better than to disregard three quarters of the contents of an oracle.

No less contentious is the brief discussion of the *Aethiopica*. It is, of course, Cnemon who is explicitly compared to Hippolytus (1.10.2), but C wants this latter figure to serve double-duty as Theagenes' 'analogue'. His argument for this is based upon two passages that allude to Euripides' play. At 4.10.5, Calasiris tells Charicleia that she feels love 'along with many famous women, along with many maidens who are otherwise chaste'; this phrase alludes to *Hipp.* 439, where the nurse tells Phaedra that she loves Hippolytus 'along with many mortals' (p. 86). But why is this held to link Theagenes with Hippolytus, and not Calasiris with the nurse, or Charicleia with Phaedra? A similar oddity surrounds the observation that Arsace's suicide with a 'choking noose' (8.15.2) borrows the phrase from Eur. *Hipp.* 802 (p. 88): what does this have to do with the characterisation of Theagenes? More significantly, though, this ignores the fact that Heliodorus' language is absolutely saturated with tragic language from beginning to end.[10] It is highly misleading to pluck these two references out as though they offered a key to the *Aethiopica*'s intertextual strategy.[11] What is more, it is wholly unclear how seeing Theagenes as Hippolytus enriches our understanding of the story.

More examples of this kind could be offered. Much of the problem is that C never defines what a myth is. Any deity is apparently mythical (e.g.

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[10] T. Paulsen, *Inszenierung des Schicksals: Tragödie und Komödie im Roman des Heliodor* (Trier, 1992).

[11] C offers two other pieces of 'evidence', but they are very weak. The first is that Theagenes wrestles a bull in Heliodorus' final book, while Hippolytus' chariot crash is stimulated by the emergence of a bull from the sea. The second is that Theagenes, in the same book, wrestles with an enormous Ethiopian, while a Titan called Hippolytus is recorded in pseudo-Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 1.38).

pp. 39–40), even Eros (p. 63); an entirely allegorical phrase such as 'may Aphrodite lead me to Ares' (i.e. I am in love on my way to war, 4.7.5; p.77) can count too. Xenophon's names Lycomedes and Themisto are also mythical triggers, because they can be paralleled in myth (even though the myth in question has nothing to do with Xenophon's narrative). The same claim is made of the account of the love of the river Alpheus and the spring Arethusa, as recorded by Achilles (1.18.2; p. 65), even though it is presented by Clitophon (the narrator) as an example of physiological lore.

C also over-commits to the opposition between myth and history. This polarity has, for sure, a certain purchase in the discussion of *Daphnis and Chloe*. This is a text with a well-developed language of myth, though whether Longus' μῦθος is the same thing as modern English 'myth' is debatable. Here, C's argument is at least coherent: Thucydides writes history without 'the mythical'; Longus reinserts the mythical into his 'history of love' (*Praef.* 1). Not that it is altogether plausible. Outside of the preface, Thucydidean allusions are pretty inconspicuous, and concentrated in the Mytilenean attack episode (pp. 58–9). It cannot really be said that Longus follows a systematic programme of Thucydidean reversal. What is more, myth is not always a straightforwardly positive category, as the famous *muthon ou logon* passage (adverted to in my first paragraph) shows.

Still, as I say, this is a coherent argument, even if it does not clinch the case. The relevance of the myth-history opposition to *Anthia and Habrocomes*, on the other hand, eludes me. 'It seems that Xenophon may have wanted to use myth, as shown by the mythological opening of the novel, but did not carry out his original intention' (p. 35). In fact, there is nothing specifically mythical about the opening of this narrative. Certainly, there are similarities between Habrocomes and Hippolytus, but this does not mean that that particular myth is specifically 'alluded' to (p. 39): Xenophon, lest we forget, is an author who (exceptionally among the novelists) avoids all allusion in the conventional sense. The figure of the narcissistic youth who counts himself above experiencing desire is probably better explained as a folkloric motif. C then turns to the even less plausible view that, having rejected myth after the opening, Xenophon turned to history. 'History' here means nothing more than two references to the 'man in charge of the peace in Cilicia' (2.13.3, 3.9.5 [not 3.11, as claimed on p. 35]) – apparently, though not necessarily, a reference to the office of 'eirenarch'. The importance of

these incidental mentions has been vastly overstated by scholarship:[12] there is no reason to think that Xenophon or his readers would have read these passages as anything other than unremarkable accounts of the political landscape of Asia Minor.

Discussions of dating are also strikingly brief and on occasion self-serving. The claim that 'most scholars believe Julian imitated Heliodorus' (p. 83), rather than the other way around, is probably untrue. More obviously misleading is the implication that the dating of Chariton to the early second century is uncontentious (p. 15): current scholarship favours the mid-first century,[13] but C completely neglects this consensus – no doubt in part because it would shoot down his central thesis in this chapter, *viz.* Chariton's dependence upon Plutarch's *Theseus*.

The book as a whole, finally, is full of errors. I am not particularly irked by my own misquotation on pp. 7–8, despite the consequences for the grammar of the sentence. Other scholars have suffered more, including 'Gregor' Nagy (p. 13), Jane Lightfoot (merged with C.S. on p. 141), and 'Conseulo' Ruiz-Montero (p. 144). Slips abound, of varying degrees of importance (e.g. p. 39: 'Even though the Xenophon …'; the meaningless sentence opening the chapter on Achilles Tatius; 'Sidon' for 'Tyre', p. 71; Bürger's article is cited as 'Zu Xenophon of Ephesus', p. 138; 'Haephaestus', p. 141). It is the Greek, though, that fares worst. Not only does C apparently use outdated Loebs where more recent texts exist, but also numerous typos have crept in. Let me give some examples: p. 18 Ἀρόδιτος for Ἀφρόδιτος. p. 22 ἐν ᾧ, ἐν ᾧ, τάφον. p. 26 κἀκ. p. 28 θανόντῶν. p. 31 παράδοζον. p. 32 υἱον. p. 39 ἐπὶ, ἵπποι, γοργοὶ for γοργοί, γόνυ. p. 40 ἡδὲ. p. 42 Ἀφροδίτην, ἑτέρῳ. p. 43 Χενοφῶν, Εφέσιος, ἱστορικὸς for ἱστορικός, περι. p. 44 ΝΥΜΦΑΓΕΤΗΖ. p. 46 περιβολή for περιβολὴ, γομνοῖς, ἀκούντες, 'because Pan wished ἐξ ἧς Ἔρως μῦθον ποιῆσαι'. p. 49 'Chloe … asks Daphnis μαθεῖν ὅ τι λέγει' [where Chloe is the subject of μαθεῖν], ἀντεπεδείξατο. p. 50 ᾀδούσης. p. 51 θηντὴ, ὑπὸ, τρέφεται omitted from start of quotation (which then begins with μὲν). p. 54 ἱστρίαν for ἱστορίαν, θεαταὶ for θεαταί. p. 55 φεύξεται, Συρρακούσαις. p. 56 τό μυθῶδες. p. 59 καὶ omitted from quotation of 3.2.3; οὐ᾽ δ᾽, οἴκτος. p. 60 μῆδεν, Μηθυμαίνων. p. 61 ἐξ ἧς. p. 63 Ευρώπης, ἡ γῆ, ἐν τῆι [i.e γῆ omitted] λειμὼν, ἐπεκθητο, μύθοις. p. 65

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[12] As noted by E.L. Bowie 'The chronology of the earlier Greek novels since B.E. Perry: revisions and precisions', *Ancient Narrative* 2 (2002): 47–63, at 57.
[13] Bowie (n. 11): 55–8, with literature.

ὀλίῳ. p. 67 εἰρηνμένον. p. 68 εἷς. p. 69 ἐνθἐ for ἐνθ' (*bis*), ἔχει [for ἔχων] χαίρει, Ἀθήνη for Ἀθήνην, δῦο. p. 73 ὀποιβούλεσθε. p. 79 ἔνεν, αναλάβοι. p. 89 ποτἔ, τοσοῦτὸς, ἀνηρ.

In sum, this is not the study that the topic deserves. I cannot, in good conscience, recommend it.