

Abstracts

DANIEL L. SELDEN

The Political Economy of Romance in Late Period Egypt

The essay examines the dialectical development of prose fiction in Egypt in the Late Period, from the first Persian Occupation to the Byzantine era. Taking four major texts—the *Life of Aḥiqar* (Old Aramaic), the Bentresh Stele (Ptolemaic hieroglyphs), Chariton’s *Callirhoē* (Greek), and the Cambyses-Romance (Coptic)—the paper shows that each fiction both reflects and serves to mediate Egypt’s changing and increasingly marginalized position within the continuously evolving Levantine-Mediterranean world system. The paper argues not only that what each romance narrativizes is principally its own “political unconscious” (Fredric Jameson), but that taken together they evolve rationally as a series without any of their compositors being necessarily aware of his predecessor’s work.

KEN DOWDEN

‘But there is a difference in the ends ...’: Brigands and Teleology in the Ancient Novel

What exactly are *lēistai* (brigands)? The overwhelming picture is of a significant armed band led by a *lēistarch*. Before the novel, they appear, it seems, in New Comedy and in historiography, where their depiction owes as much to ideology as it does to narrative. Within the novel, brigands do more than just provide thrilling adventure: they raise questions of world-view, and of the *bios* we lead. The focus on individual brigands is paralleled by, and maybe has its source in, treatments of figures like Virathus in Poseidonios-influenced historiography. The brigand *bios* is devoted to profit and to pleasures whose icon is ‘roistering’, but equally they do form a society and therefore constitute a model. Intertextuality with *Iliad* and *Odyssey* matter but perhaps even more striking is Christian allegorisation of the parable of the *Good Samaritan*,

which has its roots in pagan philosophy. We need to look at the life-goals of brigands with an Aristotelian eye.

FROMA I. ZEITLIN
Landscapes and Portraits:
Signs of the Uncanny and Illusions of the Real

Ekphrastic descriptions, whether of ‘actual’ or of ‘painted’ scenes partake in a rich dialectic between the real and the illusionist, which blurs boundaries between fact and fiction, verbal metaphor and visual realization, the literal and the imaginary, truth and deception – and this on aesthetic, cognitive, and psychological levels. At its furthest limit the boundary that separates the viewer from the object is breached, with the illusion of breaking the frame: that is, of the viewer entering the picture or a figure in the painting (or indeed the painting itself) passing into the zone of ‘reality.’ This essay examines landscape in Achilles Tatius and portraiture in Heliodorus from this point of view.

GIANPIERO ROSATI
The Loves of the Gods:
Literature as Construction of a Space of Pleasure

In the ancient novel, as well as in visual culture, the theme of mythic, divine loves acts as a mimetic mechanism (à la Girard), that mirrors the mediated nature of desire and creates a free, ideal space for the *rêveries* of lovers. Besides providing superior ‘desire-mediating’ models to humans and legitimizing their fantasies and self-projections, these ‘windows’ on the world of pleasure (both as paintings and as textual ecphraseis) offer an escape into the realm of fantasy. The recurrent presence of female figures (Muses, nymphs, or mortal women) as listeners or viewers of scenes of divine love may suggest a particular female penchant for this subject.

MARGARET DOODY
Comedy in Heliodoros’ *Aithiopika*

Heliodoros uses anachronism deliberately to develop new forms of comedy and to incorporate and question in his novel the classical genres of Comedy

and Tragedy. He is remarkably versatile in comic characterization, tracing resemblances between Thyamis and Kalasiris, son and father, even though they make very different impressions on the reader at first encounter. His comedy favours cultural change. Parades, spectacles of cruelty and gigantism all work to question generic authorities and imperial ideas.

FRANÇOISE LÉTOUBLON

Mythological Paradigms in the Greek Novels

From the explicit use of myth as paradigm in *Daphnis and Chloe* (narratives concerning Phatta, Syrinx, and Echo, the first of them entailing the myth of Pitys and Pan) and from the parallel, more sophisticated, mythical stories in *Leucippe and Cleitophon* (mostly concerning Syrinx), it may be concluded that the use of a mythological tale as a paradigm was frequent in the Greek novel. This could derive from the consciousness that things and beings in nature are the imitation of one another, resulting from a metamorphosis: the case of Echo is a symbol of this presence which makes nature “full of gods”. The use is particularly striking in the description of gardens and caves, where art imitates nature, but nature itself seems an imitation.

SILVIA MONTIGLIO

‘His eyes stood as though of horn or steel’:
Odysseus’ Fortitude and Moral Ideals in the Greek Novels

Readers have long recognized that the Greek novels borrow structural and thematic elements from the *Odyssey*. This paper focuses on another aspect in the novels’ exploitation of the Homeric epic: their appropriation and modification of moral ideals valued in the *Odyssey*, especially endurance. The novels’ heroes and heroines go through ordeals comparable to those of Odysseus and display similar fortitude. But in one detail they differ from the Homeric hero: they cannot control their emotions. This feature, however, is not a sign of weakness or simply a realistic trait, but amounts to a moral ideal. This appears most notably through the behaviour of Dionysius (in Chariton), that embodiment of self-control, who nonetheless displays over-emotionality when it is safe to do so, and through the description of Hydaspes’ failed attempt to

imitate Odysseus as he watches Penelope weep, apparently unmoved. The Heliodorean character cannot refrain from weeping when Chariclea is recognized as his daughter, and his emotionality earns him the title of father.

MICHAEL PASCHALIS
 The Basic Plot of *Callirhoe*:
 History, Myth, and Aristotelian *Poetics*

The basic plot of the ideal novel *Callirhoe*, if constructed according to the guidelines Aristotle provides in his *Poetics*, is definitely non-ideal. A pregnant young wife is kicked into a coma by her jealous husband; she is later found in another city and forced to marry a second husband for the sake of her unborn child; she is eventually reunited with her first husband but entrusts her son to the second husband, though in the future he is destined to rule in her own city. The paper examines the basic plot vis-à-vis the theory that behind the novel we have before us there may have been a real plot, and the suggestion that the plot is based on Trojan legend.

EWEN BOWIE
 Caging Grasshoppers:
 Longus' Materials for Weaving 'Reality'

After defining 'real' and 'ideal' in relation to character/behaviour and to setting, I note that, whereas the other four Greek 'ideal' novelists create a realistic background, using personal observation or historiography, Longus draws chiefly on literary texts that themselves present a fictional world (Homer and Theocritus) or a semi-fictional world (archaic melic poetry). In 'The Country' I explore the debt to Theocritus' landscape, especially poem 1, of Longus', advertised by his preface as several steps from the real world. I then discuss 2,32's relation to Theocritus 1; 1,17,3's to Sappho and Anacreon *via* Theocritus 11, convoluted by the term ἀληθῶς; and the apple's at 3,33,4 to Sappho's *epithalamia*, Theocritus 28 and Ibycus. 'The City' explores the literary forebears of Longus' Megacles; 'The Sea' looks at his 'Tyrian' pirates' origins in earlier novels, especially Chariton; and 'Reality' considers how his use of Thucydides underlines his own fictionality.

MARIO LABATE

*Tarde, immo iam sero intellexi:*The Real as a Puzzle in Petronius' *Satyrica*

Vincenzo Ciaffi identified the mechanism of the trap as the main narrative structure in Petronius' *Satyrica*. The protagonist of the story ends up by finding himself in situations that he cannot control or manage, until some external force breaks in, to interrupt the vicious circle into which he has fallen unawares. The narrative *deus ex machina* usually presents a particularly lively character who can be connected with certain wild endings, which must have been typical of popular theatre, and above all of mime. Almost all the narrative sequences in which we can verify the results, in the *Satyrica*, present a dynamics composed of brusque accelerations and sudden changes. This narrative resource already proved to be useful to solve a series of episodes of the background: e.g. the *libidinosa migratio* that had involved the wife of Lichas and the sack of his ship, or the burglary in the villa of Lycurgus, or again the probable hasty flight, connected with the profanation of the mysteries of Priapus. We may perhaps suppose that also the two 'extreme' narrative sequences of which we have a certain knowledge may be included in this brief catalogue. The question on which this paper aims to reflect in is the following one: what is the force that draws the characters into a trap, and closes the trap behind them, thus creating the presupposition whereby the story can only proceed through flight? This force is above all their lack of awareness, their inability to understand 'reality' and to foresee developments, even the most elementary and obvious ones. One of the dominant themes of the *Cena* is the incapacity of Encolpius to decipher the mechanisms that govern Trimalchio's house, in clear contrast with the perfect control that the *dominus cenae* exerts over every single moment, every event, and every performance. In the *Graeca urbs* Encolpius is unable to find the way, and continually gets lost in the meanders of a maze that proves to be too intricate for him. This lack of understanding is to some extent the result of his constitutional inability to use the resources that he possesses, or should possess, as a learned man who has studied, in the events of life. An interpretation of this kind is possible also in the episode of the forum: what is experienced by the protagonists and indicated by the narrative I as a *lusus fortunae* could be completely different, it could have a director, and a script written by others: the meeting might not be a fantastic coincidence at all, but rather a cunningly laid trap. The *pervigilium Priapi*, too, shows us a particularly unwitting Encolpius, condemned to endure, together with his companions, a situation whose dynamics he does not control, whose

climax is represented by the double intervention of the *cinaedus*. Misunderstanding *embasicoetas*, Encolpius is the victim of his own inability to grasp the situation, as a result of his insufficient command of language and of the cultural code that governs the universe of the *Graeca urbs*.

JASON KÖNIG

Landscape and Reality in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*

This chapter argues that the Apuleius' representation of landscape in the *Metamorphoses*—and especially mountainous landscape—plays a key role in his reflections on the inadequacy of mortal understandings of reality. I aim to show that Apuleius' landscapes are characterised by two different strands. The first is a strikingly rhetorical conception of landscape; the second is an obsessive awareness of the physical presence of landscape and the way in which landscape impinges on the human (or asinine) body. Both of those visions of landscape are ultimately represented as inadequate. The destruction of the stage-set mountain at the very end of Book 10 stands, I argue, as an emblem of the novel's rejection of Lucius' flawed, pre-Isis experience of landscape in all that has come before.

ROBERT H.F. CARVER

Between Photis and Isis:

Fiction, Reality, and the Ideal in *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius

This paper explores the interplay of 'real' and 'ideal' in *The Golden Ass* by collating three female characters: a slave-girl (Photis) who triggers Lucius' original metamorphosis and whose name (however ironically) suggests 'Light'; an Egyptian goddess (Isis) who demands his life-long devotion in exchange for a garland of re-transforming roses; and a wealthy *matrona* of Corinth who chooses to copulate with him while he is still a donkey. Drawing on the Middle Platonic tradition and invoking the precedent of New Comedy, it provides a philosophical critique of Lucius' religious initiations while suggesting a new understanding of Photis' role as a mediatrix between the mundane and the divine.

TIM WHITMARSH
The Erotics of *mimēsis*:
Gendered Aesthetics in Greek Theory and Fiction

This chapter proposes a new reading of the gendered aesthetics of the Greek novels, by reading them through the lens of the mimetic theory of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. It begins with the paradoxical that the novelists tend to present women simultaneously as disempowered objects of the narrative gaze and as embodiments of the high aesthetics of the text itself. This bivalence is reflected in Dionysius' *On mimesis*, where women are figurative of both gazed-at beauty and a reproductive power that is assimilated to artistic creativity. These two different modes of gendering are, it is argued, prioritised respectively by Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus.