TWO CASE STUDIES ON ETHNOGRAPHY IN NOVELS

by

ALEXANDROS TASIOULIS

(Under the Direction of T. Keith Dix)

ABSTRACT

Two cases of ethnographical excursus in ancient Greek novels are studied and compared and contrasted with previous ethnographical traditions from Classical Greek historiography and rhetoric. Chariton, in his presentation of Persia, adopts stereotypes from earlier traditions, but uses them to a different end. The study of the boukoloi in Heliodorus further demonstrates that, within the context of the Second Sophistic and the novelistic genre, ethnography operates in different ways than the established norms inherited from Classical Greek literature. The ambivalence of ethnographies in novels reflects the complexity of questions of identity in Late Roman Imperial times.

INDEX WORDS: Heliodorus, Aethiopica, Chariton, Chaereas, Callirhoe, ethnography, barbarians, ancient novels, boukoloi, bandits, Second Sophistic, late antiquity.
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ALEXANDROS TASIOULIS

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ALEXANDROS TASIoulis

Major Professor: T. Keith Dix
Committee: Erika T. Hermanowicz
Naomi J. Norman

Electronic Version Approved:
Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

To my parents.
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CHAPTER 1
ETHNOGRAPHY AND BARBARIANS IN ANCIENT LITERATURE

Ethnic and racial prejudice and xenophobia are forms of hostility towards strangers and foreigners, at home or abroad. They occur in every society, but in widely differing degrees, social settings, and moral environments. They are the result of the human tendency to generalize and simplify, so that whole nations are treated as a single individual with a single personality.

(Isaac 2004, p. 3)

This thesis analyzes the presence of two marginal groups in ancient novels: the Persians in Chariton, and the boukoloi (bandits) in Heliodorus. Each group, in its own way, falls under the category of the “barbarians” in the ancient mind. They share a number of characteristics that render them “barbaric” and marginal, and their descriptions are influenced by a long literary tradition that begins with Herodotus. As an introduction to my two case-studies in the novels, I trace the development of the concept of the barbarian and the literary tradition that our novelists and their audience will have been familiar with.

The word "barbarian" comes from the Greek βάρβαρος, a term used to describe non-Greek speakers. It is usually assumed that the word is onomatopoetic as Strabo first pointed out. A possible connection to the Sumerian barbaru which means “strange” or “foreign” has also been suggested. It famously carries no linguistic connotations in Herakleitos, whose text has one of the first appearances of the term in extant literature. He professes that “κακοὶ μάρτυρες ἀνθρώπων ὀφθαλμοί καὶ ὀτρα βαρβάρους ψυχὰς ἔχοντεν” (fr. 107 Diels-Kranz). This line is

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1 “I suppose that the word "barbarian" was at first uttered onomatopoetically in reference to people who enunciated words only with difficulty and talked harshly and raucously” (όμια δὲ τὸ βάρβαρον κατ’ ἀρχάς ἐκπεφωνήθην αὐτῶν κατ’ ὀνοματοποιίαν ἐπὶ τῶν δυσεκφόροις καὶ σκληρῶς καὶ τραχῶς λαλούντων; 14.2.28).
2 Weidner 1913.
usually translated as “men’s eyes and ears are poor witnesses if they have barbarian souls.” This translation fails to notice the disconnect between the dative ἄνθρωποις and the genitive ἔχοντων; thus the correct translation should be something like “The eyes and ears of men who have illiterate/uneducated/inarticulate (βαρβάρονς) minds are bad witnesses for the rest of us (ἄνθρωποισιν).” In other words, the term had negative connotations earlier than is usually recognized.⁴

Other than the Herakleitos passage, the very first instance of the word is found in Homer’s Catalogue of Trojans (Iliad 2.867) where the Carians fighting for Troy are described as βαρβαρόφωνοι (bar-bar-speakers). This compound adjective presumes the existence of the noun barbaros, although Homer never actually uses that word.⁵ According to a recent interpretation, βαρβαρόφωνος may have only meant “speaking Greek badly.”⁶ The word does not appear again until Anakreon’s fr. 423 Page in the later sixth century. Besides that, the communis opinio on the matter is that barbaros began having ethnic and racist — as opposed to just linguistic — connotations after the Persian Wars. It is easy to see how a word meaning “speaker of a foreign language” might come to be ethnically and racially loaded, especially in a world where those who “spoke bar-bar” (if we accept that etymology) happened also to be the same people with whom you so often fought.⁷ Nevertheless, Homer bears no trace of this process of derogatory

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³ Hall 2009, 614.
⁴ pace Barnes 1983, 116: “The philosopher is hardly advancing the chauvinist thesis that non-Greek speakers cannot attain knowledge [nobody said he was!]. His use of the word seems to be metaphorical: the sense-perceptions of those 'who do not understand' are unreliable. This instance certainly does not imply the generic sense designating all non-Greeks which the word was to possess in the fifth century.”
⁵ For more, cf. Hall J. M. 2001, 111-2, who notes that the unique use of the word in Homer has led many scholars to obelize it. I agree that “the fashionable tendency of scholars to excise from the Homeric epics any word… that appears out of place… can often be taken to excess.”
⁶ ibid: “Given the relative familiarity of the Karians to the Greeks, it has been suggested that barbarophonoĩ in the Iliad signifies not those who spoke a non-Greek language but simply those who spoke Greek badly.”
⁷ Even if some scholars, notably Hansen, might argue that Greeks came into conflict with each other just as much. Different criteria of identity may be emphasized depending on the situation. Besides, even when civil war pitted Greeks against Greeks (or Romans against Romans), accusations were typically thrown that one of the sides had taken up with the Persians (or the Gauls) or some other barbarian group.
stereotyping of “barbarians” for which the Persian Wars was a catalyst.⁸

Furthermore, this sort of stereotyping — and its counterpart, Panhellenism — were expressions of Athenian “imperial” ideology. A common enemy functions as a sort of social glue for allied poleis — or provinces, for that matter, in a Roman context — that fosters a sense of community. Besides, while Athens may have defended to the death the notion that its empire was built on democracy, whatever that is, and a Roman emperor that their genius or divine favor guaranteed the expansion of Rome, or the continuation of the pax romana, whatever that is, empires are built on “colder” economic bases, such as slavery. And these things require at least some stereotyping of the other. The fear of the Romans of that corrupting agent called Asia spreading her vices — the luxury, the sexual excesses, the loose morals — to Italy and Rome itself is a commonplace.⁹ As for slavery itself, in Roman thought slavery represented a problem in the sense that it could lead to the decline of the empire because “once a people is subject to another, it inevitably loses its capacity for independence, and if at the same time such a people has an attractive culture, its feebleness will corrupt the victor and thus destroy the empire.”¹⁰

The important thing to remember is that while initially the meaning of the word barbarian was shaped by the Greeks’ nascent sense of collective identity, traces of which can be found even in their earliest literature, it only came to designate the all-embracing genus of non-Greeks during the fifth century.¹¹ After the conquest of the Greek world by the quickly expanding

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⁸ Cf. Hall J. M. 2001, Cartledge 1993 — especially chapter three “Alien Wisdom: Greeks v. Barbarians” — who offers an eloquent summary of the study of “the other”; Hall E. 1989, in a deservedly extremely influential study, shows how the polarization of barbarian and Hellene became a popular rhetorical topos in classical tragedy, and that “the idea of the barbarian as the generic opponent to Greek civilization was a result of this heightening in Hellenic self-consciousness caused by the rise of Persia.” (p. 9) She also points out that the fifth-century portrait of the barbarian is anticipated in earlier, archaic, art.

⁹ “It was the conquest of Asia that first introduced luxury into Italy” (Asia primum devicta luxuriam misit in Italiam; Pliny, NH 33.53.148).

¹⁰ Isaac 2004, 323.

Roman state, the word was adopted into Latin as *barbarus*, and it came to mean the non-Roman and anything outside the Roman ideas of civilization in general.\(^{12}\)

As is commonly argued, “ethnicity is a subjective concept shaped through an interaction with the ethical other.”\(^{13}\) This concept of ethnicity is originally created, in practical terms, when a narrator who belongs to group \(a\) dispenses information about group \(b\) through “traveler’s tales,” in the widest sense of the expression. When that happens, two different worlds come together. The problem for the narrator is how to introduce the world being recounted into the world where it is recounted. This is accomplished through the figure of inversion, which defines the “other” as the “anti-same,” thus explaining something foreign in terms familiar to the audience.\(^{14}\)

This is obvious in Herodotus’ case, especially, for instance, at the beginning of his ethnography of Persia (1.131):

\[\text{Πέρσας δὲ οἶδα νόμοις τοιοῦτοι χρεωμένους, ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοίς καὶ βωμοῖς οὐκ ἐν νόμω ποιεμένους ἱδρύεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ποιεῖσθαι μορφήν ἐπιφέρουσι, ὡς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυεάς ἑνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατὰ περὶ οἱ Ἑλληνες εἶναι· οἱ δὲ νομίζουσι Διὶ μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ ὑψηλότατα τῶν ὀρέων ἀναβαίνοντες θυσίας ἔρθειν, τὸν κύκλον πάντα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Δία καλέοντες· θύουσι δὲ ἡλίῳ τε καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ γῆ καὶ πυρὶ καὶ ἄδατι καὶ ἀνέμουι. τούτων μὲν δὴ θύουσι μονοῦσι ἄρχθην, ἐπιμελεθήκασι δὲ καὶ τῇ Οὐρανίῃ θείᾳ, παρὰ τε Ἀσσυρίοις μαθόντες καὶ Ἀραβίων. καλέουσι δὲ Ἀσσύριοι τὴν Ἀφροδίτην Μύλλα, Ἀράβιοι δὲ Ἀλλάτ, Πέρσαι δὲ Μίτραν.}

As to the customs of the Persians, I know them to be these. It is not their custom to make and set up statues and temples and altars, but those who do such things they think foolish, because, I suppose, they have never believed the gods to be like men, as the Greeks do; but they call the whole circuit of heaven Zeus, and to him they sacrifice on the highest peaks of the mountains; they sacrifice also to the

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\(^{12}\) LSJ s.v. *barbarus*: “foreign, strange, barbarous, opp. to Greek or Roman [...] In gen., for any hostile people (among the Romans, after the Aug. age, esp. the German tribes, as, among the Greeks, after the Persian war, the Persians) [...] foreign, strange, in mind or character. [...] In mind, uncultivated, ignorant; rude, unpolished [...] Of character, wild, savage, cruel, barbarous.”

\(^{13}\) Derks & Roymans 2009; *pace* Woolf 1997.

\(^{14}\) “It thus becomes possible to understand, to explain, to make sense of an otherness which would otherwise remain altogether opaque”; cf. Hartog 1988, 212-4.
sun and moon and earth and fire and water and winds. From the beginning, these are the only gods to whom they have ever sacrificed; they learned later to sacrifice to the “heavenly” Aphrodite from the Assyrians and Arabians. She is called by the Assyrians Mylitta, by the Arabians Alilat, by the Persians Mitra.

The identity of the nation of Persia is defined through opposition to Greek customs. The very first thing Herodotus mentions is that they do not practice religion the way the Greeks do. This continues as he discusses their other customs: “when about to sacrifice, they do not build altars or kindle fire, employ libations, or music, or fillets, or barley meals” (Hdt. 1.132). They also deliberate on important matters when drunk (1.134), and “the dead bodies of Persians are not buried before they have been mangled by birds or dogs” because “that is the way of the Magi” (1.140). By Roman times, this technique had been identified and described as a rhetorical figure, the *similitudo per contrarium*, along with *similitudo per negationem*, *similitudo per brevitatem* and *similitudo per collationem*.

While it is true that ethnic self-awareness can lead to ethnocentrism, early discourse on the Greek-barbarian antithesis is highly relativist. There are many negative remarks about barbarians, but Herodotus also gives important lessons on cultural tolerance. For example, Herodotus’ information about the burial customs of the Persians might seem to marginalize that nation. The claim that Persians decide on important matters only when inebriated could be interpreted as mockery. But Herodotus himself gives us a guide on how to read his ethnographies (3.38):

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15 This funeral custom would sound particularly disgusting to the Greeks whose education was Homer; in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, having your body eaten by scavengers was one of the worst fates one could suffer.

16 *Rhet. ad. Herennium* 4.46

17 “Herodotus does not seem merely to reflect the stereotypes about Hellenism or non-Greeks that recur in Greek tragedy, though it is possible that later Greeks simplified his message”; Thomas 2001, 214.

18 But, “often with Herodotus, his remarks… are taken at face value and out of context” and “we should not underestimate the complexities of an ethnic characterization, even in cases where polar opposites are evidently in play”; Thomas 2001, 213-4.
For if it were proposed to all nations to choose which seemed best of all customs, each, after examination, would place its own first; so well is each convinced that its own are by far the best. It is not therefore to be supposed that anyone, except a madman, would turn such things to ridicule. I will give this one proof among many from which it may be inferred that all men hold this belief about their customs. When Darius was king, he summoned the Greeks who were with him and asked them for what price they would eat their fathers' dead bodies. They answered that there was no price for which they would do it. Then Darius summoned those Indians who are called Callatiae, who eat their parents, and asked them (the Greeks being present and understanding through interpreters what was said) what would make them willing to burn their fathers at death. The Indians cried aloud, that he should not speak of so horrid an act. So firmly rooted are these beliefs; and it is, I think, rightly said in Pindar's poem that custom is lord of all.19

In fact, Herodotus and historiography are not unique in that cultural relativism. Even in Aeschylus' *Persians* which contains a number of negative Persian stereotypes, as we will see, the defeated Persians are regarded with some sympathy. Xerxes is of course shown to commit hubris by invading Greece and especially in how he crossed the Hellespont, but his wise father, Darius, who appears as a ghost at his own tomb, condemns that hubris and predicts further nemeisis in the form of a terrible defeat of the Persian army at Plataea. Aeschylus' Darius is moderated by *sophrosune*, and the defeat of the Persians is a result of an individual's madness, not a result of

19 Besides, Herodotus claims that almost all Greek religious rituals come from Egypt! (αὕτα μέν νῦν καὶ ἄλλα πρὸς τούτοις, τὰ ἐγὼ φράσω, Ἐλληνες ἀπ' Ἀγυπτίων νεομίκασι; 2.50).
an endemic ethnic slavishness or cowardice. The last part of the play is a long lament of the Persian misfortune which has been interpreted as either an exercise in *Schadenfreude* or a genuine sympathy for the others’ misfortunes and the tragedies of war.\(^\text{20}\)

Nevertheless, Herodotus’ text is the first long discursus on the Persian *ethnos* and the war they waged against Greece. Therefore, it contains a number of statements that eventually became typical characteristics of Persians in particular and barbarians in general. For example, the *topos* of Persian *luxuria* (which is taken up, as we will see, to some extent, by Chariton) has its beginnings in the *Histories*. According to Herodotus, the Persians are, of all people, the most inclined to borrow luxuries of all kinds from others (“But the Persians more than all men welcome foreign customs. They wear the Median dress, thinking it more beautiful than their own, and the Egyptian cuirass in war. Their luxurious practices are of all kinds, and all borrowed: the Greeks taught them pederasty. Every Persian marries many lawful wives, and keeps still more concubines”\(^\text{21}\)). The mention, in this context, of pederasty, which they learned from Greeks, must therefore not be a negative remark on the Persians. The last three books of Herodotus’ *Histories* have been read, both in antiquity and nowadays, as a struggle of the freedom-loving Greeks against the cowardly, despotic Persians.\(^\text{22}\) Eventually, and especially through the appropriation of that memory by the Athenian Empire, the battles at Thermopylae, Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea, came to symbolize the war between the West and the East, and between democracy and tyranny.\(^\text{23}\) In the art of fifth-century Athens, they were assimilated to the mythical

\(^{20}\) Hall 1989, 71. For the first view cf. Clifton 1963, for the latter cf. Thalmann 1980, 281-2 who states that the play would have “prompted the reflection that all men are subject to the same human laws.”

\(^{21}\) ξεινικά δὲ νόμαι Πέρσαι προσένεται ἀνδρῶν μάλιστα, καὶ γὰρ ὅ τινες Ἑλλήνων ἔσθητα νομίζαντες τῆς ἐρωτέων εἶναι καλλίω φορέουσι, καὶ ἐς τοὺς πολέμους τοὺς Ἀγριππίνους θώρηκας· καὶ εὐπαθείας τε παντοδαπῆς πυνθανόμενοι ἐπιπηδεύονεις, καὶ ὅτι καὶ ἀπ’ Ἑλλήνων μαθόντες παισί μίσγονται. γαμέουσι δὲ ἐκκατοστὶ αὐτῶν πολλὰς μὲν κουριόδας γυναίκας, πολλῷ δ’ ἐτὶ πλύνας παλακάς κτόντας; 1.135

\(^{22}\) A theme that shows up particularly often in the context of the legacy of the battle of Thermopylae, from Herodotus all the way to the adaptation of Frank Miller’s comic in the movie *300*.

\(^{23}\) Bridges, Hall & Rhodes 2007; Isaac offers a nice overview of popular views on the Persian Wars and shows that
archetypes of the Amazonomachy and the Centauromachy, battles against two groups at the edges of civilization and acting outside the norms of Greek behavior.\textsuperscript{24}

The Ethiopians, who, as we will see in chapter two, play a central role in Heliodorus, present a special case. Already in Homer they are designated as the “furthest of men” (ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν; Od. 1.23) and placed far from civilization (τηλόθ᾽ ἐόντας; Od. 1.22), by the streams of Ocean (ἐπ᾽ Ὀκεανοῖς ρέεθρα Αἴθιόπων ἐς γαῖαν; Il. 23.205). The land of the Ethiopians serves as a retreat for the gods whenever they are required to be offstage for Homer’s plot construction. In the beginning of the \textit{Iliad}, for example, the gods are in Ethiopia enjoying the famously rich Ethiopian banquets, and so Thetis must wait for twelve days before presenting Achilles’ embassy to Zeus.\textsuperscript{25} The Ethiopians are described as “blameless” (ἀμύμονας), generally religiously pious, and enjoying great prosperity which allows them to furnish rich banquets to the gods. We are always aware of the Ethiopian retreat “which lies just beyond the horizon of the poems, offering the peace and plenitude which are so sorely lacking in the world before our eyes.”\textsuperscript{26}

In Herodotus, the Ethiopians become part of the narrative. Cambyses decides to invade their land, and sends a tribe called \textit{Ichthyophagoi} (“Fish-eaters”) as ambassadors ostensibly to

\textsuperscript{24} Hall 1989, 102; and Pausanias describes a mural by Polygnotus in the Stoa Poikile which depicts the \textit{Marathonomachoi} alongside Theseus and Heracles defeating Amazons and Trojans respectively (1.15.3); but as Isaac shows, “Herodotus does not suggest that this was a battle for any other spiritual value, for personal liberty or any of the other moral ideals which the modern scholarship claim he wishes to convey. Moreover, there is no support for the claim that Herodotus sees this as a war between West and East”; Isaac 2004, 273. Also cf. Miller’s remarks on that: “It is a commonplace of modern scholarship that the Athenians hated and despised the Persians ... evidence can be found in the rhetoric of the theatre and the assembly, as well as in art. But the claims of contempt are disproved by the evidence of archaeology, epigraphy, iconography and literature, all of which reveal some facet of Athenian receptivity to Achaemenid Persian culture”; Miller 1997, 1.

\textsuperscript{25} Ζεῦς γὰρ ἐς Ὀκεανὸν μετ᾽ ἀμύμονας Αἰθιοπίας/χθύσις ἐβη κατὰ δαίμονα, θεοὶ δ᾽ ἀμα πάντες ἐποντο; II. 1.424-5.

\textsuperscript{26} Romm 1992, 53.
bring gifts for the Ethiopian king, but actually to spy on him and find out more about the so-called “Table of the Sun.” This table is always full of meats that the earth itself furnishes (like the men of Hesiod’s Golden Age, the Ethiopians enjoy plenitude directly from the earth, without labor).27 The Fish-eaters, then, arrive at the camp of the Ethiopian king, bearing as gifts a red cloak, a twisted gold necklace and bracelets, an alabaster box of incense, and an earthenware jar of palm wine. The Ethiopian king rejects all the gifts; he says that the red cloak and the box of incense are “deceitful” (δολερὰ), the gold necklace and the bracelets make “poor fetters,” but he is impressed with the wine, and asks for more information about that drink. The encounter between Persians and Ethiopians ends with an unsuccessful invasion by the enraged Cambyses. Overall, the Ethiopians come out of this story as wise and moderate. The Ethiopian king appreciates wine as a salutary beverage to be enjoyed in moderation, whereas Cambyses spirals into alcohol-induced madness. The Ethiopians and Fish-eaters once again come into contact in Heliodorus, when Charicleia, the Ethiopian (as we find out at the end of the novel) princess, falls in the hands of the boukoloi, who are described as living in marshes and eating raw fish. These boukoloi prepare their fish in the exact same way as the Ichthyophagoi in Diodorus, leaving them to dry in the sun.28

Nevertheless, during the fifth century we see barbarians overall being associated with negative stereotypes, particularly in drama. In Aristophanes’ Acharnians, one of the characters, who pretends to have visited Persia, claims that he drank wine out of golden flagons and ate oxen cooked whole in an oven. When he tried to meet with the Persian King, he found out that the

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27 ἡ δὲ τράπεζα τοῦ ἡλίου τοιὴς τις λέγεται ἔνα, λειμῶν ἐστὶ ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ ἐπιπλεοῦς κρεὸν ἐφθέν τῶν τετραπόδων, ἐς τὸν τάς μὲν νύκτας ἐπιτρεφόμενας τιθέναι τὰ κρέα τοὺς ἐν τέλει ἐκάστοτε ἐώς τῶν ἀστών, τὰς δὲ ἡμέρας διαίσθησαι προσθέντα τὸν βουλόμενον. φάναι δὲ τούς ἐπιχειρίους τιστὰ τῇ γῆν αὐτὴν ἀναδιδόναι ἐκάστοτε; 3.18.
28 ἐπειδὰν δ’ ἄθροισσοιν ἤθεθον παντοδιάπον πλήθος, μεταφέροσι τοὺς ἑρθόντας καὶ πάντας ὑπόπτους ἐπὶ τῶν πετρῶν τῶν ἐγκεκλιμένων πρὸς μεσημβρίαν. διασήμων δ’ οὐκόσι διὰ τὴν τοῦ καύματος ὑπερβολήν; Diod. Sic. 3.16. For a full analysis cf. Romm 1992, 46-60.
King had “left with his whole army to ease himself, and for the space of eight months he was thus easing himself in the midst of the golden mountains.” Aristophanes’ joke is a play on the themes of Persian luxury and cowardice. The King lives in such leisure and opulence that he can spend eight months going to the bathroom, preferably surrounded by gold. Not only that, but he abandons his whole army for such a ridiculous reason.

In fact, we see this trend already in Atossa’s dream in the *Persai*. There, she dreams of two women, one symbolizing Europe and the other symbolizing Asia, placed under Xerxes’ yoke. Europe breaks off her chains and breaks free, but Asia suffers her fetters obediently. Atossa arrives at Darius’ tomb “without her chariot and her former luxury” (ἄνευ τ’ ὀχημάτων χλιδής τε τῆς πάροιθεν; 608). The chariot seems to be the wheeled tent with awnings first described in Herodotus as Xerxes’ vehicle (Ξέρξης, μετεκβαίνεσκε δὲ... ἐκ τοῦ ἄρματος ἐς ἀρμάμαξαν; 7.41) and regarded as extravagantly luxurious and effeminate in Aristophanes’ *Acharnians*, when the same character mentioned above complains that he’s had to “suffer” resting in such chariots (καὶ δὴ τ’ ἐπηρόμεσθα διὰ Καϊστρίων πεδίων ὀδοιπλανοῦντες ἐσκηνημένοι, ἐφ’ ἀρμαμαξῶν μαλθακῶς κατακείμενοι, ἀπολλύμενοι; 69-70). The chorus identify themselves as wardens of the he royal abode, rich in bountiful store of gold (τῶν ἀφνεῶν καὶ πολυχρύσων ἐδράνων φύλακες; 3-4), and the Persian *ethnos* is described as “born from gold” (χρυσογόνον; 80). Finally, some readers of this tragedy interpret the long lament for the fortune

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29 Arist. Ach. 80-83.
30 “I dreamed that two women in beautiful clothes, one in Persian garb, the other in Dorian attire, appeared before my eyes; both far more striking in stature than are the women of our time, flawless in beauty, sisters of the same family. As for the lands in which they dwelt, to one had been assigned by lot the land of Hellas, to the other that of the barbarians. The two, as I imagined it, seemed to provoke each other to a mutual feud, and my son, when he had become aware of this, attempted to restrain and placate them. He yoked them both to his car and placed the collar-straps upon their necks. The one bore herself proudly in these trappings and kept her mouth obedient to the rein. The other struggled and with her hands tore apart the harness of the car; then, free of the curb, she dragged it violently along with her and snapped the yoke in two” (181-196).
31 Hall 1989, 96.
of Persia at the end of the work as typical of Persian unrestrained emotionalism. Extreme excitement over victories and unnatural despair over defeats emerges, as we will see, as a typical barbarian characteristic, related to the barbarian emotional unstableness and contrasted to the Greek (and later, Roman) sense of *metron*.

The Persians in Aeschylus’ play also prostrate themselves in *proskynesis*, a gesture we will also see in Chariton’s novel. A soldier is described as προσκυνεῖν to the earth and the sky, and the chorus prostrate themselves (the verb used is προσπίτνω; 152) before Atossa, and “shrink in awe” from gazing upon Darius’ ghost, which may also be a reference to *proskynesis* (σέβομαι μὲν προσιδέσθαι; 694). When the chorus finds out about the destruction of the Persian fleet at Salamis, they cry out that the Persian rule over Asia will soon be in the past, and that men will not have to pay tribute to the king, or prostrate themselves before him; instead, “no longer will men keep a curb upon their tongues; for the people are set free to utter their thoughts at will, now that the yoke of power has been broken” (οὐδ’ ἔτι δασμοφόροισιν δεσποσύνοισιν ἀνάγκαις, οὐδ’ ἐς γὰν προπίτνοντες ἄξονται· οὐδ’ ἔτι γλῶσσα βροτοῖσιν ἐν φυλακαῖς· λέλυται γὰρ λαὸς ἐλεύθερα βάζειν, ὡς ἐλύθη ζυγὸν ἀλκάς; 586-92).

Overall, throughout the fifth century, a number of stereotypes were ascribed to different *ethne*. For example Thracians came to be known as bloodthirsty and untrustworthy. In reporting the sack of a town called Mykalessos by a Thracian band of mercenaries that had travelled to Athens and was on its way back to Thrace, Thucydides makes Thracians out to be monstrous: “The Thracians bursting into Mycalessus sacked the houses and temples, and butchered the inhabitants, sparing neither youth nor age, but killing all they fell in with, one after the other, children and women, and even beasts of burden, and whatever other living creatures they saw;
the Thracian race, like the bloodiest of the barbarians, being ever most so when it has nothing to fear. Everywhere confusion reigned and death in all its shapes; and in particular they attacked a boys' school, the largest that was in the place, into which the children had just gone, and massacred them all.”

In Euripides’ *Hecuba*, the Thracian king Polymestor is a cunning liar, approaching Hecuba with a pretense of friendliness and sympathy after he had murdered her son, Polydorus. The latter was a guest at Polymestor’s palace, given to the Thracian for safekeeping, but Polymestor decided simply to kill him and take off with his treasures, thus violating the Greek laws of *xenia*.

Barbarians are also prone to be violent against women, and the Egyptian herald in Aeschylus’ *Suppliant Women* abuses his countrywomen with blood-freezing threats (“Away with you, away to the ship, as fast as your feet can carry you! If you won't, your hair shall be torn out; you'll be pricked with goads, and off will come your heads with abundant letting of gory blood”). In Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulis*, one of the first reasons Iphigenia cites for why she would agree to die is that in sacrificing herself she would “check henceforth barbarian raids on happy Hellas, if ever in the days to come they seek to seize her women.”

The author of the pseudo-Hippocratic *On Airs, Waters, and Places*, ascribes servility and cowardice to Asiatics. He also emphasizes the fact that Greeks will voluntarily fight to preserve

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33 ὀσπεισόντες δὲ οἱ Θράκες ἐς τὴν Μυκαλησσόν τάς τε οἰκίας καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ ἐπάρθουν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐφόνευον φειδόμενοι οὐκ ἐπειθετέρας οὐκ ἔχων ἥλικίας, ἀλλὰ πάντας ἐξής, ὅτε ἐντύχονεν, καὶ παιδὰς καὶ γυναῖκας κτείνοντες, καὶ προσέπτες καὶ ὑποξίναι καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ἐμψύχα ἱδονέν· τοῦ γὰρ γένος τὸ τῶν Ἐθρακῶν ὀμοία τοῖς μάλιστα τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ, ἐν ὦ ἢ πορφοῦ ἐπικάλατο ἐπί. καὶ τότε ἄλλη τε ταραχή οὐκ ὀλίγη καὶ ἱδέα πάσα καθειστήκει ὄλθρον, καὶ ἐπεσόντες διδασκαλεῖ παιδών, ὅτε μέγιστον ἦν αὐτότι καὶ ἄρτι ἔτην οἱ παῖδες ἐσφυγμένοις κατέκοψαν πάντας· καὶ ἔμψυχα τῇ πόλει τάς πᾶσα σιδερέωμας ἠςον καὶ πάλας ἥλικής τε ἐπέπεσεν αὐτή καὶ δεινή; 7.29.4-5.


35 σοιδάθε σοιδάθ᾽ ἐπὶ βᾶ·/ μὲν ὅποις ποδὸν ἔχετε/ τοικοῖον οὐκοίνυν/ τίμοι τίμωι καὶ στημοί/ πολυσίμων φόνιος/ ἀποκοπά κρατός; Aesch. Suppl. 836-41.

36 τάς τε μελλούσας γυναίκας, ἢ τὸ δρόσι βάρβαροι, ἢ μηκέθ᾽ ἀρπάξειν ἐὰν τούς ὀλίβιας ἐξ Ἑλλάδος; Iph. in Aul. 1380-1.
their freedom whereas Asiatics fight because they are made to.\(^{37}\) In this example of environmental determinism, human beings from Asia or Europe derive their ethnic character from their continents. This idea also appears in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, where the heroine of the play opines that “Hellenes should rule barbarians, but not barbarians Hellenes, those being slaves, while these are free.”\(^{38}\) In Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, Cyrus admits the Greek military superiority over barbarians: “Men of Greece, it is not because I have not barbarians enough that I have brought you hither to fight for me; but because I believe that you are braver and stronger than many barbarians.”\(^{39}\) This is explained by Cyrus as a corollary of the freedom that Greeks enjoy.

In fourth century rhetoric, these stereotypes become commonplace. For Demosthenes, notions such as honor and freedom are typically Greek (“…that freedom and independence which to the Greeks of an earlier age were the very standard and canon of prosperity;” *De Corona* 296).\(^{40}\) Barbarians are slaves by default (“they spurned an alliance with you who are Greeks and their betters, and now they are slaves of barbarians, slaves of slaves, whom they admitted into their citadels”; *On the Liberty of the Rhodians* 15).\(^{41}\) Barbarian status is also related to religious impiety (“His true, native barbarism and hatred of religion drive him on by force and betray the fact that he treats his present rights as if they were not his own—as indeed they are

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\(^{37}\) “For uniformity engenders slackness, while variation fosters endurance in both body and soul : rest and slackness are food for cowardice, endurance and exertion for bravery. Wherefore Europeans are more warlike, and also because of their institutions, not being under kings as are Asiatics. For, as I said above, where there are kings, there must be the greatest cowards. For men’s souls are enslaved, and refuse to run risks readily and recklessly to increase the power of somebody else. But independent people, taking risks on their own behalf and not on behalf of others, are willing and eager to go into danger, for they themselves enjoy the prize of victory” (chap. 23).

\(^{38}\) ἀρβάρων δ᾽ Ἐλληνας ἀρχεῖν εἰκός, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ βαρβάρος, μήτε, Ἐλλήνην: τὸ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλον, οἶ δ᾽ ἐλεύθεροι (1400-1401).

\(^{39}\) οὐ ἄνδρες Ἐλλήνες, οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ἀπορούν βαρβάρους συμμάχους ἤμας ἔχω, ἀλλὰ νομίζων ἅμεινον καὶ κρείττους πολλῶν βαρβάρων ἤμας εἶναι; Xen. Anab. 1.7.3.

\(^{40}\) τὴν δ᾽ ἐλευθερίαν καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ἐχεῖν δεσποτὴν αὐτῶν, οὐ τὸς προτέρος Ἐλλην όροι τῶν ἄγαθῶν ἦσαν καὶ κανόνες, ἀνατετροφότες.

\(^{41}\) τοῦ κομίσασθαι γὰρ τὰ ὑμέτερα ὤμιν φθονήσαντες τὴν εαυτὸν ἑλευθερίαν ἀπολογίζεισαι, καὶ παρὸν αὐτῶς Ἐλλην καὶ βελτίσσιν αὐτῶν ὤμιν ἐξ ίσου συμμαχεῖν, βαρβάρους καὶ δούλους, οἷς εἰς τὰς ἀκροσάλεις παρεῖναι, δουλεύοντιν.
Barbarian leaders such as Mausolus, the satrap of Caria, and Philip of Macedon are “systematically pictured as tyrants, supporters of tyranny, and eager to deprive the Greeks of their freedom and the laws that guarantee it.” For Isocrates, Greek language and education are important factors in terms of identity: “in those qualities by which the nature of man rises above the other animals, and the race of the Hellenes above the barbarians, namely, in the fact that you have been educated as have been no other people in wisdom and in speech.”

The negative stereotypes projected onto marginal groups are related to four vices described in fourth century philosophical writings: stupidity, licentiousness, cowardice, and lawlessness (ἀδικίαν καὶ ἀκολασίαν καὶ δειλίαν καὶ ἁμαθίαν). These correspond to the four “cardinal virtues” of the ideal city as set out by Plato in his Republic: wisdom, courage, restraint, and justice (σοφία τ’ ἐστὶ καὶ ἀνδρεία καὶ σωφρόνη καὶ δικαια). These ideas persist throughout antiquity, and we find them expressed in Cicero, the Bible, and St. Augustine.
This is also the image of the barbarian we get from comedy: “a presumption of weakness… that allows the people concerned to… be made the butt and prey of any more courageous society, such as the Greeks. With the Persians it is the softness that… is satisfied with luxury, with the Phrygians their cowardice, with the Mysians their defenselessness.”

In Menander, the word *barbaros* comes to mean “slave” and is used for the slave-girl that tends the table (όλλ' ἢ βάρβαρος ἂμα τῇ τραπέζῃ καὶ τὸν οἶνον φέστο; frag. 385), a person of no worth — literally, “bought for salt” (Θρᾷξ εὔγενής εἵ, πρός ἄλας ἡγορασμένος; frag. 805), and generally unreliable (*Georgus* 54-58).

Plato furthermore writes that “Greeks fight and wage war with barbarians, and barbarians with Greeks, and are enemies by nature, and that war is the fit name for this enmity and hatred. Greeks, however, we shall say, are still by nature the friends of Greeks when they act in this way, but that Greece is sick in that case and divided by faction, and faction (*stasis*) is the name we must give to that enmity.”

He is in that sense sharing the feelings of a number of great authors of that era, such as Demosthenes and Isocrates.

Xenophon’s attitude towards Persia is more enigmatic, however, and foreshadows the complexity of the Greek-barbarian confrontations and coexistence during and after Alexander’s campaigns. Both Cyrus the Great and Cyrus the Younger are regarded with admiration. The latter receives a funeral speech after his death in 401: he was “a man most kingly and of all the Persian after Cyrus the Great the most worthy man to rule, as all agree who seem to have known him

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48 Long 1986, 142.
49 ἕνταθὰ χρείας γενομένης αὐτῷ τινος/κηδεμόνος, οἱ μὲν οἰκέται καὶ βάρβαροι, ἐφ’ αὐτῶν ἑκεῖνὸς ἕστιν, οἱμῶξοι μακρὰν/ἐλεγον ἄπαντες; cf. Long 1896, 129-156 for a full overview.
50 Ἐλλήνας μὲν ἄρα βαρβάροις καὶ βαρβάροις Ἐλλῆσι πολεμεῖν μαχομένους τε φήσαις καὶ πολεμίους φύσει εἶναι, καὶ πόλεμον τὴν ἐξήραντα ταύτην κλητέον. Ἐλλήνας δὲ Ἐλλῆσιν, ὅταν τι τοιοῦτον ὄρθωσιν, φύσει μὲν φίλος εἶναι, νοσεῖν δ’ ἐν τῷ τοιοῦτῳ τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ στασιάζειν, καὶ στάσιν τὴν τοιαύτην ἐξήραν κλητέον. Rep. 470c-d.
well." Not only that, but “no man, either Greek or barbarian, was ever loved by a greater number of people.” However, the last chapter of his Cyropaedia is “fiercely hostile and critical,” and despite the many doubts over its authenticity, it is “not important who wrote the chapter, as long as it is agreed that it reflects the views of a Greek writing not long after 361.”

In that chapter we see many of the stereotypical Persian traits we have already discussed, such as moral degeneration and effeminacy.

In Alexander’s time, the adoption of Persian court customs, above all proskynesis, was considered to exercise pernicious effects on the victor: “Many, it is true, did reproach him for these things, but he silenced them with gifts.” According to Plutarch, Alexander defined “Greek” and “barbarian” in qualitative terms and promoted intermarriage and general cultural assimilation: τὸ δ’ Ἑλληνικὸν καὶ βαρβαρικὸν μὴ χλαμύδι μηδὲ πέλτη μηδ’ ἀκινάκη μηδὲ κάνδου διορίζειν, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν Ἑλληνικὸν ἄρετῆ τὸ δὲ βαρβαρικὸν κακίᾳ τεκμαίρεσθαι: κοινὰς δ’ ἐσθήτας ἠγείσθαν καὶ τραπέζας καὶ γάμους καὶ διαίτας, δι’ αἴματος καὶ τέκνων ἀνακερανυμένους (Plut. De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute 329c-d). Furthermore, Alexander “did not follow Aristotle’s advice to treat the Greeks as if he were their leader, and other peoples as if he were their

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51 ἀνὴρ ὁν Περσῶν τὸν μετὰ Κύρου τὸν ἄρχον γενομένους βασιλικότατος τε καὶ ἄρχουν ἀξιότατος, ὡς παρὰ πάντων ὀμολογεῖται τὸν Κύρου δοκοῦντον εὐ πέρα γενέσθαι; Anabasis 1.9.1.
52 οὐδὲνα κρίνον ὑπὸ πλειόνων πεφιλήθαι οὐτὶ Ἐλλήνων οὔτε βαρβάρων; Anabasis 1.9.28.
53 Isaac 2004, 290.
54 For example, “had they not had such a character for honour, and had they not been true to their reputation, not a man would have trusted them, just as not a single person any longer trusts them, now that their lack of character is notorious” (εἰ δὲ μὴ τοιοῦτο ἦσαν καὶ τοιαύτην δοξὴν ἐχὸν οὖδ’ ἐν εἷς αὐτοὺς ἐπίστευεν, ὡσπερ οὐδὲ νῦν πιστεύει οὐδὲ εἰς ἄγαν, ἐπεὶ ἐγκαθίσταται οὐδὲ εἰς αὐτοὺς; Cyropaedia 8.8.3) and “they are much more effeminate now than they were in Cyrus’s day. For at that time they still adhered to the old discipline and the old abstinence that they received from the Persians, but adopted the Median garb and Median luxury; now, on the contrary, they are allowing the rigour of the Persians to die out, while they keep up the effeminacy of the Medes” (ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ θρησκευόμενοι πολύ νῦν ἢ ἐπὶ Κύρου εἰσίν. τῶτε μὲν γὰρ ἐτώσος καὶ ἔγραφεν ἔχοντο, τῷ δὲ Μῆδων στολή καὶ ἀβρακτητῇ: νῦν δὲ τὴν μὲν ἐκ Περσῶν κατερμάκειν περιορύθησαν ἀκοσμημένην, τὴν δὲ τῶν Μῆδος μαλακίαν διασχίζονται; Cyropaedia 8.8.15
55 ὅμως δὲ πολλάν αὐτῷ μεμηχανοῦσας τοῖς οὖν μὲν τὰς δορεὰς ἐπηράπετεν; Diod. Sic. 17.78. Diodorus tells us that Alexander “distributed to his companions cloaks with purple borders” as part of his “Orientalizing degeneration”; the color purple was already a sign of Persian excessive luxury and moral decadence.
Overall, outspoken and radical anti-barbarian attitudes occur in Greek texts of the fourth century (e.g. Isocrates and Plato), but not in texts describing the Persian Wars by authors who had traveled themselves in the East (e.g. Herodotus or Xenophon). The stereotypes developed in an age of Greek imperialism that was justified as a rightful revenge for previous Persian transgressions persist as themes in Roman literature from the late Republic onwards. In the *Life of Artaxerxes* by Plutarch (who was Chariton’s contemporary) we find that same image of the decadence and degeneration of the Persian Empire: court intrigues, a brutal empress (Parysatis, the queen of Darius II), and horrible scenes of executions. Artaxerxes II (the King in the novel) is shown as a magnanimous ruler and patron of his friends.

Within the context of the production of our novels in late antiquity, all of the above come together and become part of the “standard” imperial ideology through which barbarians are seen, expressions of which we discern in both material and literary culture. Ultimately, the...
“barbarian” provides the ideological justification for the empire’s assertion to preserve intact and even extend the patterns of wealth that the elite of the various regions of the Roman Empire had come to expect. After all, “educated elites, no matter how much they may benefit materially from the aggression of the political structures to which they belong, like to be reassured that this aggression is in a teleologically good cause.”

For Greeks living under Roman rule, Greek identity had to be redefined. It is no longer true that all non-Greeks are barbarians, and a cultural definition of Hellenism supersedes the political characteristics promulgated in fourth century rhetoric. While for Demosthenes being Greek meant to be prepared to fight for the defense of freedom against barbarians, for Dionysius of Halicarnassus it is “fair laws,” “language,” “customs,” and “religion.” Favorinus points to “language, thought, manners, and even dress” as indices of Greekness. With regard to language in particular, the emphasis is on Atticizing, not simply speaking Greek. And while he may be recognized as a Greek in Athens because he Atticizes, or a Greek in Sparta because he is “devoted to athletics,” it is his interest in philosophy that makes him a Greek all over Greece. Atticizing Greek has become the only acceptable language for the intellectual elite of the Roman Empire, who abandoned their native dialects, according to Aristides. Attic Greek was the lingua franca that bound the educated elites together and excluded the lower classes. In other words, for

namely in the narrative column. In Marcus Aurelius’ column, for example, erected in the Campus Martius sometime after his death, “the barbarian has simply become a body, dehumanized pieces and fragments of bleeding and battered flesh, whose fate was dictated by Roman imperial authority. These bodies are stabbed or hacked at, they are pushed and herded like beasts being brought in from the fields, they are pulled along by the hair; they are beheaded and their bodies piled up in heaps for the edification of the viewer” (Ferris 2000, 98).

69 Heather 1999, 235.
60 Said 2001, 286.
61 ὡς μῆτε φωνὴν Ἑλλάδα φθέγγεσθαι μῆτε ἐπιτηδεύμασιν Ἑλλήνων χρῆσθαι, μῆτε θεοὺς τοὺς αὐτοὺς νομίζειν, μῆτε νόμους τοὺς ἐπεικεῖς, ὡς μᾶλλα διαλύσει φύσις Ἑλλάς βαρβάρος; Antiquitates Romanae 1.89.4.
62 οὔτε τὴν φωνὴν μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν γνώμην καὶ τὴν διάτατα καὶ τὸ σχῆμα τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐξηλοκός; Corinthian Oration 25.
63 Ῥωμαῖος ὁν ἀφηλληνισθῇ, ὡσπερ ἢ πατρίς ἢ ὑμετέρα, παρὰ Αθηναίους δὲ, ὁτα ἀπεκέκλει τῇ φωνῇ; Corinthian Oration 26.
64 Said 2001, 293.
the members of the provincial elites, ‘Greekness’ “was a stake in an empire-wide aristocratic
competition” and not anymore “coterminal with ethnicity.” 65

These preliminary remarks should serve as a lens through which we may interpret the
presentation of barbarians in novels, as well as an introduction to the general milieu within which
any attitude towards barbarians and marginal groups is to be construed. It should also caution us
to take ethnographic descriptions in a literary work cum grano salis. It is appropriate, then, to
close with Woolf’s comments on the complexity of assigning identities/allegiances to authors of
the Roman Empire, especially in late antiquity: “our new culture heroes are Xenophontophile
Arrian governing Cappadocia and defending Rome against barbarian Alans while he dreams of
Alexander; Spanish Hadrian besotted with Athens; Marcus writing his somber Meditations in
Greek but gushing in Latin over his African tutor’s compositions in both languages; Syrian
Lucian playing the Greek sophist in Rome; and Favorinus, the Gaul who could ‘do Greek’, the
pupil of Bithynian Dio and the guru of Gellius whose admiration of pre-canonical Latin is
enshrined in his Attic Nights.” 66 The two chapters that follow are case-studies of ethnographies in
novels. In chapter four we will contextualize our individual conclusions within the wider
framework of late antique society, literature, and novelistic writing in particular.

66 Woolf 2006, 162.
CHAPTER 2

PERSIA IN CHARITON’S *CHAEREAS & CALLIRHOE*

The main objective of this chapter is to examine the presentation of Persia in Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe* from an ethnographical perspective. The investigation begins with an analysis of the direct comments on the Persians and their ways, and proceeds with an interpretation of two of the main Persian characters in the novel: the Great King, Artaxerxes, and his eunuch, Artaxates. Understanding the function of these two figures within the narrative is of great importance because they represent the essence of what is Persian. Their behavior and their Persian identity are inextricably linked. I also look at some of the ways the two heroes of the novel, Chaereas and Callirhoe, interact with the Persian environment. The image of Persia is partially painted through our heroes’ interaction with — and experience in — it. The same applies for Dionysius from Miletus, who is in many ways perceived as being “in between” our Syracusan heroes and the Persians.

Already in the first mention of the Persians in *Chariton and Callirhoe*, they are associated with that most traditional of Persian traits, luxury. At this point in the narrative, our two heroes have gotten married, but *fama* of Callirhoe’s unfaithfulness has reached Chaereas, who subsequently, too angry even to find words to speak, kicks her in the chest, causing her to fall down the stairs. She falls into a sort of temporary coma, and is thought to be dead. She gets buried, but soon after she regains her senses, a band of tomb raiders led by Theron finds her, takes her captive, and takes her aboard their ship with the intention of eventually selling her. The brigands consider trying to sell Callirhoe in Athens, but Theron rejects that city, calling its
citizens “nosy” (περιεργία), “busybodies” (πολυπραγμοσύνη) and “gossips” (δημός ἐστι λάλος; 1.11.6). They eventually land in Miletus, where Theron meets Leonas, the man in charge of the household of Dionysius, who is introduced as “the wealthiest, noblest, and most cultured man in Ionia, and a friend of the Great King” (Διονύσιον πλούτῳ καὶ γένει καὶ παιδείᾳ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὑπερέχοντα, φίλον τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως; 1.12.6-7). Leonas takes Theron to Dionysius’ estate, and the Syracusan criminal is surprised at the size and luxuriousness of the house. Chariton comments that, after all, the house was equipped to receive the king of Persia (ὁ μὲν Θήρων έθαύμαζε τὸ μέγεθος καὶ τὴν πολυτέλειαν· ἦν γὰρ εἰς ὑποδοχήν τοῦ Περσῶν βασιλέως παρεσκευασμένη; 1.13.1). This, in fact, is the only reference to Persia in book 1. For now, Chariton is simply following in a long tradition that pictures Persia as a place of extravagance. The king of Persia personifies this extravagance in this case.

The next appearance of the Persians comes in Chariton’s third book, when Callirhoe has become Dionysius’ wife and is about to give birth to a son she conceived by Chaereas, but presented as a child of Dionysius. Chaereas, having found out that his wife was not dead, but had been taken by pirates and led to Ionia, leaves Syracuse and lays anchor in Miletus. Dionysius’ steward, Phocas, sees Chaereas’ ship and decides it would be in his master’s best interest to attack and destroy it. He heads to a Persian garrison and tells them of the enemy trireme that has approached the city. Phocas knows who owns the ship and why the ship and its crew are in Miletus (ναῦτην δὲ τινα ὑποκορισάμενος μανθάνει παρ’ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀλήθειαν, τίνης εἰσὶ καὶ πόθεν καὶ διὰ τίνα πλέουσι), but he deceitfully tells the Persians that it must be pirates or spies, and that the Great King would be pleased if they were exterminated. In reality, he is just trying to help his master, because he knows that if Dionysius were to lose Callirhoe he would die (μεγάλην συμφορὰν ἢ τριήρης αὕτη κομίζει Διονυσίω καὶ οὗ βιώσεται Καλλιρρόης ἀποσπασθείς). The
Persians attack the ship in an ambush in the middle of the night (μέση νυκτί) and take the crew prisoners (3.7.1-3). In this passage, the Persians are called βάρβαροι twice. They wrongfully attack a ship led by Chaereas, who is innocent, and sell him, his friend Polycharmus, and the whole crew into Caria as slaves. Furthermore, they approach the ship with no intention of diplomacy. Instead, they attack it in the middle of the night, which is usually an act of cowardice when performed by barbarians and constitutes a violation of military honor. Thus, it is usually avoided by Greeks.⁶⁷ In our case, the deceit in the execution of the Persian plan to attack is only matched by the deceit involved in the military intelligence they received.

This deception is emphasized when Callirhoe finds out about the attack. Following Dionysius’ instructions, Phocas announces what had happened but purposefully neglects to mention “his own tactics” (τὸ ἰδιὸν στρατήγημα) and the fact that some of the men from the trireme were still alive (δῶ δὲ ταῦτα σηγάν, τὸ ἰδιὸν στρατήγημα καὶ ὅτι ἐκ τῆς τριήρους τινὲς ἔτι ζῶσι; 3.10.1). Callirhoe, in her lament for the death of her husband, expresses a very specific complaint. She accuses Aphrodite for not protecting her own suppliant, Chaereas, and complains that the trireme did not do anything wrong. Her lament establishes a clear antithesis between Greek and Persian, and defines Asia, and Miletus in specific, as a place of destruction and death in opposition to her home in Syracuse, a place of marriage, celebrations, and joy.

⁶⁷ cf. Pritchett 1975, 171: “…frequency of Thrakian nocturnal attacks”; “Polybios groups the night attack with fraudulent and petty operations (4.8.11) employed by the cowardly… Cretans”; “there is no example of a night assault… by a Greek hoplite army… in what Thucydides calls pitched-battle formation (ἐκ παρασκευῆς μάχης)... no effort was made at a surprise attack by night”; Curtius Rufus has Alexander say that “meae vero gloriae semper aut absentiam Darei aut angustias locorum aut furum noctis obstare non patiar” because “latrunculorum, inquit, ‘et furum ista sollertia est’” (4.13.8-9); but cf. the story of the Trojan Horse.
Ἀφροδίτη, έγερεν με όλη την αμφοτέρως τοπική, την διασκεδάζουσα, την ερωμένη, τον νυμφίον. Από τώρα είμαι με εις τον νεκρόν. Τί θέλεις; Όταν γνώριστεν ήμεν να μη αποκάλυψα φάντασμα; τί δέ και ή τριήρης ήδίκησεν, ώς βάρβαροι κατέκαυσαν αυτήν, ής οὐκ εκράτισαν οὔδε Αθηναίοι; Νῦν ήμων ἀμφοτέρων οἱ γονεῖς τῇ θαλάσσῃ παρακάθηνται, τόν ἠμέτρουν κατάπλουν περιμένοντες, καὶ ἤτοι ἄν ναὸς πόρρωθενς ὅφθη, λέγουσι, 'Χαῖρεας Καλλιρόην ἄγων ἔχεται,' τῆς κοίτης ήμῖν εὔτρεπίζουσα τὴν νυμφικήν, κοσμεῖται δὲ θάλαμος οἷς ἱδίος οὐδὲ τάφος ὑπάρχει. Θάλασσα μιαρά, σὺ καὶ Χαῖρεαν εἰς Μίλητον ἔχαγες φονευθήναι καὶ ἐμὲ πραθήναι.

Aphrodite, you are unjust! Only you have seen Chaereas—you did not show him to me when he came! You have given that fair body into robbers’ hands! He sailed across the sea for your sake, and you did not take pity on him! Who could pray to such a goddess, who killed her own suppliant? On a night of fear you saw a fair young man, a lover, being murdered near you—and did not help him! You have robbed me of my comrade and countryman, my lover and beloved, my bridegroom! Give me back at least his body! I grant that we were born ill starred above all others—but what wrong had the trireme done? Even the Athenians could not take it—and it has been burned by barbarians! At this moment our parents are sitting by the sea, waiting for us to come back home; at every ship that appears on the horizon they say, ‘Chaereas is coming with Callirhoe!’ They are preparing our marriage bed; our bridal chamber is being decked out—and we do not even have a tomb of our own! Hateful sea! You brought Chaereas to Miletus to be murdered—and me to be sold!”

3.9-10

It is interesting that one index of Chaereas’ identity is that he was Callirhoe’s countryman, a Syracusan. Callirhoe draws attention to the treacherous action of the “barbarians,” the Persian troops that attacked the trireme. Chariton is making it very clear that on the one hand, we have the poor Greek couple, innocent, ill-fated, stranded in the hands of criminals; on the other hand, we have the Persians, who are again simply called βάρβαροι, and who would attack a trireme that had done nothing wrong; indeed, she makes a stark contrast in the lament between the barbarians and the Athenians. The polarities of west-east and Greek-barbarian are further elaborated from a geographical perspective. In Syracuse, people are concerned with archetypal peaceful activities, like the marriage celebrations. Miletus, on the other hand, has become a place

68 All translations, unless otherwise noted, are from Reardon 1989.
of enslavement for Callirhoe and death for Chaereas. Furthermore, the sea, which is here directly addressed in an apostrophe (θάλασσα μιαρά, σὺ καὶ Χαίρεαν εἰς Μίλητον ἤγαγες φονευθήναι καὶ ἐμὲ πραθήναι) is associated with joy at home. The sea around Syracuse is the sea that will allow the return of our heroes, and give relief to their parents. The sea around Asia is a source of misery.

The narrative reaches the heart of the Persian Empire in book five. After summarizing the events that took place in the previous books, Chariton introduces Artaxates, the king’s eunuch. Dionysius and Mithridates are both making their way to Babylon, the seat of the king, where a trial will take place. Dionysius has accused Mithridates of trying to seduce his lawful wife, citing a letter that Chaereas had written to Callirhoe and that Mithridates had delivered to her. Dionysius claimed that Chaereas was dead and that Mithridates was the real author. As Callirhoe is about to enter Babylon for the trial, crowds gather around expecting to see that woman of supernatural beauty. Chariton comments that the Persians are by nature “mad for women” (φύσει δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ βαρβάρον γυναιμανές; 5.2.6). Once again, the Persians are called barbarians. They are also γυναιμανεῖς, and in Greek imagination every sort of μανία is a barbaric trait. The barbarian θυμός is overcome by passions, whereas Greeks exercise self-control.

69 This antithesis is slightly reminiscent of the scenes on Achilles’ shield: the joys of peace vs. the horrors of war. In the very next paragraph we get a quote from the Iliad, so perhaps there is an intentional allusion there.

70 Callirhoe is throughout the novel presented as a modern Helen of Troy, but her laments recall the figure of Andromache in the Iliad. Andromache weeps for Hector three times, once when they meet at home (6.414-40), and twice after she finds out he is dead (22.475 ff. & 24.710-745). Her laments are very similar to that of Callirhoe, in that they both express grief over the same misfortunes, and worries over the same dangers. Callirhoe complains that she has lost her “comrade and countryman, my lover and beloved, my bridegroom”. In book 6, Andromache explains to Hector that her whole family is dead and tells him that you are my “father and queenly mother, you are a brother, and you are my stalwart husband” (Ἐκτὸς ἡδεὶ σὺ μοί ἐσσί πατήρ καὶ πόλιμμα μήτηρ/ ἐδε κασίγνητος, σὺ δὲ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης; 429-30). In book 24, she cries out that now, with Hector dead, she will be taken away, a prisoner on one of the hollow ships (τάχα νηυσὶν ὁρθαίνεται γλαφυρῇ, καὶ μὲν ἐγὼ μετὰ τῆς; 731-732). Callirhoe expresses a similar sentiment towards the sea: “Hateful sea! You brought Chaereas to Miletus to be murdered—and me to be sold!” While the Trojans may not be perceived as barbarians in the pejorative sense in Homer, that is not a problem for later authors who wish to portray them that way. At the same time, the Roman reading of the Trojan Cycle must be kept in mind.

71 Babylon seems especially appropriate. Especially after the mysterious events surrounding Alexander’s transformation and death in Babylon, this city exerted a strange allure onto Greek imagination.
This γυναιμανία, as well as the Persians’ general tendency to become a faceless “sea of people”, is underlined when the Persian crowd falls to the ground in homage to Callirhoe and starts kissing the wagon that carries her right after she has outshone Rhodogune with her beauty. This sort of proskynesia is typical of Persians, and is already described in Herodotus’ ethnography of Persia. It also recalls Arrian’s account Alexander the Great, who had caused great distress amongst the Greeks when they found because he was allowing Persians to approach him that way. According to Arrian, who was contemporary with Chariton, when “Alexander, the sophists and the most distinguished of the Persians and Medes” decide that the topic of proskynesia should be brought up (ἐν τῷ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πρὸς τοὺς σοφιστὰς...κεῖνον...δικαίωτας...ἐπὶ λόγου...ἐν πότῳ ἐμβαλεῖν; Arr. An. 4.10.5), Anaxarchus makes the suggestion that Alexander is like a god, and should therefore be worshipped this way (i.e. receive proskynesia) even before his death (Ἄρξαι δὲ τοῦ λόγου Ἀνάξαρχον, ὡς πολὺ δικαιότερον ἂν θέω νομίζόμενον Ἀλέξανδρον Διονύσου τε καὶ Ηρακλέους [...] δικαίοτερον ζῶντα γεραίρειν; Arr. An. 4.10.6-7). Callisthenes is the one who protests against this suggestion. He reminds Anaxarchus of the god-man asymmetry, one of the most basic elements of Greek religion: “a distinction has been drawn by men between honors fit for mortals and honors fit for gods, for example in the matter of building temples and setting up cult statues and setting apart sacred enclosures for gods, and making sacrifices and libations to them, and offering hymns to the gods but eulogies to men. Most important is the distinction

72 The word γυναιμανία (and similar forms such as γυναικομανία, γυναιμανής, γυναικομανής, or the verb γυναικομανέω) is almost absent from ancient Greek literature outside of the reference to Paris in Homer. Other than that, these forms are relatively well-attested in later Greek literature and especially Scholia and Lexica such as Photius’ or the Suda.

73 When one man meets another on the road, it is easy to see if the two are equals; for, if they are, they kiss each other on the lips without speaking; if the difference in rank is small, the cheek is kissed; if it is great, the humbler bows and does obeisance to the other (ἐν τῷ προσαγορεύειν ἀλλήλους φιλέοντα τοῖς στόμασι: ἂν δὲ ἡ ὀστέρος ὑποδιεστέρος ὀλίγῳ, τὰς παρειάς φιλέονται: ἂν δὲ πολλῷ ἡ ὀστέρος ὑγιννέστερος, προσπίπτον προσκοινέι τὸν ἔτερον; Hdt. 1.134)
observed in the matter of *proskynes*is.*”\(^74\) Even more interesting is the very end of Callisthenes’ speech, which makes it clear that the notion of *proskynes*is recalls one of the typical Persian traits, submissiveness: “It may be said that Cyrus the son of Cambyses was the first man to receive the honor of obeisance, and that it is this which has kept the Persians and Medes submissive, as you can see. But you must remember that the great Cyrus was humbled by Scythians, poor but independent men, and Darius by other Scythians, and Xerxes by Athenians and Spartans, and Artaxerxes by Clearchus, Xenophon and the Ten Thousand, and lastly our opponent Darius by Alexander - who had not yet been the object of *proskynes*is.*”\(^75\) Herodotus’ story of two Spartan emissaries at the court of Xerxes reveals the Greek attitude to the Persian custom: “They said they never would [prostrate themselves and *proskynein* the king] even if the guards should press their heads down. Where they came from, they said, it was not customary to *proskynein* before a mortal, and it was not for this that they had come.”\(^76\)

It becomes apparent, then, that the fact that Callirhoe becomes the object of worship in the form of *proskynes*is has significant connotations. Just as Alexander, Callirhoe is remarkably exceptional. But it is upon arrival at Persia that this exceptionality turns into a violation of the god-man asymmetry. The East has a mystical force in Greek imagination, powerful enough to change the very nature of human beings.\(^77\) Furthermore, describing the Persians as a mass of people ready to prostrate themselves at the sight of Callirhoe not only reveals the Persians as

\(^74\) ἀλλὰ διακεκρίθησα γὰρ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὅσιοι τὸ ἀνθρώπινα τιμαί καὶ ὅσια θέλα πολλοίς μὲν καὶ ἄλλοις, καθάπερ ναιόν τε οἰκοδομῆσαι καὶ ἐγκαλμάτων ἀναστάσαι καὶ τιμήν ὑπὸ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐξαρεῖται καὶ θίεται ἐκείνοις καὶ σπεύδεται, καὶ ἄνοιγεν τε ὑπὸ τοὺς θεοὺς ποιοῦνται, ἐπαινοῦν δὲ ἐς ἀνθρώπους, — ἄτι πόλεμος ἡ ἐρίττα τῆς προσκυνήσεως νόμων: Αἰτ. Ἀν. 4.11.2

\(^75\) εἰ δὲ ὑπὲρ Κύρου τοῦ Καμβύσου λέγεται πρώτον προσκυνηθήναι ἄνθρώποιν Κύρον καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐμεῖναι Πέρσας τε καὶ Μῆδος τῆν τινα ταπεινότητα, χρῆ ἐνθυμεῖται ὅτι τὸν Κύρον ἐκείνον Σκύθην ἐποφρονίσαν, πένης ἀνδρεῖς καὶ αὐτόνομοι, καὶ Δαρείου ἄλλοι αὐ τὸν Σκύθη, καὶ Ξέρξην Αθηναίοι καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι, καὶ Ἀρτοξέρξην Κλέαρχος καὶ Ξενοφόντι καὶ οἱ ξύν τοῦτος μύριοι, καὶ Δαρείου τοῦτον Ἀλέξανδρος μὴ προσκυνούμενος: Ἀἰτ. Ἀν. 4.11.9.

\(^76\) Her. 7.136.

\(^77\) Especially the power to make men effeminate and susceptible to *luxuria*/*tryphe*. 
“submissive” by following a long tradition of association of proskynesis with servility, but also prepares the narrative for their eventual defeat at the hands of Chaereas.

Eventually, Callirhoe is brought to Queen Statira where she stays until the King makes his decision. When she goes to bed at night, she thinks about Chaereas’ appearance at the trial. In a state of great distress, she finds it hard to trust her own eyes, and doubts that she has really seen him. She is afraid that it all could have been just an illusion, that what she saw might have been a spirit summoned by Mithridates for the trial. After all, she thinks, they say that there are magicians amongst the Persians (λέγουσι γὰρ ἐν Πέρσαις εἶναι μάγους; 5.9.4). Witchcraft is closely related to μανία and is characteristic of barbarians both in Greek and Roman literature.78

In fact, there is one particularly interesting parallel in Aeschylus’ Persae, where Darius’ ghost is

78 One might think of the crazed barbarian witch par excellence, Medea (especially in Seneca’s tragedy where her hatred is emphasized so much), or Circe in the Iliad and, later, the Druids of Gaul. In the Greek tradition, the most famous “sorcerer” is probably Orpheus. Not only does he go into the underworld, but he has the power to control nature with his song. But even he is not an ethnic Greek – he hails from Thrace, just as Medea. Thrace and Scythia were places where Greeks had come in contact with shamanistic cultures (cf. Dodd 1951, 140). It is perhaps no surprise that Orpheus is condemned by Plato: “Orpheus, son of Oeagrus, they sent back with failure from Hades, showing him only a wraith of the woman for whom he came; her real self they would not bestow, for he was accounted to have gone upon a coward’s quest, too like the minstrel that he was, and to have lacked the spirit to die as Alcestis did for the sake of love, when he contrived the means of entering Hades alive. Wherefore they laid upon him the penalty he deserved, and caused him to meet his death” (Symposium 179d ). Plato takes magicians for granted, and considers them as a group that must be checked by the laws: “we have now expressly mentioned is that in which injury is done to bodies by bodies according to nature’s laws. Distinct from this is the type which, by means of sorceries and incantations and spells (as they are called), not only convinces those who attempt to cause injury that they really can do so, but convinces also their victims that they certainly are being injured by those who possess the power of bewitchment. In respect of all such matters it is neither easy to perceive what is the real truth, nor, if one does perceive it, is it easy to convince others” (Laws 11.933). E.R Dodds, in his monumental study The Greeks and the Irrational, discusses a number of Greek “scientists” such as Pythagoras, Empedocles and Epimenides, who due to their advanced education appeared to have magical abilities in the eyes of the uneducated crowds. For example, in the case of Empedocles, Dodds comments that his legend as a magician is largely “composed of embroideries upon claims which he himself makes in his poems. Little more than a century after his death, stories were already in circulation which told how he had stayed the winds by his magic, how he had restored to life a woman who no longer breathed, and how he then vanished bodily from this mortal world and became a god” (Dodds 1951, 145). Later in antiquity we have more evidence about magic and magical rituals (cf. for example magical papyri or the curse tablets from Uindolanda — in England, at the edges of the Empire). While a full treatment of magic in antiquity is not within the scope of this study, I’d like to cite an illuminating passage from Lucan’s Pharsalia: “Mid the throng Sextus... Could bear delay no more... Nor sought he sages who by flight of birds/ Or watching with Assyrian care the stars/And fires of heaven, or by victims slain/ May know the fates to come... For to him was known/ That which excites the hate of gods above;/ Magicians' lore, the savage creed of Dis/ And all the shades” (6.420-433). The Roman novelist Apuleius (notoriously a foreigner, from Numidia) was also accused of practicing magic. In his Metamorphoses, which could have autobiographical elements, Lucius makes the ill-advised decision to try out magic, which of course has bad (and comical) consequences.
raised by queen Atossa (necromancy being the specific branch of magic alluded to here).\textsuperscript{79} The term \textit{magus} itself is of Persian origin. Pliny the Elder tells us that magic “at the present day even, holds sway throughout a great part of the world, and rules the kings of kings in the East” and that “there is no doubt that this art originated in Persia under Zoroaster.”\textsuperscript{80}

While Callirhoe is held captive in Babylon, the King’s eunuch tells her that she should offer the King “instant gratification”, since he is not going to marry her, and advises her to do whatever the King wants (οὐ δὴπον γὰρ σε αὐτῶς μέλλει γαμεῖν ὁλλὰ πρόσκαιρον αὐτῷ χάριν δόσεις; 6.7.7). She is infuriated and tells him that she is in love with Chaereas. The eunuch responds that that is all the more a good reason to do anything to gain the judge’s goodwill, in order to win her husband back as well. After all, he says, “Chaereas may never even know what happened; even if he does, he will not be jealous of his superior—you will be all the more precious to him for pleasing the King” (τάχα μὲν οὖδὲ Χαιρέας γνοῖτ τὸ πραχθέν, ἀλλὰ καὶ γνοὺς οὐ ξηλοτυπῆσε τὸν κρείττονα δόξει δὲ σε τιμωτέραν, ὡς ἀρέσασαν βασιλεῖ; 6.7.11-12). This repulsive notion, as Chariton points out, was not an attempt to persuade the girl, but a reflection of Persian belief. Indeed, barbarians are generally characterized by their inordinate respect for their king. They think he is a god amongst mankind (καταπεπλήγασι γὰρ πάντες οἱ βάρβαροι καὶ θεὸν φανερὸν νομίζουσι τὸν βασιλέα; 6.7.12). When Callirhoe rejects the King by saying that she, a mere slave girl of Dionysius, is not worthy of the Great King, the eunuch is left speechless for “he had been brought up in a highly despotic society and could not conceive that there was anything impossible—even for himself, let alone the King” (οἶα γὰρ ἐν μεγάλῃ τυραννίδι τεθραμμένος οὐδὲν ἀδύνατον ὑπελάμβανεν, οὐ βασιλεῖ μόνον, ἄλλα οὐδ’ ἐκατοῦ; 6.5.10). This is

\textsuperscript{79} Atossa is incidentally also said to have introduced eunuchs to the Persian court: ταύτην φησὶν Ἑλλάνικος... τὴν τὸν εὐνούχον ὑπουργίαν εὑρεῖν; 4 FgrH F 178a, b.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{hodieque etiam in magna parte gentium praevaleat et in oriente regum regibus imperet. sine dubio illic orta in perside a zoroastre}; Plin. Nat. 30.1-2.
related to the belief that, in the eyes of the Persians, anything is attainable through material wealth. This point is highlighted when Artaxates asks Callirhoe what land and what costly jewels she owns, what cities she rules over, and how many slaves she owns, implying that the pursuit of happiness can be accomplished by acquiring wealth through her physical beauty. This accentuates the cultural conflict between the Persian eunuch and our noble and wise Greek heroine, who finds happiness in the love of her rightful husband, Chaereas, and in the genuine love and appreciation she receives from her family and the citizens at Syracuse.

Callirhoe is left alone, and starts thinking about her misfortunes and curses her own beauty, the source of all her misery. She says that her three greatest misfortunes so far are having to bear the King’s love, that the King will be angry, and that the Queen will be jealous. In fact, the Queen’s jealousy is her biggest worry. After all, not even Chaereas could endure jealousy, and he is a Greek man. The Queen, being a Persian woman, will be affected by jealousy to an even greater degree (ποθεροτέραν ἤγοιμαι τὴν τῆς βασιλίδος ζηλοτυπίαν, ἣν οὐκ ἦνεγκε Χαιρέας, ἀνὴρ Ἔλλην. Τί ποιήσει γυνὴ καὶ δέσποινα βάρβαρος; 6.6.5). Ethnicity and gender are powerful symbols that define and control human behavior in Chariton.

Aspects of the Persian ethos are revealed by the plot and main characters, but the ultimate representative of all that is Persia is, naturally, the King. One of the king’s most interesting appearances comes in book six. Artaxates, his eunuch, suggests that the king should go on a royal hunt to forget about Callirhoe. The scene of the hunt has a mocking effect for Artaxerxes. The concept of the royal hunt is traditionally invested with divine origins and value in the educational formation and military training of a leader. In Chariton’s case, however, these ethics of the hunt are subverted. The motive for the hunt is not educational. Artaxerxes is hunting

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81 See below, p. 36.
82 Smith contrasts the scene of the hunt in Chariton with Cyrus’ hunt in Xenophon’s Cyropaedia; Smith 2007, 165.
to forget about Callirhoe because he cannot control his own impulses. This emphasizes
Callirhoe’s supernatural beauty, but is also problematic for a man who is supposed to be the
prudent leader of the Persian Empire.83

The King accepted the suggestion, and a magnificent hunt was proclaimed. Horsemen rode out splendidly got up, Persian nobles and the pick of the army generally. Every one of them was a sight worth seeing, but the most spectacular was the King himself. He was riding a huge, magnificent Nisaean horse whose trappings—bit, cheekpieces, frontlet, breastpiece—were all of gold, and wearing a cloak of Tyrian purple, woven in Babylon, and his royal hat was dyed the color of the hyacinth; he had a golden sword at his waist and carried two spears, and slung about him were a quiver and bow of the costliest Chinese workmanship. He was an impressive sight in the saddle—it is characteristic of Love to indulge in display.

Gold, of course, connotes divinity and/or kingship. In this case, however, it seems that the impressive description is supposed to elicit the audience’s disapproval for the King. First of all, his description recalls Paris’ figure.84 He is somebody whose splendid armor does not

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83 Egger 1994, 37.
84 In the Iliadic passage, Hector finds “Paris in his rooms busy with his splendid weapons, the shield and cuirass, and handling his curved bow. Argive Helen sat there too, among her ladies, superintending their fine handiwork.” (τὸν δ’ εὗρ’ ἐν ταλάμῳ περικαλλίᾳ τεῖχε’ ἐποντα/ ἅπτις καὶ θωρήκα, καὶ ἀρκίς τὸς ἀφόιοντα./ Ἀργείη δ’ Ἑλένη μετ’ ἀρα δυμηθεὶς γυναῖξίν/ ἄστο καὶ ἁμφιπλάσι περικλειτα ἄργα κέλεες: 6.321-4). Paris is thus placed very close to the female realm of the household. He has just been defeated by Menelaus in single combat, saved at the last moment by Aphrodite (an appropriate patron deity for an effeminate warrior, unlike Menelaus who is the “beloved of Ares”), and has been rebuked by his wife Helen very harshly: “So you have left the field: I wish you had died there, at the hands of that great soldier who was once my husband. You used to boast you were a better man than Menelaus, beloved of Ares, a finer spearman, and with a stronger arm. Go back, then, and challenge him, man to man. But my
correspond to his martial prowess, and he is using armor not for its functional, traditional purpose, but to show off. A golden sword may look impressive, but no good warrior would ever use it. He is simply φιλόκοσμος, just like Paris who spends more time polishing his weapons than using them. Paris of course also carries a bow. More than that, the King carries a bow of Chinese workmanship (ἐργον Σιρῶν). This recalls Horace’s sagittas sericas, which also seem to be a symbol of barbarism in Roman literary tradition, somehow related to Parthians. The King’s military incompetence is brought into sharp relief towards the end of the novel, when he faces Chaereas who is leading the Egyptian forces. Chaereas performs something like a Homeric aristeia, and his military accomplishments demonstrate that he is more eligible to be Callirhoe’s mate.

Paris was first mentioned when Dionysius and Callirhoe arrived in Babylon. Then, Dionysius, who thinks Callirhoe more beautiful than even Helen, had worried that somebody would steal his wife. “Menelaus could not keep Helen in security in virtuous Sparta” he thinks to himself. “King though he was, a barbarian shepherd supplanted him; and there is many a Paris among the Persians” (Μενέλαος ἐν τῇ σώφρονι Σπάρτῃ τὴν Ἑλένην οὐκ ἐτήρησεν, ἀλλὰ παρηυδοκίμησε καὶ βασιλέα βάρβαρος ποιμήν: πολλοὶ Πάριδες ἐν Πέρσαις; 5.2.8). And indeed, the king is threatening to become much like that barbarian shepherd and to steal Callirhoe. Paris advice would be to stay here, not fight hand to hand with red-haired Menelaus, nor taunt him rashly, lest his spear conquers you” (ἥμιθας ἐκ πολέμου: ὡς ἐφελεῖς αὐτόθι ἁλίσθαυ/ ἀνήρ δὲ δαμιᾶς κρατερῷ, ὡς ἐμὸς πρῶτος πόσις ἦν./ ἦ μὲν δὴ πρὶν γ’ ἐχεῖς ἀρμῖσθιον Μενελάον σὴ τε βίη καὶ χεροὶ καὶ ἐχθρὲς φέρτερος εἶναι: ἀλλ’ ἰθ’ νῦν προκάλεσαι ἀρμῖσθιον Μενελάον/ ἐξαπτεῖς μαχαίρασθαί ἐναντίον: ἀλλὰ σ’ ἐγωγεί παίωνα κέλευε, μηδὲ ξανθῷ Μενελάῳ/ ἀντίβουν πόλεμον πολεμίζειν ἢδε μάχασθαι/ ἀφραδῶς, μὴ ποις τάξ’ ὡς’ αὐτὸν δουρὶ δαμῆς; 3.428-36). Overall, Paris is presented as unsuitable for the battlefield and generally cowardly. Instead of using his weapons like a warrior, he is found at home handling them just like the women handle the loom. The same effect is achieved for Artaxerxes, who is shown to be unsuitable for this most significant test of martial prowess, the royal hunt. Instead, he is also imagined close to the female realm; he is conspicuous for his fashion sense, as opposed to his bravery, and his heart is subdued by Ἕρως.

85 Hor. I.29.9; cf. Scholia Acronis s.v.: “deriuatuum est ab eo quod Seres uocatur; serica enim gens est Parthis uicina sagittandi arte famosa a qua et Sericum uocatur”; scholia Porphyrionis s.v.: hoc est, parthicas a gente Serum qui partem orbis terrae orientis subietam tenant.

86 Egger 1994, 42.
was also called γυναιμανές by Hector in the *Iliad*, an accusation we have seen leveled against the Persians collectively in Chariton. The negative hue of this passage is reinforced by the specific mention of the Tyrian purple. This is the color of barbarians and symbolizes luxury and excess.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Persian King is hunting for distraction and to be seen as an object of desire by Callirhoe. The description of Artaxerxes’ emotional state reveals him as a lover pursuing the object of his desire. The language of Chariton is unmistakably reminiscent of Roman elegiac love poetry.

Artaxerxes pictures Callirhoe in his mind and “burns with passion” (ἐξεκάετο σφόδρα; 6.4.6). He is consumed by the object of his desire even when it is absent. In what is supposed to have been an ennobling exercise, Artaxerxes is instead transformed into a slave, conquered by

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87 Hom. *Il.* 3.39; Whitmarsh 2011, 55 n.156; Herodotus comments on a “foul Babylonian custom which compels every woman of the land to sit in the temple of Aphrodite and have intercourse with some stranger once in her life.” (ὁ δὲ δὴ αἵρεσις τῶν νόμων ἔστι τοῦτο Βαβυλωνίωσι δόε: δεὶ πάσαν γυναῖκα ἐπιχορήγην ἐξομένην ἐς ἵππον Ἀφροδίτης ἀπὸς ἐν τῇ ζῇ μιχθῆναι ἀνδρὶ ζέινῳ: 1.199).

88 Krabbe 2003, 530 discusses the function of purple in one of the Latin novelists, Apuleius, where the debauched priests of Dea Syria are painted purple, cf. Apuleius 11.3; however, the same concept appears in much earlier Greek literature, and indeed in a description of a barbarian army in a negative context in this text that so influenced Chariton: Xen. *Cyr.* 6.4.1 — ἤθελε δὲ φοινικικὰ πᾶσα ἡ στρατιά. Purple could possibly also be portentous, such as in the case of Agamemnon in the homonymous play by Aeschylus, where a purple carpet becomes his undoing.
Eros, and although he starts off as the hunter, he becomes the hunted.\textsuperscript{89} The Great King, in other words, becomes a symbol of a recurrent motif, in Greek literature, that of Persian servility.

Furthermore, the fact that he sees Callirhoe while she is not there must be interpreted in view of Callirhoe’s interaction with Chaereas. When these two first met, they looked at each other, and they both felt the same passion. Here, not only is the King’s passion unrequited, but Callirhoe is not even physically present. This is a further elaboration of his unsuitability for the object of his desire.\textsuperscript{90}

Artaxates represents a different kind of negative Persian trait. Right before suggesting the hunt as a cure for the King’s love pangs, he had encouraged the King to force himself upon Callirhoe (“It exists already, Your Majesty,” said Artaxates, “among Greeks and non-Greeks alike, this remedy you are looking for. The only remedy for Love is the loved one; that, after all, is what the famous oracle said — “He who hurt shall heal”\textsuperscript{91}). This revolting idea is not simply ethically wrong. Artaxates is proposing a violation not only of the girl, but also of the fundamental Greek ideal of xenia — since both Chaereas and Dionysius are guest-friends of the King. The latter, in response, becomes embarrassed, rebukes his servant for such a suggestion, and announces that he is a just king and will follow the laws he himself has established.

Artaxates becomes frightened, and instead suggests the hunt. The eunuch is a mindless drone who blindly tries to please his king — becoming a symbol of Persian servility as well.

\textsuperscript{89} Smith 2007, 171.

\textsuperscript{90} The language recalls Sappho 31 and Catullus’ translation thereof in his poem 51, where the unsuccessful lover complains that “my eyes are deprived of all power of vision,/ My ears hear nothing by sounds of winds roaring,/ And all is blackness. Down courses in streams the sweat of emotion,/ A dread trembling o’erwhelms me, paler am I/ Than dried grass in autumn, and in my madness/ Dead I seem almost.” (\textit{άλλ’ ἀκαν μὲν/ γλώσσα δαισί λέπτον/ δ’ αἰτίκα χρώι πῦρ ὑπαδιδρόμηκεν/ ὀπάττοσι δ’ οὐδ’ ἐν ὀρέμμ’ ἐπιρρόμηι/ βεσα δ’ ἄκουσι/ ἐκάει μ’ ἱδρος ψύχρος κακρέται τρόμος δὲ/ παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωρετέρα δὲ ποιας/ ἐμι, τεθνάκην δ’ ὁλίγον 'πιδείης/ φαινομ’ ἐμ’ αὖτα). Artaxerxes' senses are compromised by his passion for Callirhoe in a similar manner.

\textsuperscript{91} ‘Εξοντα γὰρ ἐτερον Ἐρωτας οὐδὲν ἦστε πλὴν αὐτὸς ὁ ἑρώμενος: τοῦτο δὲ ἃρα καὶ τὸ ἄδομενον λόγον ἢν ὑπ’ ὁ τρώσας αὐτὸς ἴασεται.’; 6.3.7.
Artaxerxes further scolds the eunuch by telling him that he should not ascribe such lack of self-control to his king. The eunuch, always fawning, tells his king that he could master even a god — violating, in effecting, the man-god asymmetry. As we have already seen, however, the King does lack self-control; as much as he wanted to resist, Eros had other plans.

Artaxates’ presence in the novel is in itself an ethnographical comment by Chariton. As Saundra Schwartz points out, “Chariton deploys all the standard elements of the Persian mirage: luxury, prostration, harem life, eunuchs, satraps, court intrigue, hunts, magi, the paradeisos.” The eunuch, neither male nor female, was the unnatural intermediary between the public world of politics (male) and the private world of royal sexual favorites and monarch-manipulating females. Conceptually, the eunuch represents the “feminization of Asia; emotional, wily, subservient, luxurious and emasculated, he embodies simultaneously all the various threads in the fabric of their orientalist discourse.”

For instance, in Orestes, Helen brings back with her from Troy “exquisite riches and a troop of Phrygian eunuchs in whose mutilation the idea of eastern effeminacy is grimly reified.” It comes as no surprise, then, that Artaxates is contrasted to Greek values in that he “was thinking like a eunuch, a slave, a barbarian. He did not know the spirit of a well-born Greek— especially Callirhoe, chaste Callirhoe, who loved her husband.”

The fact that Artaxates symbolizes all that is wrong with Persia is portentously highlighted in his first meeting with Callirhoe. He approaches her and pretends to be a friend.

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92 This is the same lack of self-control traditionally ascribed to Persian kings in Greek literature. The most popular example is probably Xerxes whipping the sea for not giving him an easier passage through the Hellespont (Hdt 7.34-5).

93 Famously summarized in the γνῶθι σαυτόν maxim. Sophocles in a very famous quote from his Antigone has the chorus address Love as Ἐρως ἄνικατε μάχαν (Love, the unconquered in battle, Love, you who descend upon riches, and watch the night through on a girl’s soft cheek, you roam over the sea and among the homes of men in the wilds. Neither can any immortal escape you, nor any man whose life lasts for a day. He who has known you is driven to madness; 781-90).


95 Hall 1989 157.

96 Hall 1989 209.

97 ὡς εὐνοῦχος, ὡς δοῦλος, ὡς βάρβαρος. Οὐκ ἢκε δὲ φρόνημα Ἑλληνικὸν εὐγενὲς καὶ μαλιστά τὸ Καλλιρρόης τῆς σώφρονος καὶ φιλάνδρου; 6.4.10.
She, desperate for help from anybody, is hopeful that he might help her. But even the preliminary opening to his speech shows how much the two are “worlds apart.” His first remark is that she is obviously very beautiful, but up until that point nothing good has come of that beauty. So far, we would agree with the eunuch. However, once he begins to elaborate on that point, it becomes apparent that Persian cultural expectations are nothing like the audience’s. Whereas the audience sympathizes with Callirhoe for all her troubles, and especially for losing her husband, the eunuch asks her what land she owns, what costly jewels, what cities she rules over, and how many slaves she owns. These represent the Persian ideals for what a noble and happy person would need in life, and accentuate the cultural divide between Greek and Persian in this literary tradition.98 This ominously suggestive introduction is followed by the eunuch’s attempt to pimp Callirhoe out to the King. Callirhoe’s impulse is to “dig her nails into the eyes of this would-be pimp and tear them out if she could” (Ἀρμησεν, εἰ δυνατὸν, καὶ τῶς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐξορύξαι τοῦ διαφθείροντος αὐτήν; 6.5.8). Of course, she controls her anger, being a “well-brought-up and sensible woman” (οἶα δὲ γυνὴ πεπαιδευμένη καὶ φρενήρης).

When the eunuch insults Chaereas, the girl responds in a way that frames a qualitative comparison of Greece and Persia. “Chaereas is nobly born! He is the foremost man in a city that even Athens could not overcome—and Athens overcame that Great King of yours at Marathon and Salamis!” (“Χαιρέας εὐγενῆς εστὶ, πόλεως πρώτης, ἣν οὐκ ἐνίκησαν οὐδὲ Ἀθηναίοι οἱ ἐν Μαραθῶνι καὶ Σαλαμῖνι νικήσαντες τὸν μέγαν σου βασιλέα”; 6.7.10), says Callirhoe to Artaxates. Callirhoe’s words are very bitter towards the man who insulted her love. There is a certain belittling sound to the phrase “τὸν μέγαν σου βασιλέα”. But overall, the reminder of the Persian Wars serves as a historical confirmation of Greek superiority and Persian inferiority.99

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98 Best described in the encounter of the Lydian Croesus with the wise Athenian, Solon (Hdt. 1.29-33)
99 Smith 2007, 86.
Eventually, the King becomes the main villain of the novel, and when Chaereas joins the Egyptian forces, he tells the Egyptian King that it is with him that true majesty lies, and not with the Persian, who is the vilest of human beings (σὺ γὰρ ἀληθῶς βασιλεύς, οἶχ ὁ Πέρσης, ὁ κάκιστος ἄνθρωπων; 7.3.4). After all, Artaxerxes has behaved tyrannically towards Chaereas (τετυράνηκε δὲ ἦμον Ἀρταξέρξης; 7.2.4), and tyranny is often associated with Persians. Chaereas’ friend, Polycharmus, exhorts him to join the Egyptians so that they can “leave behind for future generations a glorious tale of how two Greeks who were unjustly treated paid out the Great King by the suffering they caused him, and died like men” (ἔνδοξον καὶ τοῖς ὀστερον ἐσομένοις διήγημα καταλείποντας ὅτι δύο Ἑλληνες ἀδικηθέντες ἀντελύπησαν τὸν μέγαν βασιλέα καὶ ἀπέθανον ὡς ἄνδρες; 7.1.8-9), in a phrase the recalls the Herodotean tradition of a few brave Greeks dying gloriously fighting against an evil Persian king.

Dionysius, who becomes Callirhoe’s second husband and, more importantly, her second captor after the pirates, is throughout the novel described as existing in a liminal space between Greece and Persia. He becomes, in effect, the middle ground between lawfulness and unlawfulness. When he meets Callirhoe, he is impressed with her beauty. He is described as “aflame with love” (φλεγόμενος ἢδη τῷ ἔρωτι; 2.3.8). He is “wounded” by the arrows of Love and trying to cover up the wound (ἐτέτρωτο μὲν, τὸ δὲ τραύμα περιστέλλειν ἐπειρᾶτο; 2.4.1). Dionysius is both Greek and Persian. He is Greek culturally, and especially in terms of his education (πεπαιδευμένος ἀνὴρ καὶ ἐξαιρέτως ἁρετής ἀντιποιούμενος; 2.4.1). When he meets with the King in Babylon for the trial, he arrives dressed in Greek style, an important detail considering the context (ἐπηκολούθει δὲ καὶ Διονύσιος Ἑλληνικῷ σχήματι Μιλησίαν στολὴν ἀμπεχόμενος; 5.4.7). In this one scene we see the juxtaposition of several cultural identities: the Milesian ruler meets the Persian King for a trial that will decide the fate of the Greek heroine.
Despite his Greek attributes, he is—at least politically—a representative of Persia. Throughout the novel, he is described as “the most distinguished man in Ionia, the admiration of satraps’’ (ἀνὴρ ὁ πρῶτος τῆς Ἰωνίας ἐνεκεν ἀρετῆς τε καὶ δόξῆς, ὅν θαυμάζουσι σατράπαι; 2.4.4), and we have already seen that he is introduced as “the wealthiest, noblest, and most cultured man in Ionia, and a friend of the Great King’’ (πλοῦτῳ καὶ γένει καὶ παιδείᾳ τῶν ἄλλων Ἰώνων ὑπερέχοντα, φίλον τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως; 1.12.6-7). Upon his rejection by Callirhoe, he finds himself unable to sleep, thinking about her, picturing and imagining her in Aphrodite’s shrine. Chariton comments that there was a visible conflict in him then, between reason and passion (τὸ ήν ἰδεῖν ἀγώνα λογισμοῦ καὶ πάθους; 2.4.4). Reason corresponds to his Greek aspect, and passion to the Persian. This is fleshed out in the same paragraph, when Dionysius, talking to himself, says that he is the most distinguished man of Ionia (traditionally associated with Greece and especially Athens) and the admiration of satraps. Dionysius is envisaged between Syracuse and Babylon, between Greece and Persia, and between reason and passion respectively.

When Callirhoe first meets him, she tries to emphasize his Greek side to convince him to rescue her. She calls him Greek and civilized— as opposed to Persian and uncivilized ("Ἐλλην γὰρ εἶ καὶ πόλεως φιλανθρώπου καὶ παιδείας μετείληφας; 2.5.11). Callirhoe herself is described in a similar way. When the queen, having been captured by the Egyptian forces, seeks comfort, she lays her head in Callirhoe’s lap. The latter comforts her “like a cultivated Greek woman with her own experience of sorrow’’ (ἐκεῖνη γάρ, ὡς ἂν Ἐλληνική καὶ πεπαιδευμένη καὶ οὐκ ἀμελέτητος κακῶν, παρεμυθεῖτο μάλιστα τήν βασιλίδα; 7.6.5). Callirhoe gets to play the role of the noble conqueror that spares his Persian captives in the manner of Alexander.100 Either way, we see that Greek-ness is associated with education. This is not surprising in a text of the Second Sophistic.

100 Egger 1994, 42; this is after the siege of Tyre, which of course also recalls Alexander.
Greek education is already an index of Greek identity in Isocrates, who points out that people are called Hellenes if they share in Greek education.\textsuperscript{101}

Dionysius is terribly in love with Callirhoe, and when he realizes that the feeling is unrequited, he is discouraged that he is not “getting what he wanted” (\begin{greek}ἡσθάνετο γὰρ ἀποτυγχάνων τῆς ἑπιθυμίας; 2.5.12). In other words, while she emphasizes his Greekness, Dionysius’ behavior demonstrates his barbaric traits: his emotions are overwhelming him. Callirhoe tells him that she is a prisoner with him, and that she would rather die free. He begins to weep, and Chariton comments that he was ostensibly crying for Callirhoe, but in fact for himself (\begin{greek}τούτων ἄκουσαν ἐκλαε προφάσει μὲν Καλλιρρόην, τὸ δὲ ἀληθῆς ἐαυτὸν; 2.5.12).

This motif is borrowed from the \textit{Iliad}, from a scene where women are crying ostensibly for Patroclus, but in fact for their own sorrows.\textsuperscript{102} The motif shows up again towards the end of the novel in book eight, during the Egyptian revolt. When the King and the Persians receive news of Aradus’ capture and realize that the queen has been taken by Chaereas, the King is of course devastated thinking that she had been killed, and the Persian nobles are in anguish too. Chariton comments that they were apparently mourning for Statira, but in fact each for his own sorrows (\begin{greek}ἐπένθουν δὲ καὶ Περσαῖοι οἱ ἐντιμῶτατοι Στάτειραν πρόφασιν, σφῶν δ᾽ αὐτῶν κήδε ἐκαστος, ὁ μὲν γυναῖκα, ὁ δὲ ἀδελφὴν, ὁ δὲ θυγατέρα; 8.5.2). Whereas the Persian tears are false, a symbol of superficial sympathy and an insincere display of emotion, Chaereas’ tears are presented throughout the novel as honest and honorable. He is envisioned in a situation similar to

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  \item \textsuperscript{101} “Our city of Athens has so far surpassed other men in its wisdom and its power of expression that its pupils have become the teachers of the world. It has caused the name of Hellene to be regarded as no longer a mark of racial origin but of intelligence, so that men are called Hellenes because they have shared our common education rather than that they share in our common ethnic origin” (τοσοῦτον δ’ ἀπολέξοιται ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν περὶ τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ λέγειν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, ὅσοι' οἱ ταί ταῖς μαθῆται τὸν ἄλλον διδάσκαλον γεγόνασι, καὶ τὸ τὸν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκε μικρὸτερον τὸν γένους ἄλλα τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἑλλήνας κοιλιᾶτα τοὺς τῆς παιδείας τῆς ἑμετέρας ὡς τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας. Isoc. Panegyricus 50)
  \item \textsuperscript{102} Iliad 19.302: ὡς ἐρατό κλαίοισι’, ἐπὶ δὲ σπενάριον γυναῖκες/ Πάτροκλον πρόφασιν, σφῶν δ’ αὐτῶν κήδε’ ἐκάστη; Reardon 1989 117, n.129.
\end{itemize}
that of Odysseus. Wandering around the Mediterranean, he finds himself alone, crying for his lost wife. When he finds out that she had been married to Dionysius, he cries out to the sea and complains about his misfortunes. When Callirhoe thinks of him, she imagines him crying for her, mourning her unfortunate death (Χαιρέας ἐπέσπεισε δακρύων; 1.14.7). Not only are Persian tears false, but in fact, Persian mendacity in general is a recurring theme in the novel. Even Mithridates, the governor of Caria, who actually helps the couple get back together, is only doing so because he thought it would let him get closer to Callirhoe while appearing to be helping a friend (Μιθριδάτης ἔχαρεν, ἐλπίδα τινά λαμβάνων ἐρωτικῆν, ὡς δυνάμενος ἢδη καὶ λέγειν καὶ πράττειν τι περὶ Καλλιρρόης ἵνα δοκῇ φίλῳ βοηθεῖν; 4.3.11-12), and maybe, while Chaereas and Dionysius are competing, he could steal her for himself (μεταξὺ Χαιρέου τε καὶ Διονυσίου αὐτὸς ἀκονιτὶ τὸ ἄθλον Καλλιρρόην ἀποίσεται; 4.4.1). It is especially interesting that not even Callirhoe herself is devoid of associations with Persia. Throughout the novel, she is identified in two ways: through her relationship to Aphrodite, and through her relationship to her father. In fact, the very beginning of the novel introduces her the daughter of Hermocrates who had defeated the Athenians: Ἑρμοκράτης, ὁ Συρακουσίων στρατηγός, οὗτος ὁ νικήσας Ἀθηναίους, εἶχε θυγατέρα Καλλιρρόην τὸν οὐνομα (1.1.1). His defeat of the Athenians aligns him to Persia; Syracuse and Persia have a common enemy in Athens. When Dionysius finds out who Callirhoe is, and that his servant Leonas had bought her as a slave, he rebukes him, remembering that she is the daughter of Hermocrates, the leader of the whole of Sicily, admired and loved by the King of Persia. Presumably, the King sends him presents every year for his victory over the Athenians, for achieving what the Persians

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103 for he sat weeping on the shore, as his wont had been, racking his soul with tears and groans and griefs, and he would look over the unresting sea, shedding tears (ἀλλ’ ὅ γ’ ἐπ’ ἀκτής κλαίει καθήμενος, ἕνθα πάρος περί δάκρυα καὶ στοναχῆσψι καὶ ἄλγεια θυμῶν ἐρέχθον; πόνον ἐπ’ ἀπίθυμον δερκάσκετο δάκρυον λέβητον; Od. 5.82-4)  
104 It is amusing that Callirhoe, the ultimate trophy wife, is here described as ἄθλον.
themselves had not been able to achieve (οὐκ ἄκοινες Ἑρμοκράτην τὸν στρατηγὸν τῆς ὅλης Σικελίας ἐγκεχαραγμένον μεγάλως, ὃν βασιλεὺς ὁ Περσῶν θαυμάζει καὶ φιλεῖ, πέμπει δὲ αὐτῷ κατ’ ἐτος δωρεάς, ὃτι Αθηναίους κατεναυμάχησε τοὺς Περσῶν πολεμίους; 2.6.3).

We have seen how Artaxates, the King’s eunuch, is presented as a bad influence. He is the one who encourages the King to do with Callirhoe as he pleases, since is a king and she is his servant. The same role is assumed by Leonas here. When Dionysius becomes upset that the object of his desire seems unattainable, Leonas tells him that she is his slave and suggests her rape, because he is her master and he can make her do what he wants, whether she likes it or not (κύριος γὰρ εἶ καὶ ἔξουσίαν ἔχεις αὐτῆς, ὥστε καὶ ἐκοῦσα καὶ ἄκουσα ποιῆσε τὸ σοὶ δοκοῦν; 2.6.2).

On the other hand, Chaereas’ underling who is cast in the role of the “servant” (despite not being called a servant) is an Egyptian soldier who speaks to Statira and Callirhoe the night after Aradus’ capture. His barbarian identity is emphasized in the fact that he cannot bring himself to address the queen like a free man. Chariton explains that as a symptom of the “innate superstition that barbarians feel towards the royal title” (κατὰ τὴν ἐμφυτὸν θρησκείαν τῶν βαρβάρων πρὸς τὸν βασιλικὸν; 7.6.6). The word θρησκεία is here used in the sense of the Latin superstitio, and is related to the Greek δεισιδαιμονία. Theophrastus defines this as “δειλία πρὸς τὸ δαιμόνιον.”¹⁰⁵ Deisidaimonia is despicable partly because it is unnecessary fear and because it incites shameful behavior. To the Greeks, the Eastern barbarians looked ridiculous when they prostrated themselves before the Great King of Persia.¹⁰⁶ For an Egyptian in particular, the royal title equals divine status. In the traditional Egyptian royal cult, the pharaoh acquired his divinity with his coronation, during which he was transformed into a god by means

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¹⁰⁵ Theoph. 16.1.
¹⁰⁶ Martin 2007, 29.
of the god’s union with the royal soul (ki), and was associated with the sun god Ra, as well as Horus and Osiris. The Egyptian’s hesitation to address the queen highlights his ἐμφυτὸν propensity for servility. A free man will address royals without excessive deisidaimonia, and, as we have seen, will certainly not prostrate himself. Ironically, it is Callirhoe who falls to the ground in her lament, just like the Babylonians who had approached had dropped to their knees upon seeing her.

In time, the Egyptian promises Callirhoe that his admiral will marry her. She does not know that the admiral is Chaereas, and again prays for death. “Now I really am a prisoner”, she says (νῦν ἀληθῶς αἰχμάλωτός εἰμι; 7.6.7). Both Leonas and Artaxates had suggested violence against Callirhoe whenever she expressed her loyalty to Chaereas and her desire to rather die than be a prisoner. Chaereas’ underling, on the other hand, an Egyptian, who by default exists in polar opposition to anything Persian (a point made explicit in a grand fashion through an entire revolt against Persia), could not bring himself to use force (σκέψις προύκειτο τῷ Ἀἰγυπτίῳ τί καὶ πράξει: βίαν μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἔτολμα προσφέρειν; 7.6.9).

Chaereas too, unlike Dionysius and Artaxerxes, responds to Callirhoe’s rejection in a much more dignified manner. He orders his soldier to let her do as she pleases. As a Greek, Chaereas values and encourages freedom — a point of stark contrast against Persian servility. Whereas Artaxates and Leonas suggested that their respective masters could do whatever they wanted, Chaereas decides that she should do as she pleases. He points out that he must honor her sophrosune — another one of the traditional Greek values that Persians do not possess (πρέπει γάρ μοι σοφροσύνην τιμᾶν; 7.6.12). He decides to treat her well because she might be mourning a husband (καὶ αὐτὴ γὰρ ἴσως ἄνδρα πενθεῖ) and because she seems to be of noble character (ἔοικε δὲ τὸ φρόνημα εἶναι τῆς γυναικὸς οὐκ ἄγεννες). Whereas both his adversaries had decided
to treat Callirhoe well in an attempt to bribe her into a marriage simply because they had been impressed by her beauty, Chaereas is kind towards her for clearly cultural reasons — values such as freedom, \textit{sophrosune}, and \textit{εὐγένεια}, all of which traditionally set Greeks apart from Persians.

One thing Chaereas, Dionysius, and Artaxerxes have in common is that they all fall in love with Callirhoe at first sight. We have pointed out that Callirhoe has the effect of making Dionysius and Artaxerxes unable to control their impulses, and that this lack of self-control is characteristic of Persians. Of course, Callirhoe incites passion in Chaereas when he sees her, as well. He too is described as “wounded” with love, just like Dionysius and Artaxerxes later are (\textit{ό μὲν οὖν Χαίρεας οἰκάδε μετὰ τοῦ τραύματος μόλις ἀπῆει καὶ ὠσπέρ τις ἀριστεύσας ἐν πολέμῳ τρωθεὶς καιρίαν, τοῦ κάλλους τῇ εὐγενείᾳ συνελθόντος, καὶ καταπεσεῖν μὲν αἰδοῦμενος, στῇναι δὲ μὴ δυνάμενος}; 1.1.7). The defining difference is that when Callirhoe sees Dionysius or the Persian King, she feels like a prisoner and a slave and cries out she would rather die; when she sees Chaereas, she is equally “wounded” by love. Her limbs give way, her heart feels faint, and the feeling is overall described as mutual. And so, while Eros functions as a catalyst that reveals the Persians’ innate inferiority, Chaereas is shown not to become effeminate and slavish towards the girl, regardless of the fact that he falls in love with her just as much as his Persian counterparts do.

It is also interesting to consider that Callirhoe’s three principal lovers are each pre-eminent in their own context: Chaereas is the most handsome (1.1.3); Dionysius is the top Ionian in station, culture, and wealth (2.1.5, 2.4.4, 2.5.4, 2.11.2, 3.6.5, 4.4.3, 8.7.9); Artaxerxes enjoys unparalleled wealth and luxury.\footnote{Whitmarsh 2011, 51 n.126.} This is nicely summarized in the words of his eunuch, which is appropriate since, as we have seen, the eunuch is by default a symbol of that excessive
opulence himself: “Everything beautiful is in thrall to you: gold, silver, clothing, horses, cities, peoples”.  

Finally, there is a distinct crescendo in terms of the narrative and the intensity of the perceived danger as the couple moves towards the heart of the Persian Empire. This gradual increase of danger is verbalized in Callirhoe’s laments. With every time she cries out blaming Aphrodite, or Fate, or her own beauty for all her misfortunes, her despair grows, and the language she uses becomes increasingly pessimistic. This crescendo creates a gloomy symbol of death out of the Persian Empire. Persia in Chariton is what the depths of Congo are in the *Heart of Darkness*.  

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108 ὦ τὰ καλὰ πάντα δουλεῖτε: χρυσός, ἄργυρος, ἐσθής, ἵπποι, πόλεις, ἔθνη; 6.3.4.

109 Just like, in the *Heart of Darkness*, the deeper Marlow travels into the jungle, the closer he gets to metaphorical darkness and death.
CHAPTER 3

THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE BOUKOLOI IN HELIODORUS’ AETHIOPICA

This chapter will examine the presentation of a group of bandits called boukoloi in Heliodorus’ Aethiopica. Their first appearance in this novel has been labeled an “ethnographical excursus” and presents an interesting case of history joining ethnography for literary purposes.\textsuperscript{110} The aim of the present study is to point out and explain the historical background of this group of bandits and to trace the ethnographical tradition followed by Heliodorus as a case study for the function of ethnography in his novel, ultimately shedding some light on the delicate line between historical report and fictionalized account.\textsuperscript{111}

The boukoloi are mainly known through Cassius Dio’s report. They also appear in Achilles Tatius, Lollianos and of course Heliodorus. Dio tells of their revolt in 172-3 A.D., which was thwarted by Avidius Cassius.

\textsuperscript{110} Graf 1986, 43.
\textsuperscript{111} Reardon 1989, 213 n. 50.
first, arrayed in women’s garments, they had deceived the Roman centurion, causing him to believe that they were women of the Bucoli and were going to give him gold as ransom for their husbands, and had then struck him down when he approached them. They also sacrificed his companion, and after swearing an oath over his entrails, they devoured them. Isidorus surpassed all his contemporaries in bravery. Next, having conquered the Romans in Egypt in a pitched battle, they came near capturing Alexandria, too, and would have succeeded, had not Cassius been sent against them from Syria. He contrived to destroy their mutual accord and to separate them from one another (for because of their desperation as well as of their numbers he had not ventured to attack them while they were united), and thus, when they fell to quarrelling, he subdued them.\footnote{Cassius Dio, 72.4}

The story unfolds in the time of Marcus Aurelius and is told in the context of the troubles with barbarians that his son, Marcus Antoninus (Commodus), successfully faced early in his career. Avidius Cassius was a popular figure in Egypt even before defeating the boukoloi and enjoyed great support by the Alexandrians after saving their city from that threat.\footnote{The text and the translation are from the Loeb edition by Cary, 1955.} He was eventually proclaimed imperator in oriente.\footnote{cf. Bowman 1970, 24, who offers a convincing reading of the papyrus fragment SB 10295 as related to Avidius Cassius; multa Alexandrini in Cassium dixissent fausta [SHA, Marcus 26.4].} After that, he was beheaded and his head was sent to Commodus.\footnote{SHA, Avidius Cassius 7.1: nam et cum Bucolici miles per Aegyptum gravia multa facerent, ab hoc retunsi sunt... imperatorem se in oriente appellavit; Avidius Cassius thus functions on a level between the two Roman officials in the Ephesiaca described by Rife. He is like an eirenarch in that he deals with the bandits, but he is also like an ἄρχων Αἰγύπτου, especially after his attempt to usurp the throne. The office of the eirenarch seems especially interesting because it persistently appeared in novels even after it historically stopped existing (i.e. it became a literary topos), cf. Rife 2002, 107.} Curiously enough, Avidius’ father was called Avidius Heliodorus.\footnote{Klebs 1888, 323.} Drawing a parallel between this revolt and one that occurred under Severus and is also mentioned by Dio, Antonio Baldini convincingly suggests that the “dissoluzione della concordia” is a result of the “topos della litigiosità degli Egizi (e dei Giudei).”\footnote{Bowman 1970, 25.} The same scholar also points out that the revolt of the boukoloi must have been much greater than Dio’s brief mention may suggest; the

\footnote{Baldini 2009, 53.}
fact that its suppression was enough for Avidius Cassius to proclaim himself emperor implies an upheaval of a rather large scale.\textsuperscript{118}

Rostovtzeff posited that the \textit{boukoloi} were impoverished, fugitive Egyptians who turned to a life of crime in order to avoid starvation, and noted that “the numbers of those who fled from the villages of Egypt to the swamps of the Delta to escape the burden of levies, compulsory work, and taxes became so large that the fugitives (who were called \textit{boukoloi}), under the leadership of a priest, could challenge the imperial government.”\textsuperscript{119} Brent Shaw calls them “‘barbaric entities’, foreign enclaves within the Roman state.”\textsuperscript{120}

We already find the term \textit{boukoloi} used to describe a group of people in Egypt in Herodotus, who includes the \textit{boukoloi} as one of the Egyptian “classes”: “The Egyptians are divided into seven classes: priests, warriors, cowherds, swineherds, merchants, interpreters, and pilots.”\textsuperscript{121} The warriors, in turn, are divided into two groups, the \textit{Kalasiries} and the \textit{Hermotubies}.\textsuperscript{122} These two terms, \textit{kalasiris} and \textit{boukoloi}, become instrumental in Heliodorus’ novel. It is also very curious that “kalasiris” is reported by Herodotus to be the term for an Egyptian linen dress, especially given that, in his first appearance in the novel, the priest Kalasiris is described as wearing Greek clothes (we will look at his introduction to the story in more detail).\textsuperscript{123} However, this is probably a different kind of \textit{boukoloi}. The first definite reference to the \textit{boukoloi} as a group of bandits comes in Strabo, who reports Eratosthenes’ words

\begin{footnotes}
\item[118] \textit{ibid.} — pace MacMullen 1964, 185 n. 3, who announces that “the Bucoli certainly represented no main current in the country’s culture” without any additional explanation.
\item[119] Rostovtzeff 1998, 348, 374.
\item[120] Shaw 1984, 42.
\item[121] ἐστι δὲ Ἀιγυπτιων ἐπτά γένεα, καὶ τούτων οἱ μὲν ιρέες οἱ δὲ μάχιμοι κεκλέαται, οἱ δὲ βουκόλοι οἱ δὲ συβιόται, οἱ δὲ κάπηλοι, οἱ δὲ έρμηνείς, οἱ δὲ κυβερνήται; Hdt. 2.164.1.
\item[122] οἱ δὲ μάχιμοι αὐτὸν καλούνται μὲν Καλασιρίες τε καὶ Έρμοτύβιες; Hdt. 2.164.2.
\item[123] ἐνδεδύκασε δὲ καθόνας λινέοις περὶ τὰ σκάλεα θυσανοτούς, τούς καλέουσι καλασιρίς (Hdt. 2.81.1); but: “his cloak and the rest of his clothes were of a greekish appearance” (Heliodorus 2.21).
\end{footnotes}
that “the harbour at Pharos… was not of free access, but watched and guarded by boukoloi, who
were robbers, and attacked those who attempted to sail into it.”

In terms of ethnography, the most shocking bit of information is the boukoloi’s ritualistic
devouring of the soldier’s entrails. In a seminal study written in the late 70’s, William Arens
discussed anthropophagy from an anthropological perspective. The gist of his argument is
nicely summarized by Wiedemann: “A person who does not eat (or drink) what I do is peculiar
[…] — I am central and he is marginal.” Cannibalism is an extreme example of a marginal
group. “Any group satisfied that its own behavior patterns are normal will tend to ascribe the
qualities of cannibals to individuals or groups whom they consider to be hostile to their behavior
patterns or values. Thus […] the statement “x is a cannibal” should not be taken at its face value
as a piece of descriptive ethnography; it is rather a moral evaluation, labeling x as being marginal
with respect to the speaker’s perception of his own values or social position.”

Nevertheless, Dio’s narrative opens a number of avenues for interpretation, but first I
examine Heliodorus’ boukoloi and explain their presence in terms of their literary tradition. I
have already pointed out that the boukoloi show up in other novels, which no doubt influenced
the Aethiopica which postdate them. The common and fair assumption is that the boukoloi made
their way into the novel since they were useful for creating a feeling of danger and adventure,
and because Egypt is a typical setting for novels. Overtime their behavior and characteristics
within the novels became disconnected from the realia and they ended up being a stock-motif for
“the other,” eventually becoming the anti-Christian in Jerome. For earlier novels, it has been

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124 μηδὲ τὸν ὄντα λιμένα ἀνείπθαι τὸν πρὸς τῇ Φάρῳ, φρουρεῖσθαι δ᾽ ἐπὶ βουκόλων ἱμηστῶν ἐπιτιθεμένων τοῖς
προσορμικομένοις; Strabo 17.1.19.
125 Arens 1980.
126 Wiedemann 1986, 188.
127 Wiedemann 1986, 189; for a full treatment of food in antiquity from a sociological perspective, cf. Garnsey 1999;
especially his chapter “Otherness,” where he discusses the ways in which food is a marker of cultural divergence.
128 See below, p. 62.
argued that the memory of the revolt of the boukoloi “était encore fraîche dans les esprits quand le roman fut écrit.”129 But by the time of Heliodorus, they will have been a memory preserved in literary imagination more than an actual threat, becoming “l’un des accessoires obligés du roman grec exotique.”130 This makes them even more interesting in terms of ethnography, because they are arguably a literary construct disconnected from reality and made up of ethnographic stereotypes, as I will show. I begin with a brief examination of what Achilles Tatius has to say about the boukoloi, since he is the other main source for that group of bandits.

In Achilles Tatius’ Leucippe and Clitophon, we meet the boukoloi in 3.9. Cleitophon is narrating the story of how he sailed along the Nile only to be ambushed by the boukoloi, which seems modeled on Strabo’s remarks that they do not allow passage through Pharos. He and his crew heard a great noise (barbarians are naturally noisy, both because they are wild, loud, and uncivilized, and because their language is just noise to the ears of the “civilized,” or to the “colonial gaze,” as Bakhtin would put it), and a sailor cried out ὁ βουκόλος! Suddenly, “the shore was full of wild frightening men, all large and black (not deep black like Indians but as black as, say, a half-Ethiopian might be), bareheaded, heavyset but quick on their feet. They all shouted in a foreign language (πλήρης ἢν ἢ γῆ φοβερῶν καὶ ἀγρίων ἀνθρώπων· μεγάλοι μὲν πάντες, μέλανες δὲ τὴν χροιάν [οὗ κατὰ τὴν τῶν Ἰνδῶν τὴν ἄκρατον, ἀλλ’ οἶος ἄν γένοιτο νόθος Αἰθίοψ], ψιλοὶ τάς κεφαλὰς, λεπτοὶ τοὺς πόδας, τὸ σῶμα παχεῖς· ἐβαρβάριζον δὲ πάντες).131

The description is both ethnographic and stereotypical. The boukoloi are “wild and frightening” (like Gauls are feroces), a typical barbaric characteristic. They are dark-skinned, which sets them apart as barbarians of the East, just as red hair and a long red beard defines

129 Schwartz 1967, 540.
130 Ibid.
131 Does that not also remind one of the Heart of Darkness? — a detail also noted in Whitmarsh 2011, 120, who sees the Nile as supplying the “template for a Conrad-esque sense of journey and destination as the narrative progresses upstream.”
someone as a German/Gaul. And of course, they all “make noise” in a foreign language. A bit later, a man with a “large and unruly mane” (κόμην ἔχων πολλὴν καὶ ἀγρίαν; 3.12) comes riding his horse bareback and asked for a virgin to be sacrificed; the victim of course was Leucippe. The boukoloi call their leader a “king” (τὸν βασιλέα· τοῦτον γὰρ ἐκάλουν τῷ ὀνόματι τὸν ληστήν τὸν μείζονα; 3.9). Many descriptions of ethnic groups similarly refer to how they are ruled.

Eventually, a phalanx of the Egyptian army comes and saves Cleitophon (but not Leucippe) from the boukoloi. During that fight, the Egyptians defeat the militarily inexperienced boukoloi despite being outnumbered (καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐμπειρὸν παρὰ τοῖς στρατιώταις ἀνεπλήρου τοῦ πλήθους τὸ ἐνδέες; 3.13).

Achilles Tatius has Cleitophon lament the fact that he is now at the hands of Egyptian bandits, as opposed to Greek bandits: “a Greek bandit would respond to our speech… but now in what language will we frame our requests?… Must I pantomime my miseries?” (ληστὴν μὲν γὰρ Ἕλληνα καὶ φωνὴ κατέκλασε… νῦν δὲ ποία μὲν φωνῇ δεηθῶμεν?... ἤδη τὸν θρῆνον ὀρχήσομαι; 3.10). Speech and the ability to communicate effectively is a crucial factor that distinguishes between civilization from barbarism (more on this below). Meanwhile, Leucippe is still with the boukoloi. Their leader (the “king”) announces to his underlings that “we have a tradition that sacrifices, especially human sacrifices, must be performed by newly intiated bandits” (Νόμος ἡμῶν ἐστιν, ἐφή, 'πρωτομύστας τῆς ἱερείας ἀρχεσθαι, μάλιστα ὅταν ἀνθρωπὸν καταθίειν δέῃ; 3.22). With Cleitophon watching from afar, unable to do anything to help, the boukoloi initiates-to-be plunge a knife into Leucippe’s heart, cut out her entrails and eat them (or at least that seems to be the case; she is safe, though, gentle reader).

132 And in 3.19, Menelaos reports that the bandits tried to recruit him, telling him that first, he needs to prove he has the guts, and go through the initiation rite during which he would have to, amongst others, “partake of her immolated liver.” The text speaks for itself, here, and the proximity of this report to Dio’s remark that the boukoloi ate the soldiers’ entrails is striking.
In their other major appearance in Achilles Tatius, the boukoloi devise an ambush which they successfully execute. The plan involves sending some older men carrying suppliant branches to the enemy general, and to ask for mercy (4.13). When he refuses, they ask him to let them die at the hearths where they were born, the swamps. As they reach the swamps, the old men quickly run away, and the boukoloi cut down a dam — thus flooding the swamp — and eventually spear the enemies, including the general, to death. The gruesomeness of the killings is described at length (ἀδιήγητος θάνατος ἦν; 4.14). Achilles Tatius does not miss the opportunity for an ethnographical comment on the collective attitude of the boukoloi: they exulted in their triumph, “thinking it due to their courage rather than a deceitful trick. Egyptians are quite cowed by cowardice in moments of fright, but when they feel brave their bravado knows no bound” (οἱ μὲν δὴ τοῖς πεπραγμένοις ἐπαρθέντες μέγα ἑφρόνουν, ἀνδρεία νομίζοντες κεκρατηκέναι καὶ οὐκ ἀπάτης κλοπῆ. ἀνήρ γὰρ Ἁγύπτιος καὶ τὸ δείλον, ὅπου φοβεῖται, δεδούλωται, καὶ τὸ μάχημον, ἐν οἷς θαρρεῖ, παρώξυνται; 4.14).

This quick summary of the ethnography of the boukoloi in Achilles Tatius illustrates the tradition Heliodorus follows, and sets the stage for my analysis of the boukoloi in the Aethiopica. The boukoloi are introduced at the beginning of the story. Our heroes, Theagenes and Charicleia, find themselves stranded at a beach next to their shipwreck, when a group of bandits approaches them. Charicleia cries out to them to leave them alone if they are ghosts or to kill them if they are criminals (1.3). But “of this tragic outburst” the brigands “could not understand a word” (Ἡ μὲν ταῦτα ἐπετραγώδει, οἱ δὲ οὐδὲν συνιέναι τῶν λεγομένων ἔχοντες; 1.3.2).

At that point, a second band of 30 brigands arrives to confront the original 10 bandits. Outnumbered, those 10 run away, leaving only Charicleia, Theagenes and the new group of bandits on the scene. These bandits are our boukoloi. Their chief approaches Charicleia, who
threatens to kill herself. He “understood what she meant, partly from her words, but mainly from her gestures” (συνείς οὖν ὁ λήσταρχος τὸ μὲν τι τοῖς λεγομένοις, πλέον δὲ τοῖς νεώμασι; 1.4.2).

Language seems to become a marginalizing element for this group of bandits. They do not understand our heroine, and from the point of view of the novels’ audience, they do not share with them the classical Greek and Latin education, and are thus placed at the edge of civilization. We are also reminded of Callirhoe’s laments about being stranded in a land where nobody understands her anymore, mentioned in the previous chapter.

The chief dismounts from his horse and allows his injured captives, Charicleia and Theagenes, to ride on the horses, “supporting them whenever either of them was unsteady” (προσανέχων, εἰ ποὺ τις αὐτῶν περιτρέποιτο; 1.4.2). Heliodorus’ authorial remark at this point is very suggestive. He notes that “there was something remarkable in the sight: the master appeared as a servant; the captor chose to minister to his captives” (δουλεύειν ὁ ἄρχων ἐφαίνετο καὶ ὑπηρετεῖσθαι ὁ κρατῶν τοῖς ἐκλοκόσιν ἠρέτω; 1.4.3). This not only refers to the principal theme of the novel, the juncture of appearance and identity, that traditional opposition between φαίνεσθαι and εἶναι, but also carries religious connotations in recalling the Saturnalia. During this festival of role reversals, the temporary freedom of the slaves was marked by their permission to dine with their masters and to wear the pilleus, the cap of freedom. Merkelbach would have probably noted that our boukoloi are already shrouded with a cloud of mystery. Heliodorus, however, explains this event in purely novelistic terms: the beauty of the heroine.

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But narrative “haziness” is a technique employed by Heliodorus throughout the novel and the twist at the end when we find out that Charicleia is actually Ethiopian is the climax thereof (over and over again, Charicleia is admired as a Greek by most of the other characters in the story, but it turns out that she is really a fair-skinned Ethiopian). Here, the orientating markers about the boukoloi are hazy enough, just like the whole opening of the work, especially the very first sentence, when, with some day smiling enigmatically (but what day?), we meet men “armed like bandits” (but are they really bandits?), at the “so-called” Heracleiotic mouth of the Nile; cf. Whitmarsh 2011, 108.
The implication is that even the barbarians, the “harshest of natures” (αὐχηροτέρων), with their “brigand hearts” (λῃστρικὸν ἠθος) can be “civilized” at the sight of beauty (κάλλους ὁμι). After a short ride, the brigands and our heroes reach the home of the boukoloi, the land called “Boukolia.” Heliodorus’ description of Boukolia and the boukoloi follows the traditional forms of ethnography.

The Egyptians call the whole area the Land of Herds; there is a natural bowl into which the floodwater from the Nile pours; thus a lake has formed, immeasurably deep at the center but shallowing off at the edges into a marsh, for as beaches are to seas, so marshes are to lakes. This is the home of the entire bandit community of Egypt, some of them building huts on what little land there is above water, others living on boats that serve them as both transport and dwelling. On these boats their womenfolk work at their weaving; on these boats their children are born. Any child born there is fed at first on its mother’s milk, later on fish from the lake dried in the sun. If they see a child trying to crawl, they tie a cord to its ankles just long enough to allow it to reach the edge of the boat or the door of the hut. A strange way to keep children in hand, to tie them by the feet! Many a Herdsman has been born here and reared as I have described, and has come to look upon the lake as his homeland. It affords a secure stronghold for bandits, and so that class of person flocks there. The water encircles the entire...
settlement like a wall, and instead of a palisade they are protected by the vast quantities of reeds growing in the marsh. By cutting devious and intricately winding paths through the reeds, and so constructing passages that are easy enough for themselves, as they know the way through, but quite impossible for anyone else, they have contrived for themselves an impregnable fastness to safeguard them against any attack. Such, more or less, are the lake and the Herdsmen who live on it.

The boukoloi, are as in Achilles Tatius, inhabitants of the marshes/swamplands of the Nile Delta. The swamps are traditionally a fascinating place for those who live in cities. Besides, the ability to live in such close contact to nature is in itself the trait of a beast. More importantly, not only do they live in the swamps, but they do everything on their little boats. There, the women work at their weaving (that most typical household task of any Greek woman). They give birth to their babies on these boats as well. That this is a formulaic way of describing a marginalized group of people becomes evident upon comparison of this passage to an ethnographic excursus such as Ammianus’ description of the Huns. These are presented as freaks of nature — beasts — because, amongst others, they live their lives on horseback. They sleep on their horses, eat on their horses, and drink on their horses.

In describing the boukoloi, Heliodorus is borrowing from Herodotus’ account of the Paionian lake-dwellers. The latter build platforms around the lake and have both huts they live in (like the boukoloi above) and trap-doors that lead to the lake. They also keep their toddlers in

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134 A truth that still holds today, as evidenced by the modern TV show “The Swamp Men.”
135 The Dionysiac rites of the maenads provide a ritualistic enactment of that trait.
136 “they are almost glued to their horses, which are hardy, it is true, but ugly, and sometimes they sit them woman-fashion and thus perform their ordinary tasks. From their horses by night or day every one of that nation buys and sells, eats and drinks, and bowed over the narrow neck of the animal relaxes into a sleep so deep as to be accompanied by many dreams. And when deliberation is called for about weighty matters, they all consult as a common body in that fashion” (verum equis prope affixi, duris quidem sed deformibus, et muliebriter eisdem non numquam insidentes, funguntur muneribus consuetis. Ex ipsis quivis in hac natione pernox et perdius emit et vendit, cibumque sumit et potum, et inclinatus cervici angustiae iumenti, in altum soporem ad usque varietatem effunditur somniorum. Et delibratione super rebus proposita seris, hoc habitu omnes in commune consultant; Ammianus 31.2).
137 οἰκέωσι δὲ τοιοῦτον τρόπον, κρατέων ἐκαστὸς ἐπὶ τῶν ἱκρίων καλέβης πε ἐν τῇ διαιτᾶται καὶ θύρης κατασκευής διὰ τῶν ἱκρίων κάτω φεροίσης ἐς τὴν λίμνην, Hdt. 5.16.3.
check the same way as the *boukoloi*, by tying a cord around their ankles. Heliodorus inserts an interesting remark: “A strange way to keep children in hand, to tie them by the feet!” Is he expressing genuine ethnographic curiosity at the information he got from Herodotus, or is the injection of the authorial voice supposed to alert the reader to the parallelism? Given the complexity of Heliodorus’ narrative technique at large, I am inclined to believe the latter.

In fact, right before that comment, he points out that after children stop breastfeeding they are fed on dried fish from the lake. Dietary practices are, of course, a major index of civilization in classical literature. The more exotic these practices are, the more barbaric the people described, and its most extreme form is the eating of raw meat (*omophagia*) and cannibalism. So how is the reader supposed to react to this bit of information? Herodotus helps with his brief discussion of Egyptian dietary practices, including the fact that they eat fish either raw and sun-dried, or preserved with brine (*ιχθύων δὲ τοὺς μὲν πρὸς Ἴλιον αὐὴνατες όμοις σιτέονται, τοὺς δὲ ἐξ ἐλμης τεταρχεμένους*; Hdt. 2.77.4). Graf points out that the surprising thing, here, is precisely the fact that dried fish must have been such a regular commodity in Egypt.

I have already said that Heliodorus constructs the novel upon a sense of ambivalence. It is within this context that this ethnography of the *boukoloi* is to be understood. They are bandits, but they seem to be helping our heroes. They are savages, but they treat our heroes

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138 τὰ δὲ νηπία παιδία δέοντα τοῦ πωδὸς σπάρτῳ, μὴ κατακύλισθη δεμαίνοντες; Hdt. 5.16.3.
139 Which, incidentally, are both ascribed to maenads (most famously in Euripides’ *Bacchae*).
140 But does not see any ambivalence therein, Graf 1986, 44; but Plutarch, in his *Quaestionae Graecae* (31, 298b) asks himself: “Why is it that at the Thesmophoria the Eretrian women cook their meat, not by fire, but by the rays of the sun?” (διὰ τί τοῖς θεσμοφορίοις αἱ τῶν Ἑρετρίων γυναῖκες οὐ πρὸς πῦρ ἀλλὰ πρὸς Ἴλιον ὀπτάσα τὰ κρέα;). In Apollodoros, the Centaurs are presented as others in comparison to Heracles in that he cooks his meat, whereas they do not (οὐτὸς Ἡρακλῆι μὲν ὀπτὰ παρεῖς τὰ κρέα, οὐτὸς δὲ όμοις ἔχρητο; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.4). Ammianus’ Huns also “eat the half-rare flesh of any kind of animal whatever, which they put between their thighs and the backs of their horses, and thus warm it a little” (semicruda culuisvis pectoris carne vescantur, quam inter femora sua equorumque terga subseratam, *fotu calefaciunt brevi*; Amm. 31.2.3).
141 Theagenes, in a meta-poetic remark, comments that “the human condition is full of uncertainty and subject to constant change” (ἀστάθμητον τι τὸ ἀνθρώπειον καὶ ἄλλοτε πρὸς ἄλλα φερόμενον; 5.4.7); the same can be said of Heliodorus’ plot.
respectfully (thanks to Charicleia’s beauty and Theagenes’ nobility, that is true). And they are described in an ethnographical excursus that recalls Herodotean —and later— models of discourse on barbarians and savages. But Heliodorus undercuts the validity of the negativity of the stereotypes.\(^\text{142}\)

This is part of Heliodorus’ narrative technique. These bandits may be criminals (and therefore marginalized), but they are Egyptians (which in Heliodorus’ terms means “good,” especially in light of the fact that the Egyptian Kalasiris becomes the protector of the novel’s hero and heroine). And so, given the obsession of Heliodorus with the concept of the “fluidity” of identity and fluctuating impressions thereof (the pinnacle of which, as we mentioned, is the twist at the conclusion of the novel), the text is designed not to allow us to make safe assumptions about the identity of any group or character, in this case the *boukoloi*. At the same time, we have to keep in mind that the audience of this novel will have been just as diverse as the traditions Heliodorus draws upon: the tradition of the Greek romance and literature at large, and the tradition of Egyptian Demotic fiction.\(^\text{143}\) The complexity of this ethnography (and the text in general) might be appreciated in a different manner by a reader familiar with the latter, a point I comment on below.

The next ethnographic comment on the *boukoloi* comes in Heliodorus’ second book, just before we meet Kalasiris, who as we later find out is the father of the “king” of the *boukoloi*, Thyamis. We are told that, while among the *boukoloi*, Knemon had let his hair grow “so as to look more the part of a brigand,” but now that he was gone, he decided to cut his hair “so as not to inspire terror or distrust among those he met” (πρῶτα μὲν ἀποτέμνει τῆς κόμης τὸ περιττότερον

\(^{142}\) “…this discovery that the "other" is really the "same" in disguise has parallels in… contexts where it serves to articulate new alliances that must be redrawn due to shifting positions”; Nimis 2004, 51. Graf, on the other hand, doesn’t see any complexity here and proposes that the *boukoloi* are simply envisioned as “outside the civilized world” in which they only incidentally break into (“gelegentlich einbrechen”), a reading which I find insufficient.

\(^{143}\) Rutherford 2000, 118.
καὶ ὅσον αὐτῆς εἰς τὸ ληστρικότερον εἶδος παρὰ τοῖς βουκόλοις ἦσκητο τοῦ μὴ ἀποτρόπαιος ἢ ὑποπτος εἶναι τοῖς ἐννηχάνουσι; 2.20.5).

Βουκόλοι γὰρ ἄλλα τε πρὸς τὸ φοβερότερον φαίνεσθαι καὶ ὅτι καὶ τὴν κόμην εἰς ὄφρον ἔλκουσι καὶ σοβήσωσι τὸν ὄμοι ἐπιμαίνουσαν, εἰ τοῦτο εἰδότες ὡς κόμη τοῖς μὲν ἐρωτικοῖς ἱλαροτέρους τοῖς δὲ ληστρικοῖς φοβερότερους ἀποδείκνυσιν.

The Herdsmen cultivate an alarming appearance, particularly as regards their hair, which they pull forward to meet their eyebrows and toss violently as it falls over their shoulders, for they are well aware that long hair makes lovers seem more alluring but robbers more alarming.

Hel. 2.20.5

This comment, at first glance, seems to be denunciatory towards the boukoloi, but I believe that Heliodorus undercuts this reading by referring to Herodotus’ description of Leonidas and the Sparts and Thermopylae. They aroused Xerxes’ curiosity, when it was reported to him that according to Spartan custom, they would comb their long hair when faced with death (ἐπεὰν μέλλωσι κινδυνεύειν τῇ ψυχῇ, τότε τὰς κεφαλὰς κοσμέονται; Hdt. 7.209.3).

Furthermore, Heliodorus’ word-choice in this passage is interesting, as the verb σοβέω, used here to mean “toss” (their hair) can have erotic connotations. This is emphasized by the juxtaposition of the boukoloi and lovers and the fact that Thyamis wants to become Charicleia’s lover. Especially relevant, in fact, is the expression of Thyamis’ desire, which takes place within the battlefield, in a scene that is tied to the ambivalent ethnography of the boukoloi. Thus Heliodorus seems to place the boukoloi somewhere between the erotic and the criminal.

This interplay between love and violence is particularly prominent when Thyamis interprets his dream. In his dream, Isis, in Delphic fashion, tells him that “you shall have her and not have her; you shall do wrong and slay her, but she shall not be slain” (σὺ δὲ ἔχων οὐχ ἐξείς, ἀλλ’ ἀδίκος ἔση καὶ φονεύσεις τὴν ἔξην· ἢ δὲ οὐ φονευθήσεται; 1.18.4). Thyamis “in desperation

144 But in the Roman tradition, long hair was associated with the Gauls (cf. Gallia Comata).
145 LSJ s.v. σοβέω II.3 (σεσόβηται ἐρωτικῶς).
forced the interpretation to conform with his own desires” (ἀπειρηκώς ἐλκει πρὸς τὴν ἐαυτοῦ βούλησιν τὴν ἐπίλυσιν; 1.18.5). He takes the oracle to mean that he will marry her, and the slaying is a reference to the “wounds of defloration” (τὰς παρθενίους τρώσεις).

When the boukoloi find themselves in battle (1.30; perhaps a reminiscence of the quarreling amongst them that Dio mentions), and Thyamis is surrounded by enemies, he is reminded of the dream, and re-interprets it. This time, he decides Isis meant that he must sacrifice Charicleia, lest he lose her to his enemies. After all, “when a barbarian loses all hope of his own preservation, he will usually kill everything he loves before he dies, either in the deluded belief that he will be reunited with it beyond the grave or else to save it from the shameless clutches of his enemies” (ὅπερ ἔρισαν ἃπαν τὸ φίλον εἴπερ, ἢτοι συνέσεσθαι αὐτοῖς καὶ μετὰ τὸν ἐαυτοῦ σωτηρίαν, προαναρεῖν ἀπεκάθαρτος τὸν ῥῆμαν· 1.30.6).

Thyamis then rushes to the cave where Charicleia is imprisoned and drives his sword through her chest. Of course, the woman he kills is not really Charicleia, but this episode fulfills the mandatory ritualistic Scheintod of the heroine and follows pattern in Achilles Tatius. The only difference is that there is no mention of cannibalism, here. But the effect is the same, and when Thermouthis brings a sacrificial animal, Thyamis rebukes him and says that “he had already sacrificed the most beautiful of victims” (εἰπὼν τε ὡς ἐξήθη τὸ κάλλιστον θυμάτων ἱερουργῆσας; 1.31.2).

However, in this scene, and in accordance with the general theme of ambiguity of the Aethiopica, the boukoloi are not presented as barbaric as in Dio or Achilles Tatius. Their

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146 Keep in mind that the Persian Empire is the central authority against whom the boukoloi fight in Heliodorus, and their “occasional success against the Persians, who are destined to be thrown out of Egypt by the Greeks, creates a vague political alignment between Greeks and Egyptians, and later between Greeks and Ethiopians as well. The novel thus poses a spatial devaluation of the center for the periphery”; Nimis & Nimis 2004, 51.
leader is led to this act by misinterpreting a dream. Regardless of dream interpretation theories in antiquity, I think the reader of Heliodorus is meant to forgive Thyamis. Throughout the first few books, all the main characters — Charicleia, Theagenes, Knemon — wrestle with the problem of dream interpretation without managing to come to any agreement or to reach any safe conclusions. Furthermore, while Thyamis is presented as barbaric for entertaining hopes of being reunited with his loved one after he kills her and himself, we cannot forget that Charicleia had already expressed similar ideas at the beginning of the novel. Again, the ethnographic comment on the leader of the *boukoloi* may seemingly condemn him as barbaric, but only at a superficial level.

Winkler offers valuable insight on the intersection between historical truth and ethnographical fiction. In his discussion of bandits (“desperadoes”) and particularly the *boukoloi*, Winkler proposes that “the coincidence between two scenes of ritual murder with cannibalism in novels of the late second century A.D. and one scene of ritual murder with cannibalism in a history of the early third century A.D. may be the result not of fiction taking its text from history but of an historian taking his colour, if not his entire text, from fiction.”

Some papyri from 170/1 (i.e. 2 years before the revolt Dio describes) speak of “unholy men of Nicochis” committing murders around that area (Achilles Tatius identifies the base of the *boukoloi* as a town called Nicochis at 4.12.8). It is plausible that Dio’s story is connected to these reports. The question to ask, then, is this: where along the line did we go from the standard stories of some criminals who happened to be shepherds harassing a few villages (such as in Strabo and the papyrological evidence), to an organized faction/guild of criminals who called

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147 Winkler 1980, 175.
148 PThmous 1, col. 116, lines 3-5: τοῖς μὲν τε [τε]ι[λενθηκόνων],/ τοῖς δὲ ἀνηρήσθαι ὑπὸ τὸν ἄνοι/ σε[ίσον Νικωχείτων ἐπειθόντεσσε]/; also col. 104, line 13. In the context of Egyptian papyri, ἀναλαμβάνω can mean “to be confiscated” (LSJ s.v. ἀναλαμβάνω A.6), so I am wondering if 99.18-9 is a report of the money stolen by the *poimenai:* κηρυσσόμενης κατὰ τὰ π[ρό]/ τερα ἐπ[τη ἀναλαμβανεται(*)/ Πετετεί διὰ πομένον (δραχμαί) κς.
themselves *boukoloi* and who came to be associated with human sacrifice, as we have seen in Dio, Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus?

As far as Dio’s history goes, Harland points out that there is consistency in Dio’s choice of the human-sacrifice-and-cannibalism charge against supposedly barbarous peoples. In his description of the revolt of Jews in Cyrene who were “destroying both the Romans and the Greeks,” he claims that “they would eat the flesh of their victims, make belts for themselves of their entrails, anoint themselves with their blood and wear their skins for clothing” (Dio 68.32.1-2). He also suggests that the Judean immigrants in Egypt and on Cyprus had “perpetrated many similar outrages” (68.32.2).149

In other words, it is not necessary to assume that Dio was influenced by Achilles Tatius in his description of the cannibalistic *boukoloi*. But how and why did they come to be cannibals in Achilles Tatius in the first place? To answer this question, I turn to Achilles Tatius’ inspiration for the episode, a scene from the so-called “Contest for the Benefice of Amun” from the Egyptian Demotic “Inaros-Petubastis cycle,” a cycle of narratives relating stories from the Egyptian heroic age.150

The *Contest for the Benefice of Amun* the mentions thirteen herdsmen, led by the son of a priest (just like Thyamis). Rutherford detects several narratological motifs that link these herdsmen with the *boukoloi* of the Greek novel.151 One of them is a “communal ritual activity:” the herdsmen of the *Contest for the Benefice* “washed themselves for a festival, brought the bread, the meat, and the wine they had on board, placed it before them, drank, and made a happy day.”152 Achilles Tatius, an Alexandrian who wrote in the first half of the second century (i.e.

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149 Harland 2007, 64.
150 Rutherford 2000.
151 *op. cit.* 110.
152 *op. cit.* 111.
before the 172 revolts) would have been inspired by this Egyptian Demotic story and would have included this group in his narrative as a verisimilar adventure. Adding a typical element of extreme violence that would lead to the required Scheintod of the heroine, he made cannibals out of the rebels. The historical unrests of 172 will have been caused by a group of bandits who could have called themselves “herdsmen” as a nationalist reference to their purely Egyptian traditions, and in reaction to Roman influence. Dio would have adopted that information as it would fit his tendency to marginalize groups that could be classified as enemies of the Empire (or he could have fabricated that cannibalism to ascribe antisocial behavior to that group, regardless of Achilles Tatius). This is the tradition that Heliodorus inherits, and this scheme explains why he would adopt it, and how perfectly he can make it fit into his overall theme of ambivalence.

Scholars who have studied the boukoloi have focused on a Quellenforschung type of approach, seen for example in Winkler’s study and in Rutherford’s use of the Egyptian demotic fiction. What I emphasize, however, is how ingeniously Heliodorus appropriates an old model and contextualizes it within the overall scheme of his novel. The novel-reader in the ancient audience would have remembered Achilles Tatius description of the boukoloi: “all large and black (not deep black like Indians but as black as, say, a half-Ethiopian might be).” How ironic that would be to the reader of Heliodorus, when at the conclusion of the Aethiopica all expectations were undermined and it was Charicleia who turned out to be Ethiopian.

153 Alston 1999, 132, thinks that “it would seem fruitless to speculate as to the historicity of the original myth or to propose an earlier revolt of the Boukoloi that has almost escaped the historical tradition,” and he is probably right. For the purpose of understanding Heliodorus’ case, however, I think this schematic and speculative scheme suffices. 154 Whereas others follow fruitless paths, such as Bertrand 1988 who spends considerable energy to attempt to convince us that the description of the boukoloi must have reflected negatively on Egypt as a whole, as the Nile, the Delta of which the boukoloi live in, symbolizes Egypt. 155 The interchangeability of identities is symbolized at the end of the novel by the jubilant celebration of the formerly archetypal Greek couple, Theagenes and Charicleia. On this occasion the principals give up talking Greek and speak Ethiopian "for the whole assembly to understand; Bowersock 1997, 49-50.
Finally, there seem to be a number of religious allusions hidden within the ethnography of the *boukoloi*, as in the rest of the ancient novels. It is certainly no wonder that Merkelbach would have placed such emphasis on the aspect of the novel as a *Mysterientext*. The *boukoloi* live around the marshes of the Nile Delta. These marshes are elsewhere called *ai Tōφῶνος ἐκνωαί.*\(^{156}\) The term *boukoloi* can mean both “a worshipper of Dionysus in bull-form” (whose birthplace, according to the First Homeric Hymn was by the “streams of Aegyptus” — *σχεδὸν Ἀἰγύπτοιο ῥόαν; HH 1.9*), and “a devotee of Sarapis.”\(^{157}\) The latter replaced Osiris as the lover of Isis in late Roman Egypt (i.e. the time of the composition of our novels). Typhon is the slayer of Osiris, and Heliodorus himself, in explaining the Neiloa, the greatest of all festivals in Egypt, tells us that in popular symbolism “the land is Isis and the Nile Osiris… the goddess longs for her husband when he is away and rejoices at his return, mourns his renewed absence and abominates Typhon like a mortal enemy.”\(^{158}\) Thyamis, the leader of the *boukoloi*, comes from Memphis, the home of Apis, the Egyptian bull-deity. The first mention of the word *boukolos* in Achilles Tatius comes in the story of Dionysos visiting a *boukolos* and eventually giving him the gift of wine; this is clearly a ritualistic story of the genesis of wine.\(^{159}\) There seems to be an intricate web of allusions that perhaps only the μῦσται would be able to decipher.\(^{160}\)

In fact, religion becomes the absolute factor that grants the *boukoloi* barbaric status in later literature. Jerome writes probably less than a century after Heliodorus and reports that Hilarion “sent Hesychius, who was to return in the spring, to Palestine to salute the brethren and

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156 Plutarch *Antony* 3.6; Plutarch *de Is. et Os*, 373D; cf. Dillery 1999, 99 n. 19.
157 Cf. LSJ s.v. *boukolos*.
158 πρὸς δὲ τούς μῦστας ᾗν τὴν γῆν καὶ Ὄσαρν τὸν Νεῖλον καταγέλλουσι, τὰ πράγματα τοὺς ὀνόμασι μεταλαμβάνοντες. Πολείῳ γοῦν ἀπόντα ἢ θεός καὶ χαίρει αὐνόντι καὶ μὴ φαινόμενον ἀδύναμος θηρεύει καὶ ὃς δὴ τῶν πολέμων τὸν Τυφώνα ἐξήρανεν; 9.9.5; also cf. Whitmarsh 2011, 132.
159 Ach. Tat. 2.2.
160 cf. Nilsson 1957, 48, 52-55, 59 on *boukolos* as a Dionysiac title. An inscription from 160-170 found near Torre Nova dedicated to the Dionysiac priestess Agrippinilla provides a hierarchy of the Dionysiac cult that includes three ἀρχιβουκόλοι, seven βουκόλοι ἱεροί, and eleven βουκόλοι (PHI 187794; Nilsson 1957, 52).
visit the ashes of his monastery. When the latter returned he found Hilarion longing to sail again
to Egypt, that is to the locality called Bucolia; but he persuaded him that, since there were no
Christians there, but only a fierce and barbarous people, he should rather go to a spot in Cyprus
itself which was higher up and more retired.”\footnote{Bucolia of course refers to the area inhabited by
the same boukoloi we find in the novels. We see, therefore, that the stereotypical portrait of the
boukoloi is so powerful that, regardless of genre, it carries the same symbolic connotations. In
this case, the boukoloi are othered in that they are not Christians. In non-Christian authors the
emphasis changes, but the result is the same; the boukoloi serve the same purpose as the Persians
did in Athenian imagination. Excluding Heliodorus, who presents a special case with his
obsession with ambivalence, we can see that in the multi-cultural world of the Late Roman
Empire, where intellectuals from all over the Mediterranean and the Middle East potentially
share in a Latin and/or Greek education, the boukoloi could be used as a neutral symbol for the
(culturally) “other.” In other words, the state of affairs required an anti-Roman symbol that
superseded ethnic divisions. Unsurprisingly, this gap in culturally symbolic rhetoric was soon
filled by a completely foreign ethnic group that had absolutely no place in the Roman World and
whose turn it was to be demonized, the Huns.}\footnote{quae vocantur Bucolia, eo quod nullus ibi Christianorum esset, sed barbara tantum et ferox nation (Jerome, \textit{Vita Hilarionis} 43); also Graf 1986, 44.}
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

We should not expect these sophisticated, highly self-conscious texts simply to ‘reflect’ an ontologically anterior ‘identity.’ Identity, in these texts, is constructed and explored within the literary work itself, and needs to be understood in the context of its dense and sometimes complex processes.

(Whitmarsh 2001, p. 305)

I have examined two cases of ethnography in two of the ancient novels and have argued that they were based on the ethnographical tradition that precedes them. In this chapter I contextualize ethnography in the novels within their contemporary social and literary milieu and discuss function of ethnography in this genre. In chapter one, I showed that ethnography becomes a weapon in the marginalization of external groups, especially during the fourth century BC and onwards, as a corollary of a political situation in which Greek city-states conceived the possibility of an attack against Persia. The obvious question to ponder, then, is what sort of political or ideological exigency calls for in Chariton’s time.

In chapter two I discussed a number of negative remarks on Persia and on the main Persian characters of Chaereas & Callirhoe. In particular, in a number of cases Chariton used familiar stereotypes about Persia, including degenerate extravagance and luxury, cowardice, and servility. I also noted Callirhoe’s progressive deracination on her journey to the heart of the Persian Empire. Both main characters from Asia, Dionysius and Artaxerxes, are imagined in contrast to our Greek hero, Chaereas, and represent a terrible danger for our noble heroine. Based on our study of Chariton’s ethnography of Persia, a “negative” reading of his ethnographical comments is conceivable, if not probable. To say that the existence of the abstract concept of the
ethnically other, the “barbarian,” within the novels, invites the definition of oneself as “civilized” seems moot at this point. The real issue is whether a specific ethnography has a particular, clearly defined function; in our case, whether Chariton’s presumed negative representation of Persia has any political or social bearing for himself or his audience. A scholar as influential as Bowersock can suggest such an interpretation and comment that the invocation of a Hellenic standard points up the chasm between civilization and barbarism. The world of Greek culture is very much the same world as that of the fifth century B.C., so that these references to Hellenism and barbarism might possibly be explained as a part of the historical background. But no reader in the Graeco-Roman empire of the late first or second century of our era would have been able to read these passages without an identification with the shared Greek culture of that time.\(^{162}\)

A more careful reading of Chariton’s ethnography of Persia and a more nuanced consideration of the political and, more importantly, cultural circumstances of the time, however, reveal that things are not necessarily so. On what level would ethnographies resonate with the novels’ readership in Chariton or Heliodorus’ time? Is it possible to posit a politically significant function for these ethnographies the way we understand them to operate in fourth to first century Greek authors? The date of Chariton’s novel is problematic. The earliest papyrus fragment, “Michaelides 1” gives us a \textit{terminus ante quem} of c. AD 150.\(^{163}\) Some scholars consider the mention of a Callirhoe in Persius’ first satire as a \textit{terminus ante quem} of 62 AD.\(^{164}\) While it is not clear whether Persius’ Callirhoe is a reference to Chariton’s novel, it is relatively safe to assume that Chariton wrote sometime around the beginning of the second century at the latest.

Heliodorus writes in the fourth century, which places these two authors on either end of the –

\(^{162}\) Bowersock 1997, 41.  
\(^{163}\) Tilg 2010, 36.  
\(^{164}\) Tilg 2010, 78. The quote in Persius is “To them I’d recommend reading posters in the morning and \textit{Callirhoe} after lunch” (\textit{his mane edictum, post prandia Calliroen do; Satires} 1.134). A mime or a play or the name of a prostitute are the commonly accepted explanations (Hunter 2006, 261).
Second Sophistic. I do not intend to go into the question of the novels’ readership, but it is usually accepted that the intended audience were the wealthy and educated, and within the context of the Second Sophistic that means an elite that had a Greek education. In fact, novels cater to their audience in that sense, disregarding ethnic characterizations: both in Chariton and in Heliodorus the heroes are upper-class, outstanding citizens of their communities and of course participate in Greek culture and education. This Greek education separates them from “barbarian” characters, as can be seen in Callirhoe’s laments that her captors do not even speak Greek. However, “authors who wrote in Greek but were born in the Near East and in Egypt cannot be called Hellenized ‘barbarians.’ As a result of their work, they were doubtless part of a cultural elite that has nothing to do with ‘barbarians’” because “these authors were open to the world in a way that we would now call ‘international.’” Chariton, the Roman citizen from Aphrodisias writing in Greek, fits into that scheme perfectly. Reading any ethnic or racial prejudice into Chariton’s ethnography seems ill advised, first of all because such dividing lines have been superseded by a new index of identity — Greek education. A point worth notice is that suggestive parallels between Persia and Rome are typical for Greek authors of the Second Sophistic. However, as I will show, this is irrelevant because Chariton’s ethnography of

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165 Goldhill 2001, 14; on the dating of Heliodorus cf. Whitmarsh 1999, 33 n.2 who concurs that “the style, language and much of the subject-matter (e.g. Charicleia’s ‘martyrdom!’) suggest a fourth century date of composition.” Some scholars consider Chariton “pre-sophistic” (Hunter 2006, 264).
166 The novels are not “bourgeois” but “elite” texts, written for a wealthy and sophisticated audience; Whitmarsh 1999, 16. Schwartz, working on the basis of Konstan’s suggestion that the novels might have been read by a paterfamilias to the family concludes that “the novels, then, contain an ideology that is essentially conservative: it aims to reinforce the values of a patriarchal, Greek-speaking, civic elite that followed the traditional, polytheistic religious practices of the Greco-Roman world” (Schwartz 2003, 107). Also cf. Hunter 2006.
167 Lower-class characters, on the other hand, such as Dionysius’ servant, Leonas, and Artaxerxes’ eunuch, Artaxates, are described as generally evil: both of them suggest the rape of Callirhoe, a suggestion that both rulers resist.
169 I am reminded of the fact that Dionysius’ Greek education is emphasized, and that Artaxerxes in many ways behaves like a Greek in terms of his piety and his law-abiding instincts (more below).
170 Whitmarsh 2011, 56. Pausanias, for example, can praise Antoninus Pius by saying that he deserves a title of Cyrus the Elder, the Persian King who was called the “father of humanity” (δόξῃ δὲ ἐμὴ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ Κύρου)
Persia, regardless of possible allusions to Rome, is entirely inconclusive and only of literary (as opposed to political, ideological, philosophical) significance.

First, however, it is necessary to qualify any conclusions about the presentation of Persia in Chariton. Indeed, there are a number of factors that are “disturbing to any comfortably compartmentalizing reading.” I have pointed out many negative remarks about the Persian unsuccessful lovers of Callirhoe, Dionysius and Artaxerxes, but closer inspection reveals that they are both fairly sympathetic figures.

After his first encounter with Callirhoe, Dionysius “went sadly to his own house” and complained that nothing goes right for him, and that Eros must hate him — he lost his wife first, and now Callirhoe shuns him. Leonas, his servant, responds by suggesting that he could simply do anything he wanted with her, since he had bought her, and he was now her master. Dionysius resists that suggestion. Instead, he sends for Plangon, and instructs her to treat Callirhoe with great respect and to make sure she has everything she needs, offering that stereotypical Asiatic tryphe. Eventually Dionysius falls deeper in love with her, and he “replicates the love-sickness, passivity and propensity towards suicide of a young romance lover.” Unable to suffer his failure to beguile Callirhoe, he “had determined to starve to death and was writing his last will and testament,” in which he begged for Callirhoe to come to him at least in death. More than anything, Dionysius is a victim of Eros and of Callirhoe’s supernatural beauty. In fact, he is a dignified victim, as Chariton makes clear: “He was a
civilized man; he had been overwhelmed by a storm — his heart was submerged, but still he forced himself to hold his head above the towering waves of passion."176 His negative traits, which may or may not be related to the fact that he is a Persian subject, are brought out as a result of the pernicious effect of Callirhoe. It should be kept in mind that this is a historical novel set 500 years before the time of its writing. There is no reason to assume ideological or political significance in ethnographical material that is instrumental to the narrative fabric of the novel and necessary for the main theme of the novel, Callirhoe’s supernatural beauty and the inescapable power Aphrodite/Eros.177

It is much more meaningful not to read Callirhoe’s rejection of the tryphe offered by Dionysius as a racist comment against the feminized and overly extravagant Persians and a celebration of Greek metron (even though it might appear reasonable to do so, but I will show why such a reading cannot bear under scrutiny), but instead to contemplate on what that says about the character of the heroine. If Dionysius eventually succumbs to his passions and becomes subservient to Eros, it is because within the wider narrative it would be inconceivable for him not to — the genre of the novel requires him to submit. Dionysius is not a bad man because he is Persian. He is simply caught up in a vicious chain of events where he must end up playing the role of the “bad guy,” even though Chariton makes it explicit that this is not the essence of his character.178 At the end of the novel, Dionysius returns home heartbroken and

176 Διονύσιος δὲ ἀνήρ πεπαιδευμένος κατεύληπτο μὲν ὑπὸ χειμῶνος καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐβαπτίζετο, δῆμος δὲ ἀνακύπτειν ἐβιάζετο καθάπερ ἐκ τρικυμίας τοῦ πόλου; 3.2.6.
177 Similarly, for example, the fact that the Persians prostrate themselves at the sight of Callirhoe, emphasizes the Leitmotif of the novel, her almost divine beauty. It is true that prostration is related to negative stereotypes about Persians, but that is not fleshed out in Chariton. Indeed, within the novelistic context, it would be superfluous, since it is irrelevant to our heroes, their adventures, the dangers they encounter, their love for each other, their desire to make sacrifices and suffer anything to get back together, Callirhoe’s beauty and, in short, all the main themes of the novel.
178 In other words, even though he is Persian, and there is a tension between familiar stereotypes about Persians and the reality of his characterisation within the novel, the fact that he is Persian is part of the novel’s historical background and not an ethnographical comment.
seeking “solace” (*paramythion*) in the letter that Callirhoe had surreptitiously written him, bespeaking his kind treatment of herself and their (as he thinks) son. He kisses the letter, clasps it to his chest, and then, after “copious tears”, opens it, kisses Callirhoe’s name and reads it with difficulty.\(^\text{179}\)

The same can be said about Artaxerxes. His struggles with his passion for Callirhoe are “offset by a strong awareness of his social and ethical obligations.”\(^\text{180}\) We have already seen the way he resists his eunuch’s suggestion to abuse his power and to violate Callirhoe. Artaxerxes, too, just like Dionysius, is nothing but a victim of Eros, as becomes apparent in the scene of the hunt. The King readily acknowledges the superior power of Eros (“the god is upon me. Eros has taken up residence in my heart, in his power and violence… I am truly his prisoner”).\(^\text{181}\) After all, Artaxerxes insists on abiding by the law and the “justice that I practice in all things” (δικαιοσύνης ἢν ἐν ἄπασιν ἀσκῷ; 6.3.8), and displays piety (eusebeia) by carrying out his religious duties and setting “magnificent sacrifices by the altar.”\(^\text{182}\) At the end of the novel, when Chaereas recapitulates his adventures to the Syracusans, he says that “the King could not win her [Callirhoe], and he did not offer her violence.”\(^\text{183}\)

I have noted that Callirhoe’s journey to the east leads to her confrontation with increasingly dangerous situations, and that could easily be explained away as an ethnographical comment on the effect of Asia on people that visit it.\(^\text{184}\) Such a reading, however, is an

\(^{179}\) 8.5.11-15.

\(^{180}\) Whitmarsh 2011, 57.

\(^{181}\) ἐνδεδήμηκεν εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν πολὺς καὶ σφοδρός Ἐρως· δεινὸν μὲν ὠμολογεῖν, ἀληθῶς δὲ ἐάλωκα; 6.3.2.

\(^{182}\) ἐπιστὰν βασιλείων θεοί θυσίας ἄκατοδικαίοι καὶ δεῖ με πρῶτον ἐκτελέσαι τὰ τῆς εὐσεβείας… μεγαλοπρεπεῖς θυσίας παρέστησε τοῖς βυρμοῖς; 6.2.3-4.

\(^{183}\) ἄλλ’ οὔτε ἐπείπεν οὔτε ἐβρισεν; 8.8.8.

\(^{184}\) A concept that has numerous parallels in Alexander’s case, as we have seen in chapter two, and in pseudo-Hippocratic environmental determinism, taken up by Roman authors who associated the degeneration of the Roman state with the conquest of Asia (cf. Isaac 2004, 306-7). Florus, for example, can say that “it was the conquest of Syria which first corrupted us, followed by the Asiatic inheritance bequeathed by the king of Pergamon. The resources and wealth thus acquired spoiled the morals of the age and ruined the State, which was engulfed in its own
oversimplification of Chariton’s masterful ambiguity. It is not Callirhoe who changes in Asia; instead, her arrival brings out the worst in both Dionysius and Artaxerxes, rulers who are generally described as just and kind. Nor is she the catalyst that brings out a presumed innate immorality of Persians. As she reminds us herself when expressing her worries about the queen’s jealousy, her effect is not limited to Persians (φοβερωτέραν ἡγούμαι τὴν τῆς βασιλίδος ζηλοτυπίαν, ἣν οὐκ ἤνεγκε Χαιρέας, ἀνὴρ Ἑλλήν. Τί ποιήσει γυνὴ καὶ δέσποινα βάρβαρος; 6.6.5).

Our noble Greek hero himself had kicked her to her apparent death as a consequence of her beauty and the possessiveness it causes. Chaereas, Dionysius, Mithridates, and Artaxerxes all believe, at some point, that their feelings towards Callirhoe are unrequited. Only in the case of Chaereas is that actually not true. But it is Chaereas who reacts in the most violent manner.

While associating the subservience that Dionysius and Artaxerxes display in the face of Eros with stereotypes about Persian servility might seem reasonable, the text does not support this. The fact that they both submit to Eros highlights the irresistible beauty of Callirhoe and the inescapable power of Aphrodite, and should not be read politically or ideologically.

Chariton’s entirely inconclusive ethnography of the whole world of his novel prohibits monolithic conclusions. Perhaps it is a reflection of the wavering sense of identity that Roman citizens of Asia subscribing to the Greek culture of the elite would have felt in the Second Sophistic. The point is that nowhere in Chariton do we see the “proto-racial” tendencies that Isaac detects in ethnographies of Persia from the fourth to the first century BC. Statements that recall stereotypes about Persia have the more significant function of contributing to the elaboration of the main theme of the novel, Callirhoe’s supernatural beauty and the vicissitudes

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our heroes have to go through, and are ambivalent and inconclusive.\textsuperscript{186} Swain has characterized the novels as a self-confident elite affirmation of imperviousness to Roman influence, an “expression of their [a culturally Greek elite] cultural hegemony.”\textsuperscript{187} However, Chariton’s complex treatment of ethnography does not allow such straight-forward conclusions either.

Not only does Syracuse become “an alternate version of its enemy” in various parts of the novel, as Smith demonstrates, especially through Chariton’s depiction of the Syracusan expedition to Ionia, but, more importantly for our study, our heroes are shown to have appropriated Persian stereotypes upon their return to Syracuse.\textsuperscript{188} The final occurrence of the invasion motif “casts Chaereas and Callirhoe themselves as aggressors against Syracuse.”\textsuperscript{189}

When their ship is finally in sight of Sicily, the focus shifts to the shores of Syracuse, where the Syracusans, upon seeing the ship, react in fear of another Athenian invasion: “Warships? Where are they coming from? They aren’t Athenian, are they?”\textsuperscript{190} The reader of the novel, of course, does not share that fear. We know this is not an invasion, but the homecoming of our heroes. However, Chariton uses familiar stereotypes about aggressive peoples to cast a shadow over that homecoming. Chareas is revealed to the Syracusans by his general’s uniform (\textit{σχῆμα ἔχων στρατηγὸν}; in this particular scene his identity is defined by what he is wearing, which, as we saw in Artaxerxes’ case, is not a good sign). However, gentle Callirhoe is seated magnificently beside him upon a couch of beaten gold and wrapped in Tyrian purple (καὶ ὀφθη Καλλιρώη μὲν ἐπὶ χρυσηλάτου κλίνης ἀνακειμένη, Τυρίαν ἀμπεχομένη πορφύραν; 8.6.7). Callirhoe, who has just had the chance to play the role of the kindly conqueror in a scene reminiscent of Alexander’s

\textsuperscript{186} In other cases, they might reflect contemporary objects of debate. For example, Chariton’s comment about the inordinate respect of barbarians towards royals might be “a reflection of the skepticism of Greek intellectuals of Chariton’s own day on the habit that Tacitus characterized so scathingly as ‘Greek adulation’ (\textit{Graeca adulatio}); Bowersock 1997, 42.
\textsuperscript{187} Swain 1996, 109.
\textsuperscript{188} Smith 2007, 180 ff.
\textsuperscript{189} Smith 2007, 182.
\textsuperscript{190} πόθεν τρήρες προσπέλουσι; μὴ τι Άττικαί;; 8.6.2.
treatment of Darius’ family (cf. discussion in chapter three), has now, in her return to Syracuse, just like Alexander, adopted Persian insignia of royalty.⁹¹ The couple has also brought Egyptian troops with them who are incorporated in Syracusan society upon Chaereas’ suggestion, and eventually given land to farm.⁹² This also has a parallel in Alexander’s introduction of Persian officers and soldiers into Macedonian units.⁹³ Could all these allusions be a portent of a darker future for our heroes than the apparent happy end might seem to imply?⁹⁴

After that, comparisons between the successes of Chaereas and Hermocrates are drawn. Chariton tells us that the harbor was filled quickly because “it looked like the scene after the sea fight with Athens — these ships too were sailing back from battle decorated with garlands and with a Syracusan commander.”⁹⁵ We then get a catalogue of Chaereas’ spoils of war that puts Hermocrates’ victory over the Athenians to shame.⁹⁶ Chaereas “gave orders to unload an untold quantity of silver and gold; after that he displayed to the Syracusans ivory and amber and clothing and all sorts of costly material and craftsmanship, including a bed and table belonging to the Great King; so that the whole city was filled, not, as previously, after the Sicilian war, with the poverty of Attica, but — a real novelty — with Persian Spoils, in time of peace!”⁹⁷ On the face of it, we are given a happy ending, but this happy ending has a dark side as well. The fact that our heroes have appropriated the stereotypical Persian luxury, that Callirhoe is presented like an Eastern princess on her gold-beaten throne, the suggestion of a personality cult in the couple’s

⁹¹ cf. Arrian Anab. 7.11.
⁹² Ἀραμπτίων τούς δέλλοντας ἠγαγον ἐνθάδε… τοῖς δε Ἀραμπτίωις ἀπένεμε χώραν Ἐρμοκράτης, ὡστε ἔχειν αὐτοῖς γεωργεῖν; 8.8.11-12.
⁹⁴ At the same time, we have already seen that Persian does not necessarily mean “bad” in Chariton, so are we to resist pessimistic readings of these passages?
⁹⁵ τοχέως οὖν ὁ λιμήν ἐπληρώτη, καὶ ἦν ἑκέντρο τὸ σχῆμα τὸ μετὰ τὴν ναυμαχίαν τὴν Ἀττικὴν· καὶ αὐταὶ γὰρ αἱ τρίταις ἐκ πολέμου κατέπλευσαν ἑστεφανωμέναι, χωρισάμενα Συρακοσίοι στρατηγῆς; 8.6.10.
⁹⁶ Smith 2007, 190.
⁹⁷ εἰδὼς ἐκέλευσεν ἐκκομίζεσθαι ἄρρητον τε καὶ χρυσόν ἀναφίλησιν, ἔτα ἐλέφαντα καὶ ᾿γλέκτρον καὶ ἐσθήτα καὶ πάσαν ὅλης τέχνης τι ποιοῦσθαι ἑπίδειξις Συρακοσίως καὶ κλίνην καὶ τράπεζαν τοῦ μεγάλου βασιλέως, ὡστε ἐνεπλήθη πᾶσα ἡ πόλις, οὐχ ὡς πρότερον ἐκ τοῦ πολέμου τοῦ Σικελικοῦ πενίας Ἀττικῆς, ἀλλὰ τὸ καινότατον, ἐν εἰρήνη λαβάρων Μηδικῶν; 8.6.12.
return from the East, the displacement of Hermocrates both as the greatest victor of Syracuse and as its political leader, and the possible allusion to Alexander’s degeneration and eventual demise all bespeak the complexity of Chariton’s world.\textsuperscript{198} They prohibit any sort of one-sided conclusion about ethnic stereotypes. If the “villains” of the story are found within the Persian Empire (specifically within its upper echelons), it is not due to a simple ethnographical conception of the world in which West equals good and East equals bad.\textsuperscript{199} Chariton’s ethnography of Persia, and the playful weaving of its elements into the wider narrative web of the novel, are as complex as Chariton’s literary creation and should be read in purely literary terms.

Bowersock points out that “the momentum of imperial fiction was clearly toward sympathetic, sometimes morbidly curious description of what was alien to the Graeco-Roman world,” but does not think this is the case with Chariton’s Persia.\textsuperscript{200} He does, however, adopt this line of thinking in looking at Heliodorus. In the \textit{Aethiopica}, the subversion of the traditional Greek-barbarian opposition is much more evident because, at the end of the novel we find out that Charicleia, who was all along lauded as a Greek, is actually a fair-skinned Ethiopian. In the final scene, the main characters give up talking Greek and speak Ethiopic “for the whole assembly to understand.”\textsuperscript{201} However, as we have seen, this interchangeability of Greek and non-Greek, or the barbarian and non-barbarian, already appears in Chariton’s novel and becomes especially apparent in the ambiguity with which Persia and Persian characters are presented.

As far as the \textit{boukoloi} are concerned, I have already discussed two important points: that their ethnography is based on earlier ethnographical excursus (with elements borrowed from

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{198} Smith 2007, 192.
\item \textsuperscript{199} And we might remember, for example, that Chariton allows a character, accused before the Persian king, to praise the king’s love of truth in comparison with the slanders of a clever Greek (5.7.1).
\item \textsuperscript{200} Bowersock 1997, 42.
\item \textsuperscript{201} \textup{où̂́̄ ò̊λ̊λ̊λ̊ν̊ι̊ζ̊ο̊ν̊ ὄ̊λ̊λ̊’̊ ò̊σ̊τ̊ε̊ κ̊α̊ὶ̊ π̊ά̊ν̊τ̊α̊ς̊ ἔπα̊ε̊ι̊ν̊ αʹ̊θ̊ι̊ο̊π̊ι̊ζ̊ο̊ν̊;̊ 10.39.}
\end{itemize}
Herodotus), and that their presence in the novel owes to a tradition that goes back to Achilles Tatius and Cassius Dio, as well as Egyptian Demotic literature. We have also seen that the *boukoloi* are depicted more negatively in Achilles Tatius and Cassius Dio, where they are shown to sacrifice humans in cannibalistic rituals. This may be due to the fact that the memory of the crimes committed by these brigands will have been more vivid while they were still active. It could also simply be attributed to the sensationalist tendencies of the respective authors. In Heliodorus, as I have shown in chapter three, the *boukoloi* are barbaric only at a superficial level. In their very first appearance in the novel, they are characterized by their inability to understand our (apparently) Greek heroine. Language, of course, is a highly obvious marker of identity in a multicultural world. In the *Aethiopica*, however, it is not a marker of civilization. Even if we were to assume that the inability of the *boukoloi* to converse with our heroine is a sign of a lack of civilization on their part, such an assumption is certainly dispelled as the narrative unfolds. Heliodorus, who follows Herodotus in so many ways (even his ethnography of the *boukoloi* is modeled on a Herodotean passage, as I have shown), adopts a similarly culturally tolerant world view in his novel. Heliodorus’ narrative travels to the boundaries of the known world in order to “articulate the geography of centres and margins as a cultural expression of identity — using the local, the not-us, as a form of self-identification.” However, this negotiation of identities is not subject to the old Greek versus barbarian polarity. Instead, it is elaborate and ambivalent, and in many ways reminiscent of Herodotus’ cultural relativism.

A discussion of one passage from Heliodorus that I have already examined in chapter three will illuminate these points. After Knemon escapes the *boukoloi*, he trimmed his hair

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202 Shalev 2006, 171.
203 Goldhill 2010, 57.
“which he had grown long among the Herdsmen so as to look more the part of a brigand.”

Immediately afterwards, he meets an old man, whose hair is described as long, like a priest’s (and like the boukoloi, apparently). His clothes are of “Greekish appearance.” Knemon addresses the old man assuming that he is Greek, only to find out that he is actually Egyptian.

The old man is, of course, Kalasiris. He, although dressed like a Greek and wearing his hair like a priest or a boukolos happens to be the father of Thyamis, the leader of the boukoloi. He is also a father figure to Charicleia, the Greek heroine who is actually Ethiopian. A complex tension between different ethnic markers is presented with systematic consistency and it seems hard to imagine a more complicated and intricate web of identities.

It also seems impossible and pointless to disentangle this web which is reminiscent of cases like “Favorinus, the Gaul who could ‘do Greek’, the pupil of Bithynian Dio and the guru of Gellius whose admiration of pre-canonical Latin is enshrined in his Attic Nights.” Again, it is only reasonable to see a reflection of the highly heterogeneous world of the Late Roman Empire in Heliodorus’ narrative.

With regard to the ethnography of the boukoloi, there is one more question to ask: why do boukoloi appear in three —possibly four— of our novels? If Achilles Tatius includes them in his story because they represent a recent memory, how do we explain that Heliodorus, the latest of our novelists, still wishes to incorporate them in his novel? Bowersock answers that, “naturally they would form part of Egyptian episodes, just as naturally as eunuchs appear in Persian scenes. These are not stock motifs, inasmuch as they mirror the real world … What they

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204 πρόφα μὲν ἀποτέμει τῆς κόμης τὸ περιττότερον καὶ δόσον αὐτῆς εἰς τὸ λησμικότερον ἐδός παρὰ τοῖς βουκόλοις ἡσσιμοὶ τοῦ μὴ ἀποφράσιοις ἢ ὅποιος εἶναι τοῖς ἐνθυγάνονσα: 2.20.5.

205 ἠ κόμη πρὸς τὸ ἱερότερον καθεῖτο: 2.21.2. “Long hair had a variety of implications, some contradictory. Beyond hairstyle as a characteristic of people in a community with a certain common lifestyle, a typical hairstyle also marks ethnic groups” (Shalev 2006, 167).

206 ἐσθῆς ἢ ἄλλη πρὸς τὸ ἐλληνικότερον βλέπονσα: 2.21.2.

207 Shalev 2006, 168.

208 Woolf 2006, 162.

209 Xenophon’s Ephesiaca, Achilles Tatius’ Leucippe and Cleitophon, Heliodorus’ Aethiopica, and apparently in Lollianos’ Phoinikika.
do indicate is the absorption of writers and readers in alien customs, the emergence of new standards of otherness—not only foreignness but social marginality as well. Fiction, and perhaps fiction alone, signals the disappearance of barbarism as a conceptual means of asserting the superiority of Graeco-Roman culture. The old standard of Hellenism broke down in the second and third centuries, and in doing so it made way for a new kind of Hellenism, an ecumenical Hellenism that could actually embrace much that was formerly barbaric.” For Bowersock, the “disappearance of barbarism as a conceptual means of asserting the superiority of Graeco-Roman culture” is a unique characteristic of the novels. We agree that it is highly prominent in novels, but, as we have seen, this is not a development that occurs in a cultural vacuum. Instead, it is a direct result of the influence of the Second Sophistic and a sign of a rapidly changing world that seemed to be looking for new markers of identity and civilization. Eventually, the old polarities of Greek vs. barbarian would be replaced by Christianity, and a completely new set of cultural rules would emerge as the stabilizing force in the early medieval era.

In conclusion, this thesis shows that, based on these two case studies, ethnography in the novels functions on a different level than in earlier literature. While historiographical and philosophical texts from both Greek and Roman literature show proto-racial tendencies, these do not appear in novels. Instead, the use of ethnographical material serves solely literary purposes, to create a fascinating and verisimilar setting for the main story. Readings that suggest a specific

210 Bowersock 1997, 53.
211 And is not unique to Heliodorus, as Bowersock thinks (cf. n. 162). As I have shown, a careful appreciation of the finer nuances of Chariton’s ethnography of Persia demonstrates that, even though Chaereas & Callirhoe is the earliest of our fully extant novels, Chariton also engages in this new, ambivalent cultural rhetoric that seems to presage the displacement of the old, Graeco-Roman Weltanschauung as it made way for the world of Christianity. 212 “An understanding of the degree of interaction, integration, and assimilation between Romans and barbarians during late antiquity does much to help explain how the barbarian settlement of the west was accomplished with a minimal, relatively speaking, level of disruption, and how barbarian populations were integrated so seamlessly into the old Roman world—through the emergence of a composite barbaro-Roman culture that integrated elements of the cultures of all of the peoples involved. All of this reflects perceptions of barbarians that were different from the conventional ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mentality” (Mathisen & Shanzer 2011, 4).
ideological or political function of ethnographical material in novels should be approached with skepticism due to the overall ambivalence that is endemic to the novelistic genre, as well as the breakdown of the old rules that regulated cross-cultural encounters (i.e. Greek-barbarian) that occurred in the remote corners of the eastern part of the Late Roman Empire. While both Chariton and Heliodorus, standing at the very beginning and the very end of the Second Sophistic respectively, are inevitably influenced by the tradition of ethnography, their treatment thereof is not politicized as in historiography or philosophy. The complexity of the world of late antiquity prohibits them from marginalizing specific ethnic groups the way ethnography did in previous literature, a fact that is reflected in the interest that novelists show in highlighting the volatility of identity. While the momentum of modern scholarship is towards the interpretation of ethnographical material in ancient texts as an expression of popular or personal ideologies, Chariton and Heliodorus resist such readings because they subordinate ethnographical elements to literary purposes. The transformation that the concept of cultural identity underwent in the world of late antiquity — and the resulting complexity of cultural transactions — is obviously a prominent and essential aspect of the novel of Heliodorus, who paints a unique, evocative picture of his own world. This thesis has shown that the ethnography of the boukoloi in the Aethiopica can and must be explained within this frame of reference, but, also, that Chariton’s ethnography of Persia can be read as a (very) early literary negotiation of these changes that eventually signified the end of the ancient world.
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