

## REVIEWS • RESENSIES

Luca Graverini, Wytse Keulen and Alessandro Barchiesi (edd.), *Il Romanzo classico: forme, testi, problemi*. Roma: Carocci, 2006. Pp. 247. €18.20. ISBN 88-430-3795-1.

This is an introduction to the study of the ancient romances aimed at Italian university students and members of the public interested in the history of story-telling in Classical Antiquity (p. 12). The authors have translated all quotations into Italian and assume no prior knowledge of the subject. A list of references for further reading ('Approfondimenti') follows each chapter and this makes an extremely useful guide to the most recent publications in the field, especially those of continental European scholars, where much interesting work has recently been done<sup>1</sup> and, judging in part by the present volume, continues to be done.

The editors, who are also the authors of the work, have approached their subject thoughtfully. They have not sought to be comprehensive, partly in view of the difficulty of defining the genre and its sub-genres, and partly as a result of their own research interests (p. 13). Instead they provide a survey of the terrain, an anthology of critical responses to the genre by ancient readers, three historical chapters – on the Greek ideal romances, the Latin comic-realistic novels, and related genres ('narrativa "di confine"') – and a glimpse into future lines of research. While some repetition inevitably results from this plan, it nevertheless avoids fragmentation and draws together to some extent the observations of the three contributors on what is a very disparate and complex area of research.

Luca Graverini, who has built up an impressive record of research into the ancient romances,<sup>2</sup> is responsible for roughly half of the book. His overview ('una visione d'insieme') covers all the appropriate issues: definition, origins, intellectual and social character, theatricality, historicity, religiosity, eroticism, and readership. Graverini presents this material well – his discussion of the definition of ancient romance, in which he focuses on the

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<sup>1</sup> An example of this is the five-volume collection of work edited by Franco Moretti, *Il romanzo* (Torino: Einaudi editore, 2001-2003), a selection of which was translated into English and published in 2006 by Princeton University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Most recently he has in press a monograph on Apuleius, *Le metamorfosi di Apuleio: Letteratura e identità* (Firenze).

imaginative plots, the theme of love, and the intent to entertain, is particularly readable. It is unfortunate, however, that the issue of cultural alterity, mentioned in passing on p. 12, was later excluded, as many of the authors of ancient romances do not come from the centre of the ancient world, but rather from its periphery, and Heliodorus in particular makes 'otherness' an important theme in his work.<sup>3</sup>

Graverini's anthology of references to ancient romance in antiquity with its associated list of further reading provides a useful checklist of the most important passages for anyone who teaches the ancient romances. If space had not been an issue, he might also have considered including Isocrates *Panath.* 1-5, Cicero *Fam.* 5.12.4-5, and indeed Euanthius, *De Fab.* 4.1 (referred to by Keulen on p. 160).<sup>4</sup>

In his chapter on the Greek ideal romances, Graverini certainly devotes sufficient space to the 'big five': Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Longus, Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus, but he also sets these works within the wider context of Greek narrative fiction, including the Ninus fragment, Antonius Diogenes, Lucian and Iamblichus. In keeping with the character of the book, the discussion is systematic, and deals with the standard elements of plot, characterisation, style and so on, but also makes some excellent comments on individual features of these works. For example, Graverini has a good account of the functions of the literary quotations in Chariton (also discussed by Barchiesi, pp. 204f.): he notes the verbal and thematic parallels between Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus (pp. 86f.), discusses the degree to which Lucian can be said to have been a writer of romance (pp. 95f.), briefly debates the religiosity of Longus (p. 114), touches on the relationship between Achilles Tatius and Petronius (pp. 100f.; cf. also p. 162), and remarks on the strong division between Books 1-5 and 6-10 of Heliodorus'

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<sup>3</sup> An example of the exclusion of alterity in this book is the absence of Ian Rutherford, 'The genealogy of the *Boukoloî*: how Greek literature appropriated an Egyptian narrative motif', *JHS* 120 (2000) 106-21, and the relative lack of attention paid to this author's article 'Kalasiris and *Setne Khanmas*: a Greek novel and some Egyptian models', *ZPE* 117 (1997) 203-09.

<sup>4</sup> The text of Euanthius is provided by P. Wessner (ed.), *Donatus Commentum Terenti* (Stuttgart 1966) Vol. 1, pp. 13-20. In connection with Cicero's discussion of narrative, the omission of Karl Barwick, 'Die Gliederung der *narratio* in der rhetorischen Theorie und ihre Bedeutung für die Geschichte des antiken Romans', *Hermes* 63 (1928) 261-87 and Richard Reitzenstein, *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* (Leipzig 1906) 84-99, is regrettable. With regard to Philip the Philosopher, Leonardo Tarán, 'The authorship of an allegorical interpretation of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*', in *SOFIHS MAIHTORES. 'Chercheurs de sagesse.' Hommage à Jean Pépin* (Paris 1992) 203-30, deserves to be included.

*Aethiopica* (p. 125). In short, this is not a dry textbook account, but an insightful and fresh discussion based on an up-to-date knowledge of the relevant scholarship. The emphasis might have fallen elsewhere, of course. For example, Photius' comment that Antonius Diogenes' *Marvels beyond Thule* was the source of Lucian's *True History*, the *Metamorphoses* of Lucius of Patrae, and the romances of Achilles Tatius, Iamblichus and Heliodorus, warrants rather more extensive discussion than Graverini gives it.

Wytse Keulen discusses in one chapter the Latin novels by Petronius, Apuleius and the anonymous *History of Apollonius of Tyre*, and in another Philostratos' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. Here, too, the discussion brings out the complexity of these texts, especially the relationship between Petronius and his predecessors on the one hand and that between Petronius and Apuleius on the other (pp. 132-135; 158f.), the question whether Petronius is satire or a parody of Greek romance (pp. 139-142), the mixture of stylistic levels and the complex intertextuality of the *Satyricon* (pp. 143-145), and, finally, the inverse relationship between the active voice of satire and degraded and passive sexuality in the work (pp. 145-147).<sup>5</sup> The debate over the relative importance of the philosophical and religious elements in Apuleius in relation to the Milesian delights and satirical comment that it provides is well balanced (pp. 147-149; 154-157), as is the issue of the degree to which the *Metamorphoses* is autobiographical or not. Particularly interesting is Keulen's comparison between Petronius and Apuleius as <fabulae> *tabernariae ab humilitate argumenti ac stili* ('stories from the marketplace, <so called> from the lowness of the plot and style', Euanthius, *De Fab.* 4.1) – perhaps a misleading description in view of the considerable sophistication of these texts (p. 162). Keulen stresses the importance of the connection between sex and ritual initiation as a feature that unites these two narratives (pp. 163-168).

Keulen's chapter on genres related to ancient romance is very short – no more than thirteen pages, half of which are devoted to a plot summary. It actually consists of a brief consideration of Philostratos' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* only, without any account of the *Life of Aesop*, for example, or the *Alexander Romance*. Given that this could have been the longest chapter in the book, it is a little surprising that it was included at all. However, the discussion does at least give the reader an example of the sub-genre of fictional biographies of famous historical figures, and the *Life of Apollonius* certainly contains enough fictional material to bear comparison with the romances.

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<sup>5</sup> The reference on p. 132 to K. Bürger, 'Der antike Roman vor Petronius', *Hermes* 27 (1892) 345-58, is missing from the bibliography.

Rather more discussion of the political aspects of the *Life* – indicated in the list of further reading – would have been useful.

The final chapter of the book by Barchiesi presents some fascinating insights into new areas of research within the field of ancient romance. Barchiesi begins with a discussion of earlier views on the relationship between the Latin novels and the Greek romances and the importance of the papyrus, such as the *Phoinikika* of Lollianus, in changing the thinking of scholars on this issue. He then widens the perspective to include comparisons with themes outside of Graeco-Roman literature. For example, Ascyllus' threat to cut Giton in half (*Sat.* 79.12) finds a parallel in the famous Judgement of Solomon (1 Kings 3.25.1), which in turn appears in a fresco in the Villa Farnese and in a fragment of Philiscus of Miletus discussed by Turner<sup>6</sup> (p. 198). Such linkages suggest that Greek and Latin narrative fiction are less rigidly distinct from one another than was previously supposed. Similarly, Barchiesi brings together the Iolaus fragment, the 'Oxford fragment' in Juvenal 6 (Ox. 1-34),<sup>7</sup> the Quartilla episode in Petronius and the Syrian *galli* in Apuleius. In formal terms the protagonist in the Iolaus fragment and the *cinaedus* in the Petronius passage utter Sotadean verses in an almost identical way, creating a comic effect by contrast with the narrative frame (p. 202), while the allusion to Euripides in the Iolaus fragment reflects a similar mixture of high and low forms of literature to that found in Petronius and Chariton. Finally, a new papyrus fragment (*P.Oxy.* 4762) containing two iambic trimeters provides a new poetic level to the erotic encounter between Lucius the ass and a married lady (*Onos* 51, *Met.* 10.21-22) and illustrates once more the mixture of low and high literary forms often found in ancient narrative fiction.

The final section of this chapter discusses the importance of space, plot and cultural identity in ancient fiction. The various literary genres of antiquity deploy their plots differently over space and, in addition, for ancient readers at the time of the Roman Empire, this space is 'coloured' (p. 211) by their experience of the imperial government. According to Barchiesi this fact has consequences for Bakhtin's theory of the 'chronotope' of ancient romance, which, to readers in antiquity at least, was less abstract than Bakhtin suggests.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, Barchiesi tackles Auerbach's theory that the realism of Petronius is not the same as realism in the modern novel, as Petronius'

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<sup>6</sup> E.G. Turner, *The Papyrologist at Work* (Durham, N.C. 1973) 8-14.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Gilbert Highet, *Juvenal the Satirist: A Study* (Oxford 1954) 335-36 and nn. 18-19.

<sup>8</sup> See also Catherine Connors, 'Chariton's Syracuse and its histories of Empire', in M. Paschalis & S. Frangoulidis (edd.), *Space in the Ancient Novel* (Groningen 2002) 1-15.

freedmen do not undergo change in status over time and remain locked into a static subculture.<sup>9</sup>

In conclusion, this book provides a well-planned and readable introduction to the study of ancient narrative fiction. The scholarship is up-to-date and wide-ranging, the critical judgements are balanced and carefully weighed, and the writing is engaged and therefore highly readable. The book is relatively inexpensive and deserves a place in the libraries of all institutions in which research into the ancient romances takes place.

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Christian Laes, *Kinderen bij de Romeinen. Zes eeuwen dagelijks leven*. Davidsford, Leuven. 2006. Paperback. ISBN 90-5826393-2. 343 pp.

This book has an unassuming yet comprehensive title. This is a good reflection of its contents and the approach of the author to his subject.

I found the style of the book one of its most pleasant aspects. Although it is a well researched work that makes use of many fields of knowledge, it never becomes pretentious. It is readable, accessible and reflects a sympathetic and humane approach to the subject without falling into the trap of either sentimentality or sensationalism. Given the subject matter the latter possibility could have been a real danger.

The author succeeds in giving the reader an idea of what it meant to be a child in the Roman World in the Late Republic and Early Empire. By making use of what he calls 'de mentaliteitsgeschiednis van de Romeinse Oudheid', the reader learns what the cultivated male Roman thought about children and childhood. Contributing to an understanding of childhood in Roman times are the black and white illustrations, consisting mostly of photos of statues and relief sculptures, but also of frescoes and depictions on vases. The one illustration which really brings home to one what it meant to be a slave child in the Roman Empire is that of a black child sitting on his haunches, head resting on his knees, bound in chains (143).

The book is divided into 5 chapters. The first is 'Hoe leefden kinderen? Demografie, ecologie en psychosociale realiteit van het antieke bestaan'. Here the material world of the Roman child is discussed, including housing, hygiene and life expectancy. The shortness of the latter had many implica-

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<sup>9</sup> Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Transl. W.R. Trask (Princeton 1953) 53.

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