

Cultural Crossroads in the Ancient Novel

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Cultural Crossroads in the Ancient Novel

Edited by

Marília P. Futre Pinheiro, David Konstan
and Bruce Duncan MacQueen

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This volume is the eighth in a series of thematically organized papers, presenting to an international academic public a selection from the 280 papers originally delivered at the Fourth International Conference on the Ancient Novel (ICAN IV), which was held at the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, in Lisbon, in July 2008. The papers assembled in this volume reflect the accelerated pace of scholarly research in one of the most innovative and fast-growing fields of study in classical and comparative studies. The ancient novel has increasingly become a crucial element in the interpretation of ancient culture, identity, reading practices, and the history of the modern genre as well. Focussing on the crossing of cultures, languages, races and mentalities, this volume introduces a wide array of topics that characterize the novelistic genre and are simultaneously at the centre of contemporary cultural debates: spaces, frontiers, and intersections, which serve as metaphors for a host of questions, concerns and issues.

A special word of recognition goes to all those who have generously contributed their time and effort to bring about this publication. First, I want to offer my warm gratitude to my fellow editors, David Konstan and Bruce MacQueen, to whom this publication owes so much. Without their friendly and continuous support, careful reading and editing of the papers, and generous commitment, it would not been possible to bring this project to completion.

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Marília P. Futre Pinheiro

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David Konstan

Introduction

The papers collected in this volume were originally delivered as oral presentations at the Fourth International Conference on the Ancient Novel (ICAN IV), held in Lisbon in July 2008 under the generous sponsorship of the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, to which all participants hereby express their deep gratitude. The conference was remarkable for including 280 papers on a wide variety of topics, from ancient texts to modern reception, and from the latest theoretical approaches to the detailed study of manuscripts and papyri; the range extended from classical Greek and Roman fiction and related genres to Jewish and Christian novelistic writing. The umbrella theme of the conference was “Crossroads in the Ancient Novel: Spaces, Frontiers, Intersections,” but its canopy was broad enough to include sessions dedicated to such topics as archaeology and the novel, the novel as a world map, boundaries of gender and sexuality, the organization of space, the porous frontiers between history and literature, turning points in scholarship on the novels, questions of empire and self, memory, intertextuality, literature as resistance, the novel and myth, mystery cults, philosophy, critical theory, the Menippean satire and the picaresque, and more.

The present volume gathers papers from several of these sessions under the heading, “Cultural Crossroads in the Ancient Novel,” a topic at the heart of the overarching theme of the conference. For the protagonists of the ancient novels wandered or were carried off to distant lands, from Italy in the west to Persia in the east and Ethiopia in the south; the authors themselves came, or pretended to come, from remote places such as Aphrodisia and Phoenicia; and the novelistic form had antecedents in a host of classical genres, but also in narrative traditions far and wide. The very range of intersections means that any cross-section of papers will have something of the quality of a potpourri or medley, and the present volume indeed brings together a wide sampling of approaches and topics. But this is all to the good, since one of the lessons of the conference was that approaches to the novels cannot be constrained by a single method or focus.

Papers in the first section of this volume deal with the topic of “mapping the world.” GOTTSKÁLK JENSSON tracks the travels of Encolpius, the narrator of Petronius’ *Satyricon*, who derives from Marseilles and makes his way south across Italy; Jensson succeeds in filling in some missing elements in the story, which he connects with the Greek tradition of the Milesian tale. ANDREA CAPRA examines the geography of Xenophon of Ephesus’ *Ephesiaca*, revealing a circular pattern that underscores the coherence of the novel and gives the lie to the idea that its present form is an epitome of a lengthier original. DIMITRI KASPRZYK ex-

plores the mixture of times and places in Iamblichus' *Babyloniaka*, creating a world of multiple and permeable identities and indeed genres that reflects the geographically hybrid world of the novel. Iamblichus' novel is also the subject of CATHERINE CONNORS' chapter, which relates the narrator's professed expertise in the arts of the Magi to his specialized knowledge of geography. Finally, ASHLI BAKER looks at Achilles' Tatiuss' digressions on natural history, such as the motion of the Nile or the nature of the Phoenix, thereby taking in a wide range of geographical locales.

The second section examines the notion of the dialogic imagination, and more particularly the conversation between history and literature. SHANNON BYRNE shows how Petronius' Fortunata, the wife of Trimalchio, is modeled on Terentia, the wife of Maecenas, who was himself caricatured by Seneca as effeminate and uxorious. CHRISTOPH KUGELMEIER turns the mirror around, and suggests that Tacitus' account, in the *Annals*, of Nero's reign exploits novelistic motifs, for example in his description of Nero's relationship to his mother, Agrippina. SOPHIE LALANNE relates the Greek novels to the realities of social life in the Greek-speaking provinces of the Roman Empire, particularly in relation to the social stratification of the times. FRANCESCA MESTRE and PILAR GÓMEZ investigate the relationship between fiction and society in Philostratus' *Heroikos*, as reflected in the two narrative levels of the text; Homeric epic is thereby adapted to contemporary religious feeling and the revitalization of hero cults. JANELLE PETERS relates how a spring that runs through the ideal garden described in the proem to Daphnis and Chloe stands for "real" springs located on the island of Lesbos; at the same time it establishes gender equality by providing a location for alternative cultural definitions of civilization. In her examination of gardens and the construction of pastoral space in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, MARTINA MEYER reveals correspondences with Roman landscape painting, thus bringing the ancient novel into dialogue with the pictorial arts. Lastly, CHRISTIAN BLOOD shows how the final book of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is indebted to Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, and that both reflect the Menippean tradition highlighted by Bakhtin, the granddaddy of the dialogical approach to the novel.

Section three treats changes in the way ancient fiction has been transmitted and perceived. Chapters single out some pivotal moments in reception of the novel, from antiquity, at the time when the novels were first being transcribed, to the Renaissance in the West and modern Japan. MANUEL SANZ MORALES notes that several of the Greek novels survive in multiple versions, and he relates this phenomenon to the question of the readership of the Greek novel: ancient copyists regarded the novel mainly as entertainment, which gave them license to introduce modifications into the text; this in turn suggests that the novels ap-

pealed not only to the educated elite but also to lower strata of society. MARINA MARTELLI compares the surviving codex of Chariton's novel with papyrus fragments, and suggests that Chariton's text might have been adapted at a certain point for a less cultivated public. NICOLA PACE focuses on the moment when the manuscript of the *Cena Trimalchionis* was first discovered, and shows that the delay in its publication was due to severe doubts among scholars of the time concerning its authenticity. ROBERT CARVER looks at Beroaldo's commentary on Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (1500) and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* ascribed to Francesco Colonna (1499); taken together, the edition and the imitation shed new light on the reception of the novel, which was seen as a metaphor for Renaissance humanism's own promise of renewal and transformation. SAIICHIRO NAKATANI discusses the first Japanese translation of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, by Gen'ichi Yanome in 1925, and records how the translator dealt with the perceived "pornographic" elements in the novel.

Space, as the locus of cultural interaction and exchange, is the topic of the next part. ELLEN FINKELPEARL looks at the ways in which Apuleius and Heliodorus disrupt the boundaries between humans and animals, Apuleius by transforming a man into an ass that is nevertheless rational, and Heliodorus by placing in the mouth of a vegetarian priest a critique of the division into god, human, and animal; the collapse of these distinctions is mirrored in the complex intersection of ethnic identities. MARY JAEGER considers the function of milk and cheese in *Daphnis and Chloe*: here too the relationship between man and animal is subtly questioned, while cheese is also a metaphor for sexual maturation and for Chloe's transformation from a child into a commodity exchanged between men. JASON KÖNIG examines the metaphorical role of mountains in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, as regions of fear and pain, and Jerome's *Life of Hilarion*, where they stand for the capacity of Christianity to transform marginal spaces into places of holiness; in both, nevertheless, mountains represent the possibility of transcending the physical world. JOHN BODEL brings this section to a close with a look at mock trials in Petronius's *Satyricon* (Eumolpus's defense of Encolpius and Giton aboard Lichas's ship) and in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* (the Risus festival); both display the collapse of order when justice is displaced from its proper setting and becomes subject to the whim of authority and emotive rhetoric.

The fifth and final section is devoted to character and emotion, and how these are perceived or constructed in ancient fiction. DAVID KONSTAN contrasts the way the heroes and heroines of the Greek novels beg pity from the gods but do not regard themselves as having done anything wrong, whereas in the Judeo-Christian *Life of Adam and Eve* the entire emphasis is on sin (especially Eve's), and the protagonists seek God's forgiveness rather than his pity. MICHAEL CUM-

MINGS exploits Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor to explain how characters experience conflicting emotions simultaneously in the Greek novels, while also advancing an alternative model of emotion that is not predicated on conflict. CRISTIANA SOGNO shows how magic operates as a metaphor for fiction in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, thereby offering a perspective on how to interpret character in the novel. VERED LEV KENAAN compares Plato's account of Gyges' ring with Lucius' metamorphosis in Apuleius' novel to show how in both authors dreams and fantasy open a window onto the realm of the unconscious. Finally, EDMUND CUEVA invokes Noel Carroll's investigation of horror movies to show that horror, and the revulsion and shudders that it occasions, was a feature too of the ancient Greek and Roman novels.

Mapping the World in the Ancient Novel

Gottskálk Jensson

Sailing from Massalia, or Mapping Out the Significance of Encolpius' Travels in the *Satyrica*

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to suggest a way of reading the severely fragmented text of the *Satyrica* by investigating the literary and cultural significance of the Massaliotic identity of Encolpius, the narrator and fictional author of this ancient Graeco-Roman traveler's tale by Petronius. I argue that, even if we are missing many details of the plot, we are still able to draw important conclusions about the basic purpose and artistic aim of the original full-text *Satyrica*, which was most likely designed as an entertaining satire on the sorry state of Greek cities under Roman rule. Accordingly, the underlying story can hardly have been conceived by a member of the Roman senatorial aristocracy; rather, the *Satyrica* appears to be a Roman adaptation, however freely made, from an otherwise lost Milesian novel in Greek.

This paper argues that, despite the fragmentary condition of its text, it remains possible to reconstruct usefully the plot of the *Satyrica* and map out Encolpius' travels based on the evidence of the preserved text and some fragments, particularly fragments I and IV (Bücheler). As I shall attempt to show, we do not need to have every single plot detail in place to be able to draw important conclusions about the basic purpose and artistic aim of the original full-text *Satyrica*.

The geographical signposts for reconstructing the travels of Encolpius are simple enough. In chapter 99 of the extant text, when Eumolpus leads Encolpius and Giton on board the ship of Lichas in the *urbs Graeca* (*Sat.* 81,3), a city much like the quintessential Greek colony of Neapolis ('New City'), it soon becomes clear that the boys have been on that very ship before, and fled from it in another port in the Bay of Naples. The flight is related to their complicated erotic relationships with a luxury-loving passenger, Tryphaena, who is being transported to Tarentum 'as an exile' (*Sat.* 100), and with the captain, Lichas, and not least with his wife (*Sat.* 113,3 *libidinosa migratio*). The ship is carrying goods to be sold in Tarentum (*Sat.* 101). Although the ship is a large merchantman built for long-distance voyaging, ships in those days sailed along the coast and rarely ventured out into the open sea. The passenger Tryphaena claims she has been in

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Baiae (*Sat.* 104,2), according to our slightly emended text, just north of Puteoli and Neapolis. Besides Baiae, the ship has likely already been in Ostia further north, since Encolpius has seen things in Rome during the Saturnalia (*Sat.* 69.9, *vidi Romae*). Encolpius and Giton left the ship in the Bay of Naples, but not in the *urbs Graeca* itself, since they are newcomers there, and very surprised at their accidental reencounter with the ship in this city. This part of the route of Lichas' ship, both actual and intended, can therefore be established with probability as Ostia-Baiae-Neapolis-Tarentum, although, as it happens, the ship is wrecked before it reaches Tarentum.¹

As for reconstructing further the route of the ship, a legal signpost for this is hidden in the information provided about the passenger Tryphaena; namely, that she is going into 'exile' in Tarentum. This home port of Lychas and his ship was, like Neapolis, originally a Greek city, although by this time it had been Romanized to a far greater extent. Founded as a Spartan colony in the 8th century BCE, it led Magna Graecia militarily for an extended period until, after several defeats by the Romans, its population was granted *ius Latii* and citizenship in 89 BCE, when Tarentum was made a Roman *municipium*. The fact that Tryphaena is going into exile in Tarentum tells us that she is not a Roman citizen.

As it turns out, Tryphaena shares her legal status as an exile with Giton (*Sat.* 100,4), and Encolpius (*Sat.* 81,3), who have therefore arrived in Roman territory with the ship from beyond the borders of Rome. It is not surprising that Encolpius and Giton share this fate, since they evidently have a long-standing relationship (*vetustissima consuetudo*, *Sat.* 80,6). The *urbs Graeca* is to Encolpius a *locus peregrinus* (*Sat.* 80,8), a foreign city. Although Greek, it is not *his* Greek city. Ethnicity and citizenship are not identical. By virtue of being exiles in Italy, these three characters, Tryphaena, Giton and Encolpius, are clearly characterized as the former-citizens of a foreign state (from the Roman perspective), which in the first century CE, the apparent dramatic date of the story, had a reciprocal *ius exulandi* with Rome. As I have shown elsewhere, this is the only

1 Some scholars prefer to identify ancient Puteoli as the *Graeca urbs*, and some doubt that the ship was ever in Baiae, but even if the protagonists are meant to have boarded the ship in Puteoli for the last time, it seems clear that at least one other Campanian city was involved, and it is not unlikely that two were (e.g. Baiae or Neapolis). If one prefers to see historical Puteoli as the model for the 'Greek' city of the *Satyrica*, one should also accept the implications of this Greek ethnicity for the overall design of the *Satyrica*. For a detailed discussion of the textual passages used in reconstructing the plot of the missing early books of the *Satyrica*, see Jensson 1997, 97–160 (revised in Jensson 2004, 96–173) and Courtney 2001, 43–49, who accepts the main points of the reconstruction.

sense *exul* can have in this context.² Taken together with their legal status as *exules*, the Greek names of these characters most obviously betray a Greek origin and prior Greek citizenship. We may use this information to extend the route of Lichas' ship beyond Rome and beyond the main body of the preserved text.

There is reliable evidence in fragments I and IV (Bücheler) of the *Satyrica* to locate the beginning of the *Satyrica* in the Greek city of Massalia, ancient Marseille. Encolpius, the narrator and main character, is a young man and needs to leave his hometown in order for his adventures to commence. Such is the invariable beginning of ancient fictions involving the adventure stories and travelers' tales of young people: Ninos, Metiochus, Callirhoë, Dinias from the *Wonders beyond Thule*, Sinon and Rhodanes from the *Babyloniaca*, Habrocomes and Anthia, Clitophon, Theagenes and Charikleia, the narrating 'I' of Lucian's *A True Story*, the kings Alexander and Apollonius, all start by leaving home – even the Greek Ass-Story begins with Loukios having just left his hometown Patrai for Thessaly on business for his father. Only Daphnis and Chloë never journey from Lesbos, although they are exposed by their parents from Mytilene, and their adventures involve his being kidnapped by pirates and her being kidnapped by a Methymnian fleet.

In fragment I of the *Satyrica*, derived from Servius' commentary of on the *Aeneid* (3,57), an attempt is being made to explain Virgil's use of the adjective *sacer*, meaning *execrabilis*, in the phrase *auri sacra fames*, 'accursed hunger for gold'. The phrase is uttered by Aeneas in outrage upon recalling how King Lycurgus of Thrace had slain a young Trojan, Polydorus, whom King Priam of Troy had given into his care with a great quantity of gold: 'This sense of the word', reads the commentary of Servius, 'derives from a custom of the Gauls, for whenever the Massaliots suffered from a pestilence, one of the poor citizens [*unus... ex pauperibus*] offered himself to be fed for a whole year on public and pure food. This individual was then equipped with branches and dressed in sacred attire [*vestibus sacris*] and led around the whole city with curses [*execrationibus*], so that on him would descend the evils of the whole city, and thus he was banished. This is, moreover, found/read in Petronius [*hoc autem in Petronio lectum est*]' (Serv. ad *Aen.* 3,57).³

² Jensson 2004, 110–112.

³ Anton Bitel (Bitel 2006), in his review of my book, *The Recollections of Encolpius* (Groningen 2004), doubts that Servius is referring to a lost episode in the *Satyrica*, because the language of the note is cast in imperfects and has other frequentative markers like '*more Gallorum*' and '*quotiens*'. However, an annual ritual providing the background for a novelistic episode is necessarily both a recurrent event (in historical fact) and a singular episode (in the novelistic account),

In offering this explanation, Servius assumes that, since Virgil was a Mantuan and thus from Cisalpine Gaul, he was employing the Latin adjective *sacer* in a sense derived from a Gallic custom, where an individual is accursed during a sacred ritual of cleansing. It is possible that the name and disposition of King Lycurgus of the Virgilian passage has triggered Servius' association with the *Satyrica* of Petronius, where an equally barbaric Lycurgus played an important role in a lost episode (cf. *Sat.* 83,6; 117,3). In any case, Servius attempts to support his reading of Virgil's Gallic-Latin usage of *sacer* by borrowing material from Petronius, another author presumed to be of northern Italian or semi-Gallic origins. The late ancient commentator is interested in the regional differences of Latin, and while he knows that Petronius wrote in Latin, he does not care, or know, that Massalia was a Greek-speaking city in the first century. What seems evident is that Servius believed that Massalia was as much Petronius' birthplace as Mantua was Virgil's, and he was not the only author of late antiquity to hold this opinion.

A ritual or a religious festival is used in three of the five fully extant erotic fictions (Chariton, Xenophon and Heliodorus) to get the plot going. Much in the spirit of the *Satyrica*, Servius elaborates on the immoral mixture of the sacred with greed in the phrase 'the sacred/accursed hunger for gold', and to explain it he relates an outlandish story read in Petronius, involving a greedy participant in a sacred ritual, a poor citizen who accepts this ultimate one-year civil service to satisfy his hunger/greed, and after the final ceremony is cast out, exiled from his city. The religious context of this 'Gallic' custom is almost entirely eclipsed by the scandalous ethical paradox. To supply such a context from elsewhere, an ancient account of a Greek scapegoating ritual is found in the poems of Hipponax (*Frs.* 5–11 [West]). In threatening his enemies with destruction, Hipponax provides a description of how the φαρμακός should be dealt with: A deformed and repulsive male is selected and force-fed with figs, barley broth, and cheese, before being whipped with fig branches and sea onions, and then struck seven times on his *membrum virile*. According to Walter Burkert: 'This is not active killing, but simply a matter of offscourings which must be thrown across the boundaries or over the cliffs, never to return.'⁴

In the extant *Satyrica*, religious cults and rituals are represented as little more than pretexts for exploitation – sexual, financial or otherwise. Encolpius, who is poor and needy (in *Sat.* 125,4, he is happy about his *tandem expugnata*

while at the end of his note Servius states directly: 'This is, moreover, found/read in Petronius' (*hoc autem in Petronio lectum est*).

⁴ Burkert 1985, 83.

paupertas), fits the profile of the Massaliot scapegoat in another way. We know that, of the characters in the extant *Satyrica*, he is most susceptible to sexual humiliation. The possibility that the branches mentioned in the account of Servius have to do with the beating of the scapegoat on his penis, and, in any case, the general prominence of Encolpius' male member in the extant story make him well suited to play the φαρμακός in such a ritual. Like Lichas in *Satyrica* 105,9, we too may recognize Encolpius by his *mentula*. Encolpius' humiliating procession through the streets of Massalia would have a partial but striking resemblance to the *Risus*-festival in Apuleius (*Met.* 3,1–12), where Lucius is made the butt of the citizenry of Hypata.

More information can be gleaned from the fragments of the *Satyrica*. Fragment IV, a few lines from a poetic eulogy by Sidonius Apollinaris (*Carm.* 28,145–7), also places Petronius and the *Satyrica* in Massalia. The late fifth-century Christian bishop here apostrophizes three Roman worthies (Cicero, Livy and Virgil) by noting only their birthplaces (Arpinum, Patavium, Mantua). He goes on to address others and amongst them 'Arbiter', who is presented as a Massaliot: 'and you, Arbiter, worshipper of the holy trunk, throughout the gardens of Massalia, on a par with Priapus of the Hellespont?' (*et te Massiliensium per hortos / sacri stipitis, Arbiter, colonum / Hellespontiaco parem Priapo?*, *Carm.* 28,155–7). Sidonius was from Lugudunum (Lyons) in Gaul, a city associated with Massalia through traffic on the Rhône, and he clearly read the *Satyrica* as the story of Petronius the Massaliot. Sidonius has modeled his lines on the words of Encolpius in *Satyrica* 139,2,14–15: 'me, too, through lands, over hoary Nereus' surface, / haunts the heavy wrath of Hellespontiac Priapus' (*me quoque per terras, per cani Nereos aequor / Hellespontiaci sequitur gravis ira Priapi*).⁵

On Sidonius' reading of the *Satyrica*, it is 'Arbiter' who is the speaker of the imitated lines in *Satyrica* 139,2,14–15, and 'Arbiter' is a Massaliot. Thus the bishop deflates Encolpius' fabulous hyperbole, *per terras, per cani Nereos aequor*, by redefining the speaker's relationship with the grotesque pagan deity and putting it in its proper ambiance in Massalia. What Sidonius says about Petronius recalls in form and content what Encolpius says about himself, but more obviously the detail about Petronius' supposed phallic looks betrays the identity of Encolpius, or Mr. Incrotch, the narrator of the *Satyrica*.

It was Bücheler, the first modern editor of the *Satyrica*, who explained the biographical fallacy in Sidonius' reading of Petronius by noting that the poet 'thought, evidently, that Petronius was the same as Encolpius' (*ratus uidelicet eu-*

5 The last line is in turn a reworking of Virgil *G.* 4,111, *Hellespontiaci servet tutela Priapi*.

ndem esse Petronium atque Encolpium).⁶ St. Augustine, another learned interpreter of the same critical school as Sidonius, shows some doubt as to whether one should believe Apuleius' statement 'about himself' (August. *C.D.* 18,18, *inscribit sibi ipsi accidis*) in the *Metamorphoses*, to the effect that he changed into an ass, but he does not hesitate to apply Lucius' statement to the author, Apuleius. Fulgentius, likewise, is convinced that it was Petronius himself and not Encolpius who drank the aphrodisiac (Fragment 7). Late antiquity consistently confused Petronius with the fictional narrator of the *Satyrica*. Autobiography was a rare form of literature, and even more so fictional autobiography, an artistic concept apparently incomprehensible to these learned men. On this reading, any autodiegetic statement had to be reliable information about the author. So the fact that Servius and Sidonius both knew Petronius to have been a native of Massalia simply informs us that this was the identity of the narrator of the *Satyrica*, Encolpius.

Fragments I and IV together thus support the narrator Encolpius' citizenship in Massalia, his poverty, his voluntary assumption of the degrading role of phallic scapegoat for financial gain, and his final expulsion from the city. This information is confirmed by the extant text of the *Satyrica*, where Encolpius refers to himself as *exul* (*Sat.* 81,3), as I mentioned previously, and not least where Lichas, the captain of the ship, refers to Encolpius directly with the Greek word for scapegoat (*pharmace*): 'What do you have to say for yourself, you thief? ... Answer me, you scapegoat!' (*quid dicis tu latro? [...] pharmace, responde!*, 107,15,). Lichas, on whose ship Encolpius had traveled from Massalia, knew how he had earned his exile. Significantly, the narrator Encolpius immediately acknowledges the truth of Lichas' accusations, adding 'and I couldn't invent anything to say against such manifestly accurate statements' (*nec quid in re manifestissima dicerem inveniebam*, 108,1).

In Roman literature, the name of Massalia (or Massilia as the Romans spelled it) was loaded with political and cultural significance. The Massaliots were praised for having preserved the old Greek civilization in barbarian territory (e.g. Cic. *Flacc* 63; Liv. 37,54; Sil. 15,168–72), and the city's destiny was perceived as intimately connected with that of Rome from its very foundation. Legend had it that in the times of king Tarquinius the youthful settlers from Phocaea, which is sometimes portrayed as another sacked Troy (Luc. 3,340), had sailed up the Tiber and made friends with the Romans before continuing on their journey to found Massalia in the midst of barbaric nations. Massalia, moreover, was believed to have provided financial aid after the sack of Rome by Gauls, and like

6 Bücheler 1862, *ad Fr.* IV.

Rome it fought against the Carthaginians. It had the reputation of a faithful friend and ally to Rome in war and peace (Just. 43,5,3). Accordingly, the siege and subsequent capitulation of Massalia to Caesar during the civil war was viewed as symbolic of the irreparable harm and madness of that conflict. Massalia, like Troy in the poem of Eumolpus (*Sat.* 89), might be presented as a projection of Rome herself with respect to her fate in the civil war, the subject of another of Eumolpus' poems.

Greek writers, on the other hand, had a very different story to tell about the Massaliots, one that, indeed, resonates better with the tenor of the *Satyrica*. They describe the Massaliots as wearing richly embroidered tragic robes with floor-length tunics, being effeminate, soft of character and passive like women, which gave rise to the Greek saying 'you might sail to Massalia' (Ath. 12,25; Ps.-Plutarch *Proverb.* Alex. 60). This saying is explained in the late tenth-century Byzantine lexicon, the *Suda*, in the following way: 'Used of those living an effeminate and soft life, since the people of Massalia used to live rather effeminately, wearing fancy long robes and perfumes' (*Suda*, epsilon 3161). In the same fashion, the phrase 'you are coming from Massalia' gets the gloss: 'Used of effeminate and luxury-loving people, inasmuch as the men of Massalia are said to wear effeminate clothing and perfume, and tie their hair up, and are a disgrace because of this softness' (*Suda*, epsilon 499). One wonders what the source of this information might be. The Younger Seneca wrote to Nero about a father who had shown his clemency to a son who had made an attempt on his life: 'satisfying himself with exile—and a luxurious exile—he detained the parricide at Massalia and gave him the same liberal allowance that he had before' (*Cl.* 1,15,2). Although a Greek *Satyrica* could possibly be the source of late testimonies, such as the *Suda*, Massalia's bad reputation dates to much earlier times, e.g. Plautus lets a character refer to effeminacy as 'practicing the morals of the Massaliots' (*Cas.* 963), in a play he adapted from a work by Diphilus of Sinope, a contemporary of Menander.

Massalia prided itself on having a port of major commercial importance in the western Mediterranean, and the city was famous for its Atlantic explorers, Pytheas and Euthymenes, whose travelogues were nevertheless considered untrustworthy and fictitious by most ancient authorities. Antonius Diogenes parodied Pytheas of Massalia in his *The Wonders beyond Thule*, and Euthymenes of Massalia is called a braggart by the sophist Aelius Aristides and his *Periplus* nothing but an 'account for Alkinous' (Aristid. *Aeg.* p.354 [Jebb], ἀπόλογος Ἀλκίνου), i.e. of the same type as the lying fables told by Odysseus to the gullible king of the Phaeacians. Because of such incredible travelers' tales connected with the city of Massalia, Aelius Aristides uses the term 'Massaliotic fables' (*Aeg.* p.353 [Jebb], μῦθοι Μασσαλιωτικοί) to cover this type of travelogue. Wheth-

er the Massaliots Pytheas and Euthymenes were mere liars or misunderstood explorers far ahead of their time is difficult to ascertain, but it is certain that they were known to later authors as Odyssean spinners of yarns, which makes their city especially appropriate as the home of Encolpius, the narrator of the travelogue we know as the *Satyrিকা*.

Encolpius is, in several ways, the archetypal Massaliot. His education fits the image of this Greek university town in imperial times, his sexual preferences are stereotypical for Massaliots in Greek literature, and his travelogue may be read as a parody of the Odyssean yarns of his fellow citizens. In the *Satyrিকা*, allusions to the Odyssey evoke a Homeric frame of reference, making Encolpius into a sort of Odyssean traveler, moving from city to city, becoming acquainted with the minds of many men. As such Encolpius is also an ideal vehicle for an entertaining satire on the state of literature and morals in Greek communities under Roman rule. The image or reputation of cities is of major importance in the *Satyrিকা*, just as the association of Hypata and Thessaly with magic is of major importance in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius. The plan of Encolpius and Ascyltos to earn a living from their knowledge of letters (*Sat.* 10,4–6), a plan which they undoubtedly formed prior to arriving to Naples, thus seems to spring from the reputation of *docta Neapolis*, in the same manner that the conception of Eumolpus' profitable *mimus* arises from information about the reputation of the ghost-town of Croton, the adoptive city of Pythagoras, now become obsessed with legacy hunting. Encolpius' visit to Rome, which apparently fell during the Saturnalia, presumably defined the character given to that city in a lost episode.

Rather than voyaging to the fabulous edges of the world, the overeducated but unheroic Encolpius heads to the heart of civilization, to face moral and aesthetic monstrosities of no less fabulous proportions. This movement inwards to the ordinary (and prosaic) and away from the mythical (and poetic) is probably related to the moral therapy of Greek Cynic satire, which ridiculed scholars for studying in detail the errors of Odysseus while being ignorant of their own. For Petronius the effeminate Massaliot provided, additionally, a platform from which to deflate Roman delusions about the empire under the Julio-Claudian dynasty. However, when one keeps in mind the manifest Greekness of the *Satyrিকা*, especially the bitter ideological worries concerning the humiliating state of Greek communities under Roman rule – in comparison with the grandeur that was Greece – it seems impossible that Petronius, who is most often thought to have been a member of the Roman senatorial aristocracy, conceived the idea of this entertaining text without having recourse to a Greek original, perhaps by the same Greek title, *Σατυρικά*. There is certainly no lack of parallels in Roman literature for this method of writing, while the genre of Milesian fiction was certainly of Greek origins, and considerably older than the *Satyrিকা*.

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Andrea Capra

Xenophon's 'Round Trip': Geography as Narrative Consistency in the *Ephesiaka*

Abstract: A careful examination of Xenophon's geography reveals a circular pattern and a neat if rudimentary technique of *entrelacement*. Such an arrangement (i.e. the characters' 'round trip') squares well with Xenophon's orali(istic) style and accounts for its open-ended structure: far from being a shortcoming, this feature is best interpreted in the light of ancient poetics, and helps us to understand a number of alleged problems in this novel, such as the difference in style between the first (extra-circular, in fact) scene and the frantic adventures forming the core of the story. The circular pattern thus reinforces the case against the epitome theory in books 2–5.

Xenophon of Ephesus is notorious for overwhelming his (modern) readers with both geographical and personal names. He seems to suffer from a severe form of *horror vacui*, which in turn is responsible for the breathless pace of his narration. Thus, to quote from Brian Reardon's classic book, 'Miracles accumulate, each more lurid than its predecessor; Xenophon can think of no very effective means of conducting the parallel actions, and ends up moving his characters more and more wildly around the Mediterranean, like demented chessmen. It all ends happily, of course – if only from sheer exhaustion, for there seems little reason in the action itself why it should ever end at all. In this respect too Xenophon cannot match Chariton, who carefully builds his action to a crisis that must be resolved, be it only by chance or war'.¹

Reardon's words are quite typical of a certain way of approaching the *Ephesiaka*: in a similar vein, Rohde described Xenophon's characters as 'blosse Mari-

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¹ Reardon 1991, 36.

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onetten, welche dieser stümperhafte Poet vor uns tanzen lasst',² and equally unflattering comments are fairly common among other scholars as well. To be sure, any modern reader of the *Ephesiaka* is likely to feel puzzled by the frantic pace of Xenophon's narration. Moreover, it would not be difficult to prove that the seemingly endless series of episodes which take place in the novel are somehow unnecessary: as Reardon implies, nothing crucial would change if some of them were crossed out, nor – conversely – if someone decided to cram even more episodes and names into the plot. But why is this so? It may be possible that Xenophon is just 'incompetent', but before we accept such a facile explanation it is worth trying to get a fuller picture of his novel. Could it not be the case that some hidden threads, scarcely visible for the modern reader, keep the story together? And what if there are some centripetal factors, obvious enough for Xenophon's contemporaries, to counterbalance the centrifugal forces that we modern readers are so ready to notice?

Xenophon and his modern readers

We may begin by reviewing – very briefly – previous attempts to 'rescue' Xenophon as a consistent writer. By far the commonest explanation for his alleged shortcomings is the so-called 'epitome' theory. According to it, the central books of the *Ephesiaka* have survived in an abridged version. Besides explaining Xenophon's 'incompetence', the theory is designed to account for the slower rhythm of much of the first and last books. It is no surprise, then, that the theory has been – and still is in some quarters – very popular. Considerations of space prevent me from discussing this issue at length, but it may be worth recalling that the most thorough version of the theory, namely Bürger's,³ has been discussed and, by fairly general consensus, refuted by Thomas Hägg.⁴

By 'most thorough' I simply mean that Bürger has set himself the task of producing literary and linguistic evidence in support of the theory, such as a close examination of the particles (*men*, *de*), patterning most of the episodes of the novel. The evidence has proven inconclusive, but Bürger must be credited with leaving aside the aprioristic approach so typical of scholars such as Erwin Rohde and – much more recently than Rohde and Bürger himself – Reinhold Merkelbach.⁵ According to the latter, Greek novels, almost by definition, conceal

² Rohde 1914, 426.

³ Bürger 1892. For new arguments, cf. Borgogno 1985 and Bianchi 2011.

⁴ Hägg 1966.

⁵ Rohde 1914 (first ed. 1876), Merkelbach 1962.

a mystic meaning to be grasped by the initiated. Since Xenophon's novel does not seem to measure up to this theory, it must be 'wrong'. So, for instance, Merkelbach notices that most of Xenophon's references to the divine revolve around one of two principles: the one is feminine and lunar (Artemis, Isis...), the other is masculine and solar (Apollo, Helios...).⁶ As a consequence, the novel as we read it must be a conflation between an original *Isisredaktion* and a later *Heliosredaktion*, although there is hardly any philological evidence for such an astonishing conclusion.

My reason for lingering a bit on Merkelbach's theory is that it will come in handy later. For the time being, however, I would like to add that, although hardly anyone has espoused Merkelbach's theory, many scholars implicitly agree that religion is indeed an important factor in the Greek novel (including Xenophon's).⁷ The 'miracles' and wanderings of the characters, however 'lurid' and 'wild', are the product of divine will, and the predictions of Apollo's oracle are fairly accurate. Thus, Xenophon's references to the divine can be construed as a promising, if thin, thread keeping the story together.⁸

The most recent and sustained attempts to defend Xenophon's novel as good narrative are those by Marcelle Laplace, James O'Sullivan, Consuelo Ruiz-Montero, Konstantin Doulamis, Anton Bierl and Jason König.⁹ At the end of the novel, the lovers set up 'an inscription in honour of the goddess commemorating all their sufferings and all their adventures'.¹⁰ According to Laplace,¹¹ this fascinating remark can be construed as a kind of a posteriori explanation for the frantic pace of the narration, the 'inscription' (*graphe*, i.e. the novel itself) being necessarily brief and desultory, and König takes this as a sign of the increasing textualisation/monumentalisation of the text, self-consciously shifting from an oral to a literary mode for artistic purposes. O'Sullivan, as is well known, has made a strong case for an altogether new appreciation of the *Ephesiaka*.¹² The

⁶ One may of course argue that in the *Ephesiaka* Isis is a more prominent deity than Helios: cf. Enermalm 1997.

⁷ See Bierl 2007, esp. 249, with ample bibliography. Merkelbach himself subsequently modified his position: 'In einer monotheistischen Religion aufgewachsen, hatte ich mir nicht klar gemacht, dass Isis und Sarapis-Helios ein Ehepaar sind und dass Helios-Re, der Nil, Isis und Osiris die Hauptgoetter Aegyptens waren. – Meine Hypothese ist widerlegt worden von H. Gaertner, R.E. IXA 2074–2080' (Merkelbach 1995, 348 n. 1).

⁸ Cf. Chew 1997–1998.

⁹ The list is now enriched by Tagliabue 2012, who construes Xenophon's novel as a Bildungsroman leading to the foundation of a new community based on spiritual love.

¹⁰ 5,15,2.

¹¹ Laplace 1994; cf. Bierl 2007, 310.

¹² O'Sullivan 1995.

idea that Xenophon's novel might be an oral (or 'transitional') text, complete with a formulaic system, is groundbreaking, and has important consequences for its overall evaluation. Needless to say, if we accept such a theory traditional notions of literary criticism can hardly apply, and the very idea of an 'incompetent' author should, at the very least, be revised according to a wholly different set of aesthetic principles. Ruiz-Montero, too, has carefully analysed the 'oral story-telling features' of Xenophon's novel,¹³ but according to her such features are artfully contrived, so that 'Xenophon is another face or aspect of the Second Sophistic'.¹⁴ For his part, Konstantin Doulamis builds on Ruiz-Montero's thesis and argues for Stoic echoes as a unifying factor in the *Ephesiaka*.¹⁵ According to Bierl,¹⁶ finally, the first and last sections of the novel respectively, before the lovers' separation and after their reunion, are clearly distinct from the central part, crammed with fantastic adventures. The lovers' separation that is the beginning of the fabulous adventures, is marked by the dream of Habrocomes,¹⁷ whose vision – a purple (*phoinix*) woman – clearly foreshadows the assault of the Phoenician (*phoinikes*) pirates. Thus, according to Bierl the rationale of the narration changes abruptly, because from now on the frantic adventures of the lovers follow a symbolic and associative pattern. The many episodes are linked to one another by associations of words (as in the case of the adjective 'purple'), so as to form a '*Signifikantenkette*' alluding to the symbolic logic of dreams, as if the lovers' adventures were nothing but a kind of temporary nightmare.

The ingenious explanations put forward by Laplace and Bierl may lack significant parallels in Greek literature and culture, yet they seem to shed new light on the structure and inner logic of Xenophon's novel. As will become clear, my own explanation is not incompatible with theirs, yet it follows a completely different track. Moreover, it would square very well with O'Sullivan's oral approach as well as with the more or less 'oralistic' readings by Ruiz-Montero, Doulamis

¹³ Ruiz-Montero 2003, 44.

¹⁴ Ruiz-Montero 2003, 60. Cf. Shea 1998, claiming that Xenophon's novel can be construed as a series of *ekphraseis*. and Temmermann 2014, 118–51, with excellent points on Xenophon's *apheleia*.

¹⁵ Doulamis 2007, who concludes by saying that 'the combination of simplicity and subtle rhetoric in certain sections of this novel provides a suitable stylistic environment for, and at the same time helps to bring out, the Stoic echoes in the discourse of certain characters' (172).

¹⁶ Bierl 2006 (cf. <http://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5637> for an updated 2014 version in English). According to König 2007, the obsessive repetitiveness of Xenophon's oral style contributes to the nightmarish atmosphere of the heroes' adventures.

¹⁷ 1,12,4.

and König, although it is by no means based or dependent on them.¹⁸ My own approach may be labelled as *geographical*, inasmuch as it starts from an examination of the geography of the *Ephesiaka* within the frame of oral(istic) poetics.

A geographical approach

The importance of space in the Greek novel has long been recognised, and, more to our point, David Konstan has argued that 'Xenophon's spatial arrangements are as complex as they are because he is expressing by means of them one aspect of his theme', namely the symmetry between male and female heroes, as expressed by parallel movements.¹⁹ I fully share this view, but here I would like to focus on the actual places covered by the travelling heroes, rather than on space as an abstract dimension. Is there any meaning in Xenophon's choice of his novel's geographical settings?

Although the lovers' adventures are consistently narrated in external focalisation, whereas Hippothoos' story is partly delivered by himself as a 'first-person narrator-participant', it is noticeable that the three main characters share the same travel pattern, covering four areas clockwise: Ionia, Asia, Egypt, Italy, and – again – Ionia. The characters' movements can be easily arranged in a synoptic table:

	Anthia	Habrocomes	Hippothoos
	Ephesus	Ephesus	Perinthus (<i>flashback</i>)
1 Ionia	Ephesus-Samos (1,11)	Ephesus-Samos (1,11)	Perinthus-Byzantium (<i>flashback</i>)
	Samos-Rhodes via Kos-Knidos (1,11-2)	Samos-Rhodes via Kos-Knidos (1,11-2)	Byzantium-Lesbos (<i>flashback</i>)
2 Asia	Egyptian sea-Tyre (1,14)	Egyptian sea-Tyre (1,14)	Lesbos-Phrygia (<i>flashback</i>)
	Tyre-Antiochia (2,9)	Tyre-Antiochia (2,12)	Phrygia-Pamphylia (<i>flashback</i>)
	Antiochia-Cilicia (2,11)	Tyre-Cilicia (2,14)	Pamphilia-Cilicia (<i>flashback</i>)
	Cilicia-Tarsus (2,13)	Cilicia-Cappadocia-Cilicia (3,1-3)	Cilicia-Cappadocia-Cilicia (3,1-3)
3 Egypt	Tarsus-Alexandria (3,8)	Cilicia [Alexandria] Pelusium (3,12)	Tarsus-Syria-Phoenicia-Egypt (4,1)
	Alexandria-Ethiopia (via Memphis) (4,3)	Around the Nile delta (4,2)	Ethiopia via Pelusium, Hermoupolis, Schedia [Alexandria], Mem-

¹⁸ I shall be using the term 'oralistic' to describe a narration that, while consciously adopting oral techniques, is the product of literacy.

¹⁹ Konstan 2002, 9. On Xenophon's treatment of space see also Temmerman 2012.

Continued

	Anthia	Habrocomes	Hippochoos
			phis, Mende, Taba, Leontopolis (4,1)
	Ethiopia -Alexandria-(via Memphis) (5,4)	Northern Egypt	Ethiopia -Alexandria, Nile, Schedia (5,2–3)
4	Alexandria-Italy (Tarentum) (5,5)	Egypt [Italy] Syracuse (5,1)	Alexandria [Syrac.] Taormina (5,6)
Magna Graecia	Tarentum	Syracuse-Italy (Nucerium) (5,8)	Taormina-Italy (Tarentum) (5,9)
1	Italy-Rhodes (5,11)	Italy-Rhodes via Sicily, Crete, Cyprus ²⁰ (5,10)	Italy-Rhodes (5,11)
Ionia	Rhodes-Ephesus (5,15)	Rhodes-Ephesus (5,15)	Rhodes-Ephesus (5,15) Lesbos

Table 1. the wanderings of the three main characters. Square brackets indicate that the character does not succeed in reaching a given place. The colours indicate that two or three characters are together in a given moment.

Xenophon shares with other Greek novelists the basic notion of a happy *nostos* after some dangerous travelling through faraway lands. However, other novels feature mostly linear travels, whereas Xenophon's are circular, as is obvious from the table (1–2–3–4–1).²¹ Rather than *nostoi*, we may thus call them jokingly 'round trips', taking our cue from travel agents. This peculiarity has a number of consequences for the interpretation of the novel. To begin with, the circular pattern brings about a sense of completion somewhat at odds with Xenophon's notoriously openended style. In some respects, Xenophon's novel threatens to become an endless catalogue of unnecessary episodes, yet this impression is counterbalanced by the circular pattern.

Xenophon's travels, as we have seen, are arranged into geographical units, which are introduced clockwise and are at times so frantic as to look like a catalogue of names. Such an arrangement is immediately reminiscent of a strategy as old as Homer, which can be seen at work whenever the poet launches into one of the so-called epic catalogues. The technique is a well-known feature of epic poetry, so a couple of scholarly quotes – on Homer's Catalogue of Ships and Hesiod's Catalogue of Suitors respectively – will suffice:

²⁰ Crete-Cyprus is the only sea-route in the novel that does not seem to make sense. The mention of Aphrodite's island is arguably due to the copyist's intervention (see Capra 2012).

²¹ See in general Morgan 2007.

For all this catalogue is long and detailed, we can deduce the singer's overall strategy for retrieving it from memory. It resembles all Homer's lists in that it is constructed from material which is connected thematically. But what is more important in this case is that the material is connected spatially also: the catalogue is organised and presented as a kind of circuit around Greece and the islands, broken only at 2, 645–80 to include Crete, Rhodes and the islands close by. This arrangement is not, I believe, the result of happy chance. I suggest that the content of the Catalogue had long been structured in this way so that it might be formatted in any bard's memory as a 'cognitive map', a kind of schema which preserves information about places and the relationships between places. The sequential order of the 'map' directs search in memory. It assists in the recall of the principal regions and the peoples who dwell there. It acts as a kind of check: it attempts to guard against the unintentional omission of items (as indeed may have happened in this case – the Cycladic group of islands is, by accident or design, omitted from the Catalogue).²²

With regard to place of origin – and no differently from the Homeric Catalogue of Ships – The Catalogue of Suitors seems to follow a geographical spiral oriented clockwise, starting from the Peloponnese, where Tyndareus' palace was located (at Lacedaemon), and ending with Crete and possibly Rhodes (Tlepolemos?).²³

To the surprise of modern readers, epic catalogues were a highly praised form of poetry, as is precociously testified by Homer's elaborate invocation to the Muses, and geographical thoroughness was clearly an important aesthetic principle. This is obviously one point where modern taste is not in tune with ancient perceptions, something that can help account for scholarly dissatisfaction with Xenophon's novel as well. It will be obvious that such a conclusion squares very well with O'Sullivan's oral theory, but even if O'Sullivan were wrong, there is a growing consensus that Xenophon's style is – more or less self-consciously – 'popular' and designed to please large audiences.²⁴ These people were likely to share in such an 'aesthetics of thoroughness', with its reassuring circular pattern.

In a way, Rohde was right when he noticed that 'Sobald die Liebenden erst einmal auseinander gerissen sind, beginnt das zweckloseste Hin- und Herfahren im Zickzack'.²⁵ To be sure, the three main characters have not the slightest clue as to where they should go, and the narrator himself somehow adopts their perspective:²⁶ from this limited point of view the heroes' wanderings are indeed 'zwecklos'. However, the circular pattern of the *Ephesiaka* makes it clear that from the vantage point of the listener/reader their travels are hardly aimless: there is little room for zigzagging, and notions of authorial incompetence or tex-

²² Minchin 1996, 12.

²³ Cingano 2005, 128.

²⁴ See e.g. Ruiz-Montero 1994, with further bibliography.

²⁵ Rohde 1914, 426.

²⁶ As is argued by Chew 1998.

tual conflation seem to be out of the question. Far from being an element of weakness, the structure of the *Ephesiaka* was probably perceived by ancient audiences as Xenophon's 'forte', as is suggested by Theodorus Prodromus' reworking. In his 12th century novel, *Rhodanthe and Dosikles*, Theodorus draws heavily on Heliodorus, but he turns to Xenophon for points of structure. Like Xenophon, Theodorus resorts to Apollo's oracle as a pivotal element, and – what is more – textual echoes make it clear that he is openly drawing on the *Ephesiaka*.²⁷ Moreover, Theodorus follows in Xenophon's footsteps in making Rhodes, as it were, the *omphalos* of the story: the Island of the Sun is again the first stop after the lovers' departure and the last one before their final *nostos*, which recreates, albeit in a simplified form, the circular pattern of the *Ephesiaka*. Theodorus' reworking is likely to reflect Xenophon's ability in creating a well-rounded story.

Amorous *entrelacement*

As we have seen, well-rounded completeness is a key factor. Moreover, a sense of order is generated by the characters' mutual quest, complete with missed encounters (see square brackets in the table) and unexpected couples sharing stages of their circular journey (see coloured areas in the table).²⁸ After the lovers' separation, Habrocomes, while looking for Anthia, meets Hippothoos in Asia, and the latter is with Anthia in Egypt and Italy while looking for Habrocomes, who is in turn always a step late in his search for his wife. In the end, all possible encounters between the three main characters have been experienced: Xenophon's novel thus reveals a neat, if rudimentary, *entrelacement* technique.

The very notion of '*entrelacement*' may be useful to revise the widespread idea that Xenophon's novel lacks unity on the ground that the story would stand even if entire episodes were added or crossed out. Such an approach, it seems to me, rests upon an ultimately romantic notion of unity. According to such a view, great masterpieces are governed by a sort of intrinsic necessity that makes it impossible to alter a single detail without spoiling the ineffable beauty of the whole. However, an undisputed masterpiece such as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* might help question this notion of unity. Like the *Ephesiaka*, his poem is largely built along the lines of amorous quest and *entrelacement*, and

²⁷ Cf. the persuasive parallels detected by Borgogno 1985. However, I do not agree with Borgogno's attempt to reconstruct Xenophon's allegedly original text on the basis of Theodorus' novel.

²⁸ Some good points in Lowe 2000, 230–231.

we happen to know that Ariosto added various episodes over the years. Moreover, further additions are perfectly conceivable, because the poem has an obviously open structure. Needless to say, this is not to suggest that Xenophon's simple novel can match Ariosto's exquisite poem, but merely that romantic notions of unity as necessity are not very useful when evaluating pre-romantic romances.²⁹

The narrative circle of the *Ephesiaka* has its focal point in Rhodes, where Anthia and Habrocomes last taste their love 'feast' before their separation, only to reunite on the island after their adventures, ready to enjoy their lifelong 'feast'.³⁰ Such a pattern leaves out the initial scenes on Ephesus, arguably the most polished of the novel, and the moving *nostos* of the lovers to their hometown.³¹ It may be argued that Xenophon's 'round trip' gives a satisfactory explanation for such a difference in style. The first 'extracircular' Ephesian scenes feature the crucial events for the psychological and divine background of the story, namely the *coup de foudre*, Eros' intervention, and the ominous oracle.³² After that, the circular pattern sets in and, quite naturally, stylistic embellishments become less pronounced, giving place to what O'Sullivan calls an oral technique. The circular pattern, then, reinforces the case against the epitome theory in books 2–5.

Finally, and rather more tentatively, I would like to argue that Xenophon's references to the divine may be seen as yet another instance of 'round' structure. Lunar-feminine and solar-masculine elements alternate, as Merkelebach noticed. However, far from being the result of textual conflation, such a pattern of alternating divine elements might be seen in an altogether different perspective. As Thomas Hägg has observed, the lovers' adventures would likely have lasted several years, and yet the only time-lag recorded in the novel is the alternation of night and day, which is explicitly and repeatedly mentioned.³³ In a somewhat similar way, Xenophon's narration is built as a kind of ping-pong between Anthia and Habrocomes. Thus, the alternation of the two astral siblings, the Sun (Helios-

29 On ancient notions of artistic unity as *poikilia* rather than intrinsic necessity, see e.g. Heath 1989, maintaining that only neo-Platonic thinkers came close to modern notions of unity. Nimis 1999 has some good points on open-endedness as an intrinsic feature of Xenophon. Aristotle's notion of unity (*Poetics*, ch. 8) allows for the multiplication of episodes (ch. 17).

30 Compare *heorte* at 1,10 and 5,15, forming a neat ring composition emphasising the reestablishment of the lovers' happiness.

31 Whitmarsh 2011, 45–50, construes this opposition in terms of centre vs. periphery.

32 The same is true of the final 'extracircular' scenes, which abound in emphatic forms of closure: see Nimis 2004.

33 Hägg 1971.

Apollo: masculine principle) and the Moon (Artemis-Isis: feminine principle), seems to reflect the simple structure of the story, and the circular pattern of the narration might even be ultimately due to a kind of naïve ‘astral’ conception:³⁴ it may not be coincidental that two extremes of the circle, namely Rhodes and Ethiopia, are celebrated residences of the Sun. Needless to say, such imagery is simple as well as vague. I am afraid that there is no mystery to be decoded by the initiated, either ancient believers or over-subtle modern scholars, as opposed to *hoi polloi*.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to suggest that Xenophon’s novel should be evaluated on the basis of some very simple aesthetic principles – oral(istic) ones, as it were – which were commonplace in the Greek world: geographical thoroughness, a technique going back to Homeric epics, is a crucial strategy by which Xenophon made his novel palatable and entertaining to his contemporary audiences.³⁵ Seen in this light, Xenophon is far from an incompetent story-teller, and his novel is not the result of posthumous abridgment or textual conflation. By and large, Xenophon’s (modern) critical misfortunes rest on an ultimately romantic notion of unity as intrinsic necessity, a principle that can hardly be applied to ancient narrative. By removing the dust of modern prejudices, a new picture is revealed, and – I dare say – it is a beautiful one.

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³⁴ For a similar point, see Bierl 2007, 311. It is worth noticing that the four areas covered by the lovers can be easily construed as standing for the cardinal points.

³⁵ The naming of characters and a net of allusions to well-known tragic plots are two additional strategies: cf. Capra 2009, with bibliography.

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Permeable Worlds in Iamblichus's *Babyloniaka*

Abstract: In his *Babyloniaka* (second century CE), Iamblichus devotes an important part of the narration (as it is summarized by Photius) to events occurring in a very particular place: an unnamed island formed by the Tigris and the Euphrates. This paper aims to show how Iamblichus has intermingled times, places, identities and genres to create a permeable world which reflects the pluricultural identity of the author. The island concentrates levels of reality which are usually separated to construct a geographically and ontologically hybrid world, which is enigmatic and paradigmatic of the novel as a whole. In accordance with a permeable genre, Iamblichus has constructed a permeable world, which seems to be characteristic of an author who has several geographical and cultural roots.

This paper¹ concerns a place which is apparently insignificant in Iamblichus's *Babyloniaka*: a small Mesopotamian island where the main characters stay for a while after being set free by Soraichos. This island is a refuge and a break in the middle of their adventures. In this respect, Iamblichus is not different from other novelists, since the heroes of Chariton or Xenophon stop off in Arados or Rhodes, which are important stages in the geographical, dramatic and symbolical structure of their stories. These islands are situated on the threshold of adventures, or they are a place for reunion – in any case, a good place for a pause in the action. But in the *Babyloniaka*, the situation is somewhat peculiar: the island is not only isolated or remote, but a world apart, where several dimensions coexist, from a geographical, temporal, and narrative point of view. I shall try to show that, by bringing together elements which are usually incompatible, but here interpenetrate, Iamblichus makes the island a symbol of a sort of permeability which is inherent in the novelistic genre.

¹ A modified version of this paper has been published under the title 'L'île entre les fleuves : géographie symbolique des *Babyloniaka* de Jamblique', *Hermes* 138, 2010, p. 216–229.

It is difficult to have an idea of the island's shape because, from a geographical and syntactical point of view, Photius's summary² is far from clear. The island, which the fragments do not describe, appears in two stages. First it is mentioned casually when the heroes are delivered by Soraichos:

ὑποδείκνυσι τὸ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ἱερὸν ἐν τῇ νησίδι, ἐν ᾗ ἔμελλε καὶ τὸ τραῦμα ἡ Σινωνίς θεραπευθῆσθαι. (75a34)

he shows them the temple of Aphrodite on the island, in which Sinonis would be cured of her wound.

Then the summary is more precise:

Ὅς ἐν παρεκβολῇ δὲ διηγεῖται καὶ τὰ περὶ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ τῆς νησίδος, καὶ ὅτι ὁ Εὐφράτης καὶ ὁ Τίγρις περιρρέοντες αὐτὴν ποιοῦσι νησίδα. (*ibid.*)

As a digression, the story is told of the temple and the island: how the Euphrates and the Tigris run on either side and so make it an island...

The last sentence, if examined closely, looks strange for two reasons. On the one hand, if we consider that the rivers form an island, in other words a stretch of land surrounded by water, there should only be one river, just as the Seine, in Paris, surrounds the so-called *Île de la Cité*. So should we define the little Mesopotamian island as a real island? In fact, it looks as if the novelist had wanted this place to be an island and had wanted to keep both rivers. Now (and this is my second point) the letter of the text is disconcerting in itself since, according to the summary, the rivers flowing around *it* (that means *around the island*) make it an *island*.³ The expression is somewhat awkward, verging on tautology; but it looks as if the difficulty was introduced by the novelist, who seems to deny us the possibility of picturing the island. Some texts evoke islands located on the Tigris or the Euphrates,⁴ but what Iamblichus says does not refer to any known place – which is itself uncommon in Greek novels – or even to any possible place.

The fact that it is located in Mesopotamia both increases and explains the difficulty in representing the island. Ancient authors naturally defined Mesopotamia as the country between the Tigris and the Euphrates (cf. Arr. *An.* 7,7,3): now, around the country of Meroe, Strabo writes that, since it is delimited by

² Photius' summary of Iamblichus' *Babyloniaka* is cited from the Budé edition of Henry (Paris 1960).

³ ὁ Εὐφράτης καὶ ὁ Τίγρις περιρρέοντες αὐτὴν ποιοῦσι νησίδα.

⁴ Plb. 5,46,9 (τινα νησίζοντα τόπον, 'a place forming an island' on Tigris); D.C. 68,28,4 (Mesene, on Tigris); St.Byz. *Ethnica*, s.v. Syrbanè (an island on Euphrates)

two tributaries of the Nile, it forms an island (17,1,2; cf. Hld. 10,5,1); in the same way, according to a division criticized by the geographer Eratosthenes, rivers can be used to outline continents, which are islands from this point of view. Nowhere is Mesopotamia defined in such a way; but its form fits in with this theory. Mesopotamia is both mainland and island, and through a reduplication which is typical of the global structure of the novel, it encloses an island which is surrounded by the two rivers. Thus the same place (the same island) appears twice, on two different scales. The fact that the island is inhabited by a young girl called Mesopotamia reinforces the effect of a nesting-structure. The island has a temple whose priestess has three children, called Tigris, Euphrates and Mesopotamia. Since the rivers give their names to the brothers, one can infer that the same thing happens to the girl. But is it the whole country that gives her a name? I wonder if the young Mesopotamia does not live on an island called Mesopotamia, a miniature Mesopotamia, situated in the centre of Mesopotamia.⁵

The outline is hazy because an island lying in the middle of a river may look a little strange. It is not that an island located on a river is an extraordinary geographical fact;⁶ however, it should be noted, for instance, that Arrian relates that Alexander, after crossing an Indian river, lands on an island located on this river (5,13,2), thinking he has arrived on the other side. This example (which is not unique) suggests that the perception of a river-island is not entirely natural and straightforward.⁷ The islands which are evoked in the other novels are always located in the sea, so that our Mesopotamian island, by contrast, looks like a hybrid place, lending itself to an ambiguous representation.

Rivers are naturally a frontier (at least symbolically), as indicated by the famous episode where Callirhoe laments before crossing the Euphrates, because she feels she is really going into a barbarian country.⁸ Crossing a river, generally speaking, has a considerable symbolic force; besides, an island is a peculiar place, isolated from the rest of humanity. Consequently, coming onto an island across a river suggests in a redundant way a removal from the ordinary world.

⁵ On the island as a miniature world, an image of the *oikoumene*, see Borca 2000, 40.

⁶ In general, the writers do not comment upon river-islands. On this sort of island, see Plb. 3,42,7 (about the Rhone which forms an island by dividing into two arms); D.S. 3,8,1 (islands on the Nile); Plu. *Ant.* 19,1 (an island where Octavius, Lepidus and Antony prepare the proscriptions; D.C., 46,55 writes that they meet on this island for privacy).

⁷ Cf. Borca 2000, 95 : 'sono le isole "di terra" – fluviali o lacustri – a suscitare uno speciale interesse : spazi continentali circondati e protetti dall'acqua, e perciò stesso anomali, tali isole realizzano sulla terraferma ciò che è tipico di un contesto marino'.

⁸ On the river as a frontier, see Braund 1996.