

THE HOMERIC CHARITON

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RESUMEN

Este estudio demuestra que lejos de tener una mera función ornamental o de servir simplemente como testimonio de la erudición del autor, las citas de los poemas homéricos iluminan mejor ciertos desarrollos en la trama de la novela de Caritón o la psicología de algunos de sus personajes mediante la yuxtaposición del mundo de Calíroo a los de la *Iliada* y la *Odisea*.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Caritón, Homero, intertextualidad.

SUMMARY

This study demonstrates that far from having a mere ornamental function or from simply serving as testimony to the author's erudition, the extracts from the Homeric poems illuminate better certain developments in the plot of Chariton's novel or the psychology of some of its characters by the juxtaposition of the world of Callirhoe to those of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

KEYWORDS

Chariton, Homer, Intertextuality.

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More apparently and more frequently than any other Greek novelist, Chariton cites extracts from the Homeric poems in a way that might seem disruptive to the flow of his narrative, especially if we bear in mind that they are not incorporated into the prose of his novel but retain their initial verse format. The studies that have appeared so far on this subject either concentrate on Chariton's citational practice or touch upon the function of the quotations in the meaning of the text; the same subject, that is the function of the quotations, has been briefly and occasionally dealt with by certain scholars, each of whom has usually explored the relevance of no more than two Homeric quotations¹. On the other hand, my study is comprehensive and aims at demonstrating that far from having a mere ornamental function or from simply serving as a testimony to the author's erudition, these extracts illuminate better certain developments of the novel's plot or the psychology of some of its

¹ Chariton's citational practice has been studied by C.W. Müller, "Chariton von Aphrodisias und die Theorie des Romans in der Antike", *A&A* 22, 1976, 126-33; G. Manuwald, "Zitate als Mittel der Erzählens – zur Darstellungstechnik Charitons in seinem Roman Kallirhoe", *WJA* 24, 2000, 107-15; M. Hirschberger, "Epos und Tragödie in Chariton's Kallirhoe. Ein Beitrag zur Intertextualität des Griechischen Romans", *WJA* 25, 2001, 157-86; G. Esposito Vulgo Gigante, "Omero nel Romanzo di Caritone", in G. Indelli, G. Leone, F. Longo Auricchio, eds., *Mathesis e Mneme: Studi in Memoria di Marcello Gigante*, II, Napoli 2004, 173-93; and R. Hunter, "Rhythmical Language and Poetic Citation in Greek Narrative Texts", in G. Bastianini, A. Casanova, eds., *I Papiri del Romanzo Antico*, Firenze 2010, 234-8. See also A. Setaioli, "L'uso della citazione poetica in Petronio e negli altri romanzieri antichi", *Prometheus* 39, 2013, 196-7. On the other hand, M. Fusillo, "Il testo nel testo: la citazione nel romanzo greco", *MD* 25, 1990, 32-42, M. Baumbach, "*Paideia* and the Function of Homeric Quotations in Chariton's *Kallirhoe*", in T.A. Schmitz, N. Wiater, eds., *The Struggle for Identity: Greeks and their Past in the First Century BCE*, Stuttgart 2011, 253-71, É. Romieux-Brun, "Chairéas à la lumière d'Achille: Chariton lecteur d'Homère", in M. Briand, M. Biraud, eds., *Roman grec et poésie: Dialogues des genres et nouveaux enjeux du poétique*, Lyon 2017 (available on the Internet: <https://books.openedition.org/momeditions/2300> [21 November 2021]), and A. da Silva Duarte, "Que eu não morra sem luta e sem glória: as citações da *Iliada* em *Quêreas e Calirroe*", *Classica* 32, 2019, 181-94 touch upon the function of the quotations in the meaning of the text. Brief and occasional examination of this subject can be found in G. Anderson, *Ancient Fiction. The Novel in the Greco-Roman World*, London-Sydney 1984, 47, A. Billault *La Création Romanesque dans la Littérature Grecque à l'Époque Impériale*, Paris 1991, 114, D. Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry. Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres*, Princeton 1994, 16-17, P. Robiano, "La Citation Poétique dans le Roman Érotique Grec", *REA* 102, 2000, 509-29, E.P. Cueva, *The Myths of Fiction. Studies in the Canonical Greek Novels*, Ann Arbor 2004, 25-32, S.D. Smith, "Bakhtin and Chariton: A Revisionist Reading", in R.B. Branham, ed., *The Bakhtin Circle and Ancient Narrative*, Eelde 2005, 184-6, J.R. Morgan, "Chariton", in I.J.F. de Jong, R. Nünlist, eds., *Time in Ancient Greek Literature*, Leiden 2007, 447-8, S.D. Smith, *Greek Identity and Athenian Past in Chariton: The Romance of Empire*, Groningen 2007, 93-4, J.R. Morgan, "Intertextuality. The Greek Novel", in T. Whitmarsh, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Greek and Roman Novel*, Cambridge 2008, 219-20, and K. De Temmerman, "How Ideal is the Oldest Ideal Greek Novel", *Mnemosyne* 63, 2010, 474-5. Most of these scholars focus on the differences, not the similarities, as I do, between epic and novel. I have not been able to consult M. Pakcinska, "Motywy Homerowe w romansie Charitona", *Meander* 21, 1966, 149-57, M. Biraud, "L'hypotexte homérique et les rôles amoureux de Callirhoé dans le roman de Chariton", in *Sémiologie de l'amour dans les civilisations méditerranéennes*, Paris 1985, 21-7, and T. Paulsen, "Von Ilion trägst du mich fort. Homerische Einflüsse im antiken Roman", in B. Effe, R.F. Gleis, C. Klodt, eds., "*Homer zweiten Grades*". *Zum Wirkungspotential eines Klassikers*, Trier 2009, 81-104.

characters by the juxtaposition of the world of *Callirhoe* to those of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, two works which formed the basis of ancient Greek education and culture. It is the contention of this paper that the reader, ancient or modern, is implicitly invited by Chariton to study his work in counterpoint to the two great epics, to compare the situations and heroes he has created to the respective ones from the Homeric passages he cites, to trace the analogies and the differences in order to better appreciate the intricacies of his own novel. In the course of this paper I will examine the relevance of the Homeric quotes to Chariton's narrative and will trace the existing similarities between the immediate or broader context of the verses cited to the scenes from Chariton's novel, where they appear.

There is, however, one exception to this practice of Chariton. The formulaic quotation τῆς / τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ appears three times in Chariton's text: the first one when Callirhoe hears from her nurse the news of her upcoming wedding without knowing the identity of the groom (1.1.14), the second when Chaereas sees in the shrine of Aphrodite in Ionia a golden statue of Callirhoe, the offering of Dionysius (3.6.3), and the third when Dionysius reads in the first line of Chaereas' letter to Callirhoe that her first husband is alive (4.5.9). Since variations of this expression are featured nine times in the Homeric epics², it is rather doubtful that Chariton intended to implicitly incite his readers to associate these passages of his novel with specific loci from the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. The formulaic nature of this Homeric quotation most probably urges us to surmise that it has a general meaning and that it simply refers to emotional overload and/or despair. Moreover, the association with Homeric heroes increases the solemnity of the characters of Chariton's novel.

The rest of the Homeric quotations can roughly be divided into two categories: a) quotations in which we can clearly detect specific allusions to Homeric passages and where awareness of the wider Homeric context can credibly be said to inform our reading of Chariton's text, that is quotations that refer to parallel situations and b) quotations that link specific figures in Chariton to specific figures in Homer, associating aspects of their character. It will be noticed that many quotations can be classified in both categories. However, my classification takes into consideration what I consider to be their predominant characteristic or function. Let us begin with the quotations denoting parallel situations.

After Callirhoe's apparent death the robber Theron enters her tomb and carries her along with the funerary offerings to Ionia, where he sells her to the superintendent of a wealthy man, Leonas. The latter informs his master, Dionysius, about the beautiful newly-bought slave and convinces him to visit his fields in the countryside, where she is kept. When Dionysius first sees Callirhoe at the shrine of Aphrodite, he mistakes her for the goddess of love, while Leonas hastens to reveal to him that she is actually his slave. Dionysius chides him and is initially unable to believe this (2.3.7), since, as Homer says:

² *Il.* 21.104 and 21.425, *Od.* 4.703, 5.297, 5.406, 22.68, 22.147, 23.205 and 24.345.

καί τε θεοὶ ξείνοισιν εὐκότες ἄλλοδαποῖσιν
ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορῶσι

The extract is taken from a scene from the *Odyssey*, where the rest of the suitors rebuke Antinous for hitting Odysseus, who had been disguised as a beggar, with a stool (*Od.* 17.485 and 487). Both Callirhoe and Odysseus find themselves in an inferior social position, which they will subsequently reverse, gaining dominance over their “masters”. As Odysseus will harm the suitors by killing them, so will Callirhoe, after having enthralled Dionysius erotically, “harm” him by her final departure³; she will not even allow him to get married again in order to protect the interests of her son (8.4.5). Moreover, by implicitly assimilating Leonas to Antinous Chariton condemns his behavior towards Callirhoe; the heroine does not deserve to be treated like a slave.

Callirhoe remains at the estate of Dionysius and later on discovers that she is carrying Chaereas’ child. At the risk of giving birth to a slave she wonders whether she should keep the child or have an abortion. Then an apparition of Chaereas comes to her in her sleep, which is (2.9.6):

πάντ’ αὐτῷ μέγεθός τε καὶ ὄμματα κάλ’ εἰκῦια,
καὶ φωνήν, καὶ τοῖα περὶ χροῖ εἶματα <ἔστο>.

These verses refer to the dead Patroclus’ appearance in Achilles’ dream (*Il.* 23.66-7); in this dream Patroclus asks Achilles to bury him and to put his bones together with his own. If we bear in mind that Chaereas entrusts his son to Callirhoe in her dream (2.9.6), then we might surmise that the unborn baby will ultimately ensure the union between the separated couple, instead of undermining it, and will give to it a heroic undertone, which will extend even beyond their death, as shall happen with the union of the two Iliadic comrades. Indeed, there are multiple allusions and references in Chariton’s text to the future glory of the primary couple’s offspring, whom certain scholars identify as Dionysius, the famous ruler of Syracuse⁴. It has also been asserted by Naber that the novel serves in fact as an *aetion* of Dionysius’ rule. In that case, the quotation might serve as an implicit prolepsis of the couple’s undying fame through their descendant.

Meanwhile, back in Syracuse, Chaereas discovers that his beloved’s tomb is empty and in his search for her finds Theron’s ship. Theron is tortured and reveals the truth about Callirhoe. The Syracusans launch the general’s trireme and Chaereas is about to depart for Ionia, when his mother begs him not to leave her

³ Dionysius characteristically employs the verb ἀπόλεσε (8.5.15) when he mourns his separation from Callirhoe.

⁴ Naber, quoted by B.E. Perry, “Chariton and his Romance from a Literary-Historical Point of View”, *AJPh* 51, 1930, 102. On the contrary, M. Laplace, “Les Légendes Troyennes dans le «Roman» de Chariton, *Chairéas et Callirhoé*”, *REG* 93, 1980, 120, believes that the son of Callirhoe represents Aeneas.

alone, but to put her on the boat. As she was saying this, she holds out her breast and cites the following extract from the *Iliad* (3.5.6):

τάδ' αἶδεο καί μ' ἐλέησον
αὐτήν, εἴ ποτέ τοι λαθικηδέα μαζὸν ἐπέσχον.

These words belong to Hecuba, who is asking Hector not to confront Achilles outside the walls of Troy (*Il.* 22.82-3). The two mothers are obviously afraid for their sons' lives and Chariton probably wants to stress that this journey has many dangers in store for the hero, especially since he will find himself outside the protective confinement of his native city. At the same time, these verses might indicate that the two heroes, Chaereas and Hector, are in a quest of their manhood that disconnects them from any kind of dependence on their parents. The pursuit of their respective goals – despite the fundamental difference in the outcome – will ultimately bring them glory.

Dionysius' caretaker, Phocas, sees Chaereas' trireme, finds out the cause of the Syracusans' journey and fears that his master will lose Callirhoe. So he urges a Persian garrison to attack the ship. Some of Chaereas' companions are killed, while others, including the hero, are captured. Callirhoe learns about her first husband's journey, but is misinformed that he is dead. Dionysius prompts her to build a tomb for Chaereas; he urges Callirhoe to imagine her first husband sitting at her side and saying (4.1.3):

θάπτε με, ὅττι τάχιστα πύλας Αἴδαο περήσω.

These are the words of Patroclus, who appears in Achilles' dream and asks him to bury him (*Il.* 23.71). Thus, the union of the primary couple assumes a heroic undertone. Just as Patroclus' death is due to Achilles, so is Chaereas' apparent death due to Callirhoe; Patroclus tried to be Achilles, while Chaereas tried to be with Callirhoe. At the same time, if we take into consideration Chaereas' initial comparison to Achilles (1.1.3), the identification made by Dionysius proves to be inaccurate and so the writer stresses the falsity of Chaereas' death.

Chaereas' funeral is attended by the satrap Mithridates, in whose fields Chaereas works as a slave. Later on, the hero is recognized by the satrap, who informs him about Callirhoe's wedding and her child. Mithridates prompts Chaereas to write a letter to Callirhoe in order to find out if she remembers him and is willing to leave Dionysius or, as he says (4.4.5):

κείνου βούλεται οἶκον ὀφέλλειν, ὅς κεν ὀπιήη.

The verse is taken from a scene in the *Odyssey*, in which Athena incites Telemachus to return to Ithaca (*Od.* 15.21); she tells him that the suitor

Eurymachus has surpassed all the other suitors with his presents and perhaps Penelope, by leaving with him, will get something from Telemachus' property. Once again, Dionysius is identified with the suitors and Chariton's erudite readers may justifiably consider this parallelism as a sign that Callirhoe will not stay with him, since it is Chaereas she loves. Furthermore, in both cases the verse serves as a false alarm intended to prompt the hero to action.

Chaereas' letter falls into the hands of Dionysius, who erroneously thinks that the letter had been written by Mithridates in his effort to seduce his wife and asks the help of the satrap Pharnaces, who makes Dionysius' case known to the Great King. Artaxerxes, in his turn, summons Mithridates and Dionysius, along with Callirhoe, to Babylon in order to try their case. The day of the trial has arrived and the king takes his place on the throne. On either side sit his friends, the "leaders of the leaders", and around the throne stand captains and commanders, so that one might say that (5.4.6):

οἱ δὲ θεοὶ παρ Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ἡγορόωντο.

The verse is used to describe the beginning of the gods' council after the duel of Menelaus and Paris (*Il.* 4.1). Perhaps the extract serves as a prolepsis of the subsequent verbal sparring between Dionysius and Chaereas, when both of them claim to be the rightful husband of Callirhoe (5.7.5-6). The line might even presage the fact that Dionysius and Chaereas will fight on opposing sides in the Egyptian war that will break out later on. And it is this war that will determine to whom the heroine truly belongs. In any case, some kind of confrontation between Callirhoe's two husbands is foreshadowed. In addition, by likening Artaxerxes to Zeus Chariton underlines the power he holds over this matter; indeed, the king will consider it proper to arbitrate over who should legally possess Callirhoe.

The night before the trial queen Stateira wishes to get rid of Callirhoe, while king Artaxerxes stays awake and is sad because he will not have the opportunity to see her again. Soon afterwards he will find a pretext to postpone the trial. This is how his sleeplessness is described (6.1.8):

ἄλλοτ' ἐπὶ πλευρᾶς κατακείμενος, <ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
ὑπτιος,> ἄλλοτε δὲ πρηγῆς

The cited verses refer to Achilles' inability to sleep because he cannot get Patroclus out of his mind (*Il.* 24.10-11). After Zeus' intervention the best of the Achaeans will accept the ransom of Priam and will give back to him the dead body of Hector. Perhaps the parallelism stresses the fact that the king is going to lose Callirhoe anyway, no matter what he does. The postponement of the trial to a certain extent corresponds with the mistreatment of Hector's corpse: both provide the illusion that the beloved person (Patroclus and Callirhoe) can somehow

become theirs; both will eventually come to an end by divine intervention; both are acts of despair and denial of loss.

The pretext that Artaxerxes uses to postpone the trial is that the gods had appeared in his dream demanding him sacrifices. Thus, a sacred month is proclaimed, everybody offers sacrifices and (6.2.4):

κνίση δ' οὐρανὸν ἵκεν ἔλισσομένη περὶ καπνῶ·

The verse describes the sacrifices of the Achaeans for the appeasement of Apollo's wrath, which was due to Agamemnon's disrespect for Chryses' supplication to ransom his daughter (*Il.* 1.317). Just as Apollo's wrath leads to the strife between Agamemnon and Achilles, so the postponement of the trial is going to result in the participation of Chaereas in the Egyptian revolt; as Achilles will gain glory because of this strife, so Chaereas will emulate the hero's glory by his martial exploits. Consequently, both Apollo's intervention and the postponement of the trial will ultimately lead to the fulfillment of the protagonists' destiny. Finally, the strife between the two Achaean leaders had begun because of a woman, Briseis; similarly, Chaereas and Dionysius will participate in the Egyptian war because of Callirhoe.

Artaxerxes reveals his love for Callirhoe to the eunuch Artaxates, but soon realizes that in succumbing to his passion he betrays his principles. Following Artaxates' suggestion he tries to divert himself by going hunting. But even then he brings to his mind Callirhoe (6.4.6):

οἷη δ' Ἄρτεμις εἶσι κατ' οὖρεος ἰοχέαιρα,
ἢ κατὰ Τηϋέγον περιμήκετον ἢ Ἐρύμανθον,
τερπομένη κάπροισι καὶ ὠκείης ἐλάφοισι.

In these verses it is Nausicaa who is compared to Artemis just before her meeting with Odysseus (*Od.* 6.102-4). If we bear in mind the fact that when Odysseus addresses Alcinous' daughter he tells her that the man who will have her will be fortunate (6.158-9), then Chariton stresses once again Callirhoe's godlike beauty. But just as Odysseus will not marry Nausicaa but will return home to Penelope, so Artaxerxes is not going to acquire Callirhoe but will "return" to his wife, Stateira. Perhaps there is another similarity between the two characters: as Odysseus had been tormented by Poseidon before arriving at Scheria, so Artaxerxes has been and will be tormented, although in quite a different way, by the god Eros.

The Egyptian revolt breaks out and Chaereas joins the Egyptian forces with Polycharmus in order to avenge Callirhoe's perceived loss. Chaereas then leads his chosen comrades against Tyre, keeping them closely massed, so that one could say (7.4.3):

ἀσπίς ἄρ' ἀσπίδ' ἔρειδε, κόρυς κόρυν, ἀνέρα δ' ἀνήρ.

This line is used twice in the *Iliad*. In the first case, the Trojans have approached dangerously their enemies' ships and the Achaeans are lined up for battle after Poseidon's encouragement (*Il.* 13.131). If Chariton incites his readers to compare his scene with this situation, then he might imply that Chaereas' influence and impact on his soldiers resembles that of a god; so powerful it is. In the second case, the verse is used when the Myrmidons prepare for battle (*Il.* 16.215); Patroclus, who leads them, will get killed. If the author alludes to this incident, then a martial success is presaged; as the Trojans will be pushed back from the Achaean ships, so will Tyre be captured. Furthermore, there is a similarity between Patroclus' death and Tyre's capture; as the former event incites Achilles to return to battle, fulfilling thus his destiny by winning glory, so Tyre's conquest ultimately effects the reunion of the primary couple, fulfilling Chaereas' fate; we must not forget that it is precisely due to Tyre's capture that Artaxerxes decides to leave the women and the children on the island of Arados (7.4.11-12). We must also take into consideration that in the broader Iliadic context of this citation it is Achilles who encourages his soldiers for the ensuing battle; thus, the parallelism stresses once again Chaereas' identification with the best of the Achaeans.

Nearly all of the Homeric quotations that evoke parallel situations have a proleptic function, foreshadowing certain developments in the plot of Chariton's novel. In the quotations which establish certain analogies between the Homeric characters and the protagonists of Chariton's romance both Chaereas and Challirhoe are compared with multiple heroes. It is as if the narrator consciously puts them through their trials and tribulations in a constant search for their identity. Let us now turn to this second group of quotations which link the characters of Chariton's novel to those of the Homeric epics.

Near the beginning of the novel the marriage of Chaereas and Callirhoe incites the vindictive rage of her failed suitors, who instruct an old man to tell Chaereas that his wife is unfaithful to him, in order to avenge her loss. This is Chaereas' reaction when he hears the news (1.4.6):

ὦς φάτο· τὸν δ' ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα,
ἀμφοτέρησι δὲ χερσὶν ἐλὼν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν
χεύατο κὰκ κεφαλῆς, χαρίεν δ' ἤσχυνε πρόσωπον.

The above passage describes Achilles' reaction when he learns about Patroclus' death (*Il.* 18.22-4). It seems that something dies in Chaereas' soul, something vital, an ideal which gives meaning to his whole existence, judging from his willingness to die as soon as he hears the news (1.4.7). For him, who is an erotic and not a traditionally epic hero, the loss of his love is equal to death⁵. In both cases the news

⁵ However, M. Sanz Morales and G. Laguna Mariscal, "The Relationship Between Achilles and Patroclus According to Chariton of Aphrodisias", *CQ* 53, 2003, 293 are right in treating this passage as evidence that Chariton understood the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus to be homo-

creates a decisive turn in the works' plots; in the case of Chariton's novel they will actually lead to Callirhoe's apparent death; and this happens precisely because Chaereas shares Achilles' most distinctive characteristic, the characteristic which sets the plot of the *Iliad* on its course, his irascibility⁶. Chaereas' irascibility will inaugurate the adventures that the primary couple will go through and that will ultimately lead to the fulfilment of their destiny, the glory they earn: Callirhoe becomes renowned for her beauty, while Chaereas is glorified for his martial exploits. Similarly, the death of Patroclus ultimately leads to the confrontation of Achilles with Hector, which will grant eternal glory to the best of the Achaeans.

After the news of Chaereas' supposed death, Dionysius objects to his wife's wish to build the tomb near Aphrodite's shrine and proposes to construct an imposing and conspicuous memorial in the city instead (4.1.5):

ὥς κεν τηλεφανῆς ἐκ ποντόφιν ἀνδράσιν εἴη.

This is what Agamemnon says to Achilles about his tomb, when they are conversing in the Underworld (*Od.* 24.83). Chaereas is now correctly identified with Achilles. Certain points of the comparison between Agamemnon and Achilles contained in Agamemnon's speech are valid in the case of Chaereas too: the hero is loved by the gods, in particular Aphrodite, and his glory will withstand the passage of time. In addition, if we bear in mind that Agamemnon's speech to Achilles is concluded with his regret at having been murdered by his wife and Aegisthus, the quotation might even presage Dionysius' incapacity to hold onto his wife.

Intending to attend their trial both Dionysius and Mithridates arrive at Babylon, but the latter forbids Chaereas, who had traveled with him, to try to see Callirhoe or make any inquiry about her. Chaereas consents, but, when he returns to his room, he throws himself on the floor and tearing his clothes (5.2.4):

κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαν
 χεῦατο κὰκ κεφαλῆς, χαρίεν δ' ἦσχυνε πρόσωπον.

As we have seen, the verses describe Achilles' reaction when he learns about Patroclus' death (*Il.* 18.23-4). The hero's forced inability to see his beloved is likened to an experience of death; so intense are his feelings for her. Thus, to Chaereas Callirhoe is a source of life, something which is repeatedly underlined throughout the narrative by his multiple attempts at suicide when he is under the

erotic and at asserting that the author establishes a clear parallel between the two couples Achilles-Patroclus and Chaereas-Callirhoe.

⁶ Cf. Hirschberger, "Epos und Tragödie", 169 and Romieux-Brun, "Chairéas". On the other hand, da Silva Duarte ("Que eu não morra...", 184) stresses Chaereas' impulsiveness as his common feature with Achilles.

impression that he will not see her again. Moreover, their relationship takes on a heroic undertone, which will be justified by the future glory of their son.

After the Great King's decision that he will judge who Callirhoe's rightful husband is, Chaereas wants – once again – to commit suicide because his beloved did not approach and kiss him in court and because he thinks that Dionysius will prevail. In what seems to be his *ultima verba* he includes a Homeric quotation (5.10.9):

εἰ δὲ θανόντων περ καταλήθοντ' εἰν Αἴδαο,
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ καὶ κείθι φίλης μεμνήσομαι σου.

These words are uttered by Achilles about Patroclus⁷ soon after the killing of Hector (*Il.* 22.389-90). Dying for his love is equal for Chaereas to the grandest martial exploit which brings undying glory. This kind of attitude may be termed as “erotic heroism” and sharply differentiates the genre in which Chariton's novel belongs from Homeric epic poetry and its concomitant values: for Chaereas the tears of Callirhoe over his grave are more significant than even immortality itself (5.10.8). The self is completely annihilated before the ideal of love.

While Artaxerxes has succumbed to his love for Callirhoe and his eunuch tries to convince her to yield to the king's passion, the Egyptian revolt breaks out. Dionysius campaigns with the king's forces and Callirhoe is brought along with the women and children who follow them. When Chaereas searches her in Dionysius' residence, a man instructed by Dionysius misinforms him that the king has promised Callirhoe to him in order to secure his services in the war. Following his friend's suggestion, Chaereas joins the Egyptian forces with him in order to avenge Callirhoe's loss. In his speech to the Egyptian king, to whom he declares his determination, Chaereas cites (7.2.4) two verses from the *Iliad*:

μὴ μὰν ἄσπουδί γε καὶ ἀκλειῶς ἀπολοίμην,
ἀλλὰ μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι.

These words belong to Hector just before his duel with Achilles (*Il.* 22.304-5); the Trojan hero understands that Athena, who had been previously disguised as his cousin Deiphobus, has deceived him and realizes that the gods have forsaken him. Thinking that he has lost Callirhoe, Chaereas considers himself almost dead and, consequently, chooses to identify with a doomed hero. However, he misconstrues his identity; he is Achilles, not Hector, while the gods have not abandoned him. His grief at the apparent loss of his beloved prevents him from perceiving reality in the right way.

Chaereas quickly rises in the ranks of the Egyptian army and becomes the pharaoh's advisor. At a council he urges him not to give up on the conquest of

⁷ And, thus, Homer has a different gender for the addressee.

Tyre and promises to him that he will conquer the city with the help of a few soldiers, since (7.3.5):

νόι δ' , ἐγὼ Πολύχαρμός τε μαχησόμεθα·
...σὺν γὰρ θεῶ εἰλήλουθμεν.

Diomedes uses similar words to oppose Agamemnon's wish to return home without conquering Troy (*Il.* 9.48-9). The situations are parallel; we are certain that, like Troy, the city of Tyre will fall. More importantly, there is a shift in Chaereas' psychology: from perceiving himself as a doomed hero, he now identifies himself with one of the most prominent warriors of the Achaeans, putting himself on the winning side this time. Furthermore, his attitude has the same invigorating effect for the army's moral as that of Diomedes⁸.

As Chaereas and his comrades approach the walls of Tyre, they are asked by the Tyrians who they are and what they want. Chaereas replies that they are Greek mercenaries who have defected from the pharaoh and want to join them; when the gates open, he kills the Tyrian general first, attacks the others and he (7.4.6):

τύπτε δ' ἐπιστροφάδην· τῶν δὲ στόνος ὄρνυτ' ἀεικίης.

This verse appears three times in the Homeric epics. It is applied to the killing of the suitors by Odysseus (*Od.* 22.308), to Diomedes' and Odysseus' attack against the Thracian soldiers of Rhesus (*Il.* 10.483), and to Achilles' attack against the Trojans after Patroclus' death (*Il.* 21.20). I think that in all probability Chariton invites us to compare his scene with the last occurrence of the line. In battle Chaereas recovers his true identity; he now becomes the fierce Achilles, an association which is enhanced by the lion simile used immediately after by Chariton (7.4.6). Achilles' rage originates from his grief for the loss of Patroclus; similarly, Chaereas' valor is due to the perceived loss of Callirhoe. However, we cannot preclude associations with the former two occurrences, since not only has Chaereas manifested a resourcefulness similar to that of Odysseus, but also his *dolos* might suggest that of the *Doloneia*.

The Egyptian revolt has ended. Not knowing that Chaereas has decided to send back his wife to him, Artaxerxes learns from a messenger that Arados has been occupied and that the Egyptian ships are carrying off all that was in it. The king mourns the apparent loss of Stateira and so do the Persian nobles (8.5.2):

Στάτειραν πρόφασιν, σφῶν δ' αὐτῶν κήδε' ἕκαστος.

⁸ Hirschberger, "Epos und Tragödie", 171, also notes that the passage illustrates the great argumentative effect of Homeric quotes.

The verse is used when the slave women, following Briseis, who has been given back to Achilles after his reconciliation with Agamemnon, cry over the corpse of Patroclus (*Il.* 19.302). The citation reinforces Chaereas' identification with Achilles⁹ and probably prefigures his reconciliation with Artaxerxes, since – similarly to Agamemnon – the latter had deprived the protagonist of what he considered his due, namely his lawful wife. Perhaps it even stresses the fact that, unlike the Greek protagonists of the novel, all the Persians, even the highly ranked, are essentially slaves.

Having examined Chaereas' implicit psychological evolution through the Homeric quotations we may now turn to Callirhoe.

Dionysius erroneously thinks that Chaereas' letter had been written by Mithridates in his effort to seduce his wife and asks the help of the satrap Pharnaces, who makes Dionysius' case known to the Great King. Artaxerxes, in his turn, summons Mithridates and Dionysius, along with Callirhoe, to Babylon in order to try their case. As Dionysius is traveling to Babylon, Rumor announces to everybody the arrival of Callirhoe, “the masterpiece of Nature”, who is (4.7.5):

Ἀρτέμιδι κέλην ἢ χρυσεῖη Ἀφροδίτη.

The verse is used twice in the *Odyssey* to describe Penelope. In the first case, Odysseus' wife welcomes her son, Telemachus, after his journey to Pylos and Sparta (*Od.* 17.37), while in the second case her comparison to the two goddesses occurs just before hearing from the disguised Odysseus that her husband will return (*Od.* 19.54). By comparing her to Penelope, the author stresses implicitly Callirhoe's fidelity to her first husband and presages their eventual and unexpected – at least for the heroine – reunion. In both situations from the *Odyssey* the hero has already returned to his homeland¹⁰, but his arrival remains unknown to his wife; similarly Callirhoe is not yet aware that Chaereas is alive and cannot possibly imagine that she will see him again at Babylon. The element of surprise is emphasized further by the fact that, in the first case, Penelope did not expect her son to return, since he was ambushed by the suitors.

In Babylon, after Mithridates' demand Dionysius is forced to bring Callirhoe with him to the king's court. A crowd is gathered to marvel at her beauty. When she enters the courtroom, Chariton likens her to Helen and cites a verse which refers to the latter's intervention at the Scaean gates, from where she watches the duel between Menelaus and Paris (*Il.* 3.146):

ἄμφι Πρίαμον <καὶ> Πάνθοον ἠδὲ Θυμοίτην.

⁹ Since, as Achilles was partly responsible for Patroclus' death, so Chaereas is partly responsible for the Stateira's enslavement.

¹⁰ Although in the first it is the return of Telemachus, not of Odysseus, which is primary.

Immediately after that the author quotes a line from the *Odyssey*, which is used twice to describe Penelope's appearance before the suitors (5.5.9):

πάντες δ' ἠρήσαντο παρὰ λεχέεσσι κλιθῆναι·

In the first case, Penelope asks Phemius to stop his song about the return of the Achaeans because it reminds her of her husband, whom she has not forgotten (*Od.* 1.366), while in the second, Athena makes her more beautiful in order to appear more precious to her husband and son (*Od.* 18.213); the intention of her appearance is to chide Telemachus for not preventing the fight between the disguised Odysseus and the beggar Iros. Callirhoe, then, is both a Helen and a Penelope¹¹. At a fundamental level, she remains faithful to her first husband, but the complex situation she has found herself in renders her a Helen, oscillating as she does in her preferences between Chaereas and Dionysius; consequently, when the queen later on asks her which husband she prefers, Callirhoe remains enigmatically silent (5.9.7). Because of her a “war” will erupt between her two husbands¹². In any case and more than anything else, it is her beauty which is stressed, an attribute which certainly renders her more valuable to her two husbands and justifies the fervour of their vindications in their ensuing confrontation.

Chaereas is finally reunited with his beloved on the island of Arados, where his fleet arrives after his naval victory over the Persian ships. Having narrated their adventures to each other, Chaereas and Callirhoe (8.1.17):

ἀσπάσιοι λέκτροιο παλαιοῦ θεσμὸν ἴκοντο.

The line refers to Odysseus' and Penelope's reunion (*Od.* 23.296) and is considered by certain philologists to be the end of the *Odyssey*¹³. Similarly to Chaereas, Callirhoe now acquires her true identity: she is Penelope, that is she has remained essentially faithful to her first husband. The parallelism contributes to her absolution from the ethical blame of her second marriage. On the other hand, Chaereas has admittedly shown a resourcefulness similar to that of Odysseus, especially in the conquest of Tyre, and has regained his wife due to his martial merit. However, it might be also implied that, like Odysseus, more “adventures” await him in the future; at the end of the narrative it becomes evident that Chaereas will have an illustrious political career in Syracuse¹⁴.

¹¹ Cf. Fusillo, “Il Testò”, 41 and Morgan, “Intertextuality”, 220. On Chariton's reworking of the available megatext of the Penelope/Helen myth see further A. Lefteratou, *Mythological Narratives. The Bold and Faithful Heroines of the Greek Novels*, Berlin-Boston 2018, 204-29.

¹² Cf. Manuwald, “Zitate”, 112.

¹³ As Gigante, “Omero”, 194, remarks. He also hypothesizes that Chariton might have had an edition of the *Odyssey* that ended with this verse.

¹⁴ And although Odysseus' further adventures take him away from Ithaca, it might not be inconceivable that in his new political role Chaereas will often have to be sent away from Syracuse as an

I have examined the quotations of full lines from Homer, where the form of prose is visibly disrupted, excluding thus quotations of short phrases, like ἔνθεν ἐλὼν (1.7.6, 5.7.10, 8.7.9) and πῆλας ταῖς χερσίν (8.5.15), which are incorporated in the main text. As far as I can see, it does not make a difference if the quotation stands near the opening or ending of a book, but it can be highly significant if one Homeric passage is quoted very soon after another or if an unusually long gap separates quotations. For example, in the seventh book where the heroic exploits of Chaereas during the Egyptian revolt are narrated there is an increased density of Iliadic quotations (7.2.4, 7.3.5 and 7.4.3), while there is no quotation at all when Callirhoe's status is demoted, as she is captured and sold as slave by Theron and his pirates (from 1.4.6 to 2.3.7). Generally speaking, Homeric quotations are employed by the novelist to the characters whose status he wishes to elevate, not for dishonest pirates, like Theron, or manipulative slaves, like Plangon.

Moreover, as we have seen, all of the extracts from the Homeric epics are more or less relevant to the novel's scenes in which they are quoted. I think that Chariton often invites us to take into account the broader context of the quotations and to discern their analogies with his narrative¹⁵. Most of the times their function is proleptic; by the parallelisms that they urge us to make they presage certain events to come. Furthermore, they render the two protagonists more solemn by associating them with famous characters from the two epics, like Achilles and Penelope¹⁶. This association is also applied in order to mark their psychological evolution: while Callirhoe initially oscillates between the attributes of a Helen and a Penelope, at the end she assumes her final identity which coincides with that of the latter; similarly, in his despair Chaereas poses as a Hector, he develops into a Diomedes and ends up as an Achilles, with whom he had been compared at the beginning of the novel¹⁷. Finally, it must be noted that this kind of intertextuality, this technique of an open juxtaposition of different literary realities from different ages¹⁸ and their synergy in the production of meaning is not usual. The reader is implicitly encouraged to compare the various situations of Chariton's narrative with the immediate or broader context of the quotations from the Homeric epics and to add an extra semantic layer by tracing the similarities, as well as the differences of Chariton's fictional world with its concomitant values from that of

emissary of his city-state.

¹⁵ Consequently, I disagree with Robiano, "La Citation", and Cueva, *The Myths*, 29, who maintain that most of the quotations may be generally considered as decorative in Chariton's narrative.

¹⁶ Billault, *La Création*, 114, writes about the first quotation of the novel: "Ce vers homérique, introduit dans le texte sans annonce, a pour effet de hausser l'héroïne au niveau des personnages d'Homère, puisque c'est le «divin poète» qui décrit son émotion".

¹⁷ I do not think that there is an oscillation between different heroic personae, but an intended underlying psychological development: after trials and tribulations with concomitant emotional fluctuations the hero finally assumes his initial identity.

¹⁸ This juxtaposition is open because the verse format of the Homeric quotations disrupts the prose which predominates in almost the entirety of Chariton's narrative. In addition, the language of the quotations belongs to a much earlier phase of linguistic development than that of the prose.

his illustrious predecessor. In this way, the novelist stresses both his influence and his differentiation from the glorious literary Greek past¹⁹. Needless to say, that an erudite reader, or at least someone who is more than familiar with the Homeric texts, is needed for such a technique to work²⁰.

¹⁹ It is in this context, I think, that Chariton's other literary-historical influences (Thucydides, Xenophon, Menander) should be viewed. According to Romieux-Brun, "Chairéas", "le romancier semble utiliser l'œuvre d'Homère... pour mettre en évidence la nouveauté du roman".

²⁰ This observation might contribute to the question of Chariton's readership; I think that it was his intention that his novel be read *also* by scholars. Cf. T. Hägg, "Orality, literacy and the «readership» of the early Greek novel", in R. Eriksen, ed., *Contexts of Pre-Novel Narrative. The European Tradition*, Berlin-New York 1994, 53. Manuwald, "Zitate", 119, is right in maintaining that the correspondence of the quotes to their original texts is not necessary for the understanding of the novel, something which enables the less educated reader to enjoy the love story without any problems. However, it must be noted that only an experienced scholar, who would be more than familiar with the entirety of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, would be able to trace the exact context of every single Homeric quotation. Finally, I would like to thank the anonymous referees of *ExClass* for their helpful suggestions.