Seeing Double(s)

Reception of Chariton in the Erôtes

Nicolò D’Alconzo
Ghent University
Nicolo.dalconzo@ugent.be

Received April 2020 | Accepted June 2020

Abstract
This article considers the Lucianic Erôtes a receptor of Greek novels and focusses on Chariton’s Callirhoe as hypotext. It argues that Chariton’s construction of Callirhoe as a double of Aphrodite, and the plot that this predicament generates, are central to the presentation of the statue of Aphrodite in the Erôtes. This is revealed by consistent verbal echoes and by the re-enactment of memorable scenes in the novel. The Erôtes emerges as an important document for the early reception of Greek novels, and its author as an attentive reader of them.

Keywords
Chariton – reception – Erôtes – Callirhoe – Cnidian Aphrodite – Greek novels

Chariton was hit hard by the silence that seemingly enveloped the Greek novels in antiquity.1 His Callirhoe was seldom copied. After its composition some time in the second half of the first century

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AD or the beginning of the second,² we have three second-century papyri and one sixth- or seventh-century codex, now lost, containing fragments, and the thirteenth-century codex Florentinus Laurentianus Conventi Soppressi 627 which alone saved Chariton from oblivion, together with Xenophon of Ephesus.³ Evidence of readership follows suit, being both small and debated. Conditionals are still necessary when saying that his novel or its heroine may be mentioned by Persius, and that Chariton himself may be addressed in a fictional letter by Philostratus.⁴ Chariton is not mentioned in the Suda, and was ignored by the Byzantine scholars who paid attention to other novelists and paved the way for the twelfth-century revival of the genre.⁵ For a timespan of more than one millennium, this is scant evidence.⁶ The picture starts to change, however, if we take into consideration possible allusions to, and reworkings of, Chariton’s work by other authors. So far scholarship has revealed a significant level of engagement with Chariton in subsequent novelists,⁷

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² The debate on the dating of Chariton’s Callirhoe is very much alive: see Bowie 2002 (before AD 60s), Tilg 2010, 36-79 (between AD 41-62), Morgan 2017, 389-391 (early second century AD).

³ Wilcken 1901; Stephens 1994; Reardon 2004, v-xvi.


⁵ Cf. Photius’ Bibliotheca (cod. 73 on Heliodorus, 87 on Achilles Tatius, 94 on Iamblichus, 166 on Antonius Diogenes), and Psellus’ De Heliodoro et Achille Tatio iudicium. Xenophon of Ephesus and Longus are also overlooked by them.

⁶ When Tilg 2010, still the richest discussion to date, speaks of “vigorous Nachleben” (p. 82) he does so only to support his claim that antiquity recognized Chariton’s status as a classic and the creator of the ‘ideal’ novel. Focussing on papyri, Susan Stephens comes to different conclusions: “Taken in the aggregate, the number of fragments of this allegedly popular material [narrative fiction on the whole] is surprisingly small” (Stephens 1994, 410).

⁷ Points of contact between Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus are plenty, their interpretation less so, uncertainty in dating being a contributing factor. The feeling is that Xenophon modifies and complicates, seemingly playfully, elements that are present in Chariton. See Tilg 2010, 85-92. De Temmerman 2012b and Morgan 2017, 396-401 highlight both similarities and points of departure, while O’Sullivan 1995, 145-169 is a fairly isolated voice for Xenophon’s anteriority. For Achilles Tatius’s use of Chariton see Bird 2019. For Heliodorus see examples in Tilg 2010, 144-145, 159, and 175-177. On intrageneric intertextuality see in general Morgan and Harrison 2008, and especially 226-227.
and also in Lucian. Until more hard evidence is found, this methodology seems the most useful tool to reconstruct not just Chariton’s readership but also how the thinking about novels developed and carried the genre through its ‘dark ages’. My aim here is to expand this picture by showing specialized knowledge of Chariton’s novel at play in the Erôtes.

It is useful to summarise this engrossing dialogue attributed to Lucian or otherwise dated to the third or fourth century. Theomnestus has been telling Lycinus his seemingly never-ending love adventures, with both women and men, and, considering Lycinus’ apparent asexuality a guarantee of impartiality, asks him which sex preference is better (1-5). Answering with a first-person narrative that occupies the rest of the dialogue, Lycinus tells of his solo journey from the East Mediterranean to Italy and his encounter with long-lost friends Charicles and Callicratidas in a temple in Rhodes (6-10), the trio’s further journey to Cnidus to look at the statue of Aphrodite (11-16), the ensuing contest between Charicles and Callicratidas over heterosexuality and pederasty, and Lycinus’ verdict in favour of pederasty (17-53). Back to the main dialogue, Lycinus’ past judgment is approved by Theomnestus (53-54). Even this quick glance reveals the richness of the Erôtes’ literary pastiche. Goldhill underlined the dialogue’s ‘bricolage of generic influences’ and included the Greek novels in it, but, in spite of the artisanal metaphor, did not explore the intertextual workings of the dialogue

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8 See ní Mheallaigh 2014, 39-71 on Lucian’s Toxaris. Claire Rachel Jackson is currently working on the structural and thematic parallels between Chariton and Musaeus (who already knew Achilles Tatius’ novel well: see Dümmler 2015).

9 Never doubted in ancient times, the booklet’s paternity has been questioned in modern research, in particular on stylistic grounds: see Lauer 1899; Bloch 1907; Jones 1984, 180; Klabunde 2001, 165 n. 1. Jope 2011, 111-116 defends the attribution to Lucian by tackling the stylistic problems. I do not aim to solve this issue and will be referring to the author of the Erôtes as ‘the/our author’. Given antiquity’s long silence on Chariton, my argument sits equally well with any dating from the second to the fourth century, or even later.

10 The interlocutors do not hesitate to make generic connections explicit: ‘I almost thought I was Aristides being enchanted beyond measure by those Milesian Tales’ (Erôtes 1); ‘you were going through in Hesiodic fashion the long catalogue of your loves’ (3); ‘I would pray that near us, if it were possible, grew that plane-tree … against which Phaedrus leaned’ (31).
beyond the mere mention of journeys, ekphrasis, and the parallel debate over sex preferences in Achilles Tatius’ *Leucippe and Clitophon* (2.34-38).\(^{11}\) Expanding the novelistic territory of reference, Hunter hinted twice at the possibility that there may be a connection between Chariton’s *Callirhoe* and the Cnidian Aphrodite, a point to which I will return, but refrained from making this link explicit.\(^{12}\) In fact, a meticulous reworking of Greek novels is at play in the *Erôtes*, and constitutes a remarkable portion of the author’s project.\(^{13}\) To begin with, and by way of introducing my argument concerning Chariton’s novel, I want to suggest that our author designed Lycinus’ travel narrative as a way to build a novelistic storyworld, establishing novelistic coordinates in which to replay novelistic scenes. These coordinates seem to me remarkably similar to the travels of another novel, Xenophon of Ephesus’ *Ephesiaka*.

Lycinus’s decision to travel to Italy (‘I had in mind going to Italy (ἐπ’ Ἰταλίαν) and a swift ship (σκάφος) had been made ready for me’, *Erôtes* 6)\(^{14}\) is as sudden and as random as Habrocomes’ when looking for Anthia (‘he boarded a ship (ἐπιβαίνει σκάφος) and set out on a voyage to Italy (ἐπὶ Ἰταλίας)’, X.Eph. 4.4.2).\(^{15}\) Lycinus starts his journey either from Antioch or Tarsus and goes West sailing past the coast of Cilicia, the gulf of Pamphilia, and the Swallow Islands, makes a longer stop

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\(^{13}\) I aim to detail the reworking of Achilles Tatius in the *Erôtes* in a separate study.

\(^{14}\) The Greek is taken from MacLeod’s OCT, and translations from MacLeod’s Loeb, sometimes adapted.

\(^{15}\) Xenophon’s take on the feature of journeys borders the chaotic: see Hägg 1971, 172-175; Lowe 2000, 230-231; Morgan 2007b, 146-150. Some have found meaning in the wanderings of this novel: Konstan 2002 sees in them a reflection of sexual symmetry; De Temmerman 2012b considers their function in the multiplication of storylines, especially in relation to Chariton’s novel; and Capra 2018 identifies patterns in their circular trajectories.
in Lycia, and finally arrives in Rhodes (Erôtes 7). This is the same route travelled by Leucon and Rhode, the servants of Anthia and Habrocomes, separated from Anthia in Antioch and sold in Lycia (X. Eph. 2.10.4), where they spend a long time before they move to Rhodes (5.10.11). After the same seas have been sailed in the eastern corner of the Mediterranean, the same roads are walked in Rhodes. Lycinus first visits the temple of Dionysus and its anathemata (Erôtes 8), and then bumps into his old friends Charicles and Callicratidas, an encounter which shapes the rest of the narrative. Habrocomes visits the temple of Helios and finds the anathemata previously dedicated by himself and Anthia, and is in turn there found by Leucon and Rhode (X. Eph. 5.10.9-12), an encounter which triggers the final reunion. In the Erôtes the trio leaves Rhodes for Cnidus: a further stop in Thespiae is anticipated (Erôtes 17), but the rest of the journey to Italy remains untold. In the Ephesiaka the group, now five strong, leaves Rhodes to return to Ephesus, likely via Cnidus and Cos whence they came in the beginning (X. Eph. 1.11.6). To be sure, these routes are hardly untravelled and our author need not have had Xenophon of Ephesus in mind when planning them, but the coincidences of trajectories, stops, and reunions, would have created for a reader of novels an increasing feeling of déjà-vu. Someone thus alerted to spatial and situational similarities would have been prepared for the subsequent re-staging of novelistic scenes that takes place in the temple of Cnidus, to which I now turn.

The temple of Cnidus is the only space where a form of female agency can be observed in the Erôtes. Especially compared to female characters in Greek novels, women are otherwise underemphasised in the male-dominated scene of the dialogue. The topic at stake makes them, whether in a positive or a negative light, an intrinsic part of the dialogue throughout, but the narrative

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16 Jones 1984, 178-179 argues for Tarsos while dismissing Antioch too quickly. Antioch has the intriguing bonus of being the setting of Lucian’s Imagines, a dialogue featuring Lycinus where the promise of recounting the story of the Cnidian Aphrodite is made (Imagines 4).


18 For this protracted and seemingly implausible recognition scene see Montiglio 2012, 47-64.
is at all levels by male voices, for male ears, and about male perspectives. Having said that, the only two female characters of the *Erôtes*, Aphrodite and her attendant in the temple, take centre stage and for some time monopolize the audience’s eyes and ears, respectively. The case for Aphrodite is easily made. In spite of the stillness and passivity of the statue, Aphrodite exerts a force which influences both the environment around her, like the temple’s garden, and those who flock from everywhere to see her, like our trio. Visually, she is the most powerful presence of the *Erôtes*, her appearance and 360-degree close-up delivering the promises of her long-delayed introduction.\(^{19}\) Although after the trio leaves her she will not be discussed further, her story is what triggers the contest of love, which, as is remembered at its end, takes place under her banner.\(^{20}\) On the other hand the temple’s attendant, contrastingly someone to listen to but never to look at, provides the story, which produces a full appreciation of the statue as well as the *casus belli* for Charicles and Callicratidas, making her intervention crucial to the development of the plot.

The story is a scandalous episode of agalmatophilia. A young man fell in love with the statue, managed to have himself locked inside the temple after closure, and had sex with it. For reasons not told he later vanished, perhaps dying by suicide (*Erôtes* 15-16). This story had long been attached to the Cnidian Aphrodite and the *Erôtes* gives us the most elaborate version,\(^{21}\) but it is not the only relevant episode concerning this statue. Another one tells how the Cnidians obtained Praxiteles’ Aphrodite, and another one, which is not reported in the *Erôtes*, how the statue bore the likeness of the famous hetaira Phryne, with whom the sculptor had fallen in love.\(^{22}\) Different tensions flow into the anecdotes of the creation of the statue and of the man who made love to it. One is between marble

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\(^{19}\) The *Erôtes* offers fertile ground to art historians. See Havelock 1995, 10-11; Spivey 1996, 173-186; Borg 2004, 52-56; Haynes 2013. See also Elsner 2007, 117-120; and Squire 2011, 97-100.

\(^{20}\) *Erôtes* 53: ‘Thus ended our stay in Cnidus and our conversation beside the goddess’ (ἡ μὲν ἐν Κνίδῳ διατριβή καὶ τὰ παρὰ τῇ θεῷ λαληθέντα … τῇ δὲ πη διεκρίθη).


and flesh. Confounded by the artist’s skill and by his passion, the young man mistakes inanimate for animate and acts in that delusion. Another one, paving the way for the previous, is between flesh and marble: the artist is in love with a woman and translates her body into a statue. A third (as the result of tagging the statue with the name ‘Aphrodite’) is the tension between the mortal and the divine. Although the woman remains a woman, the reproduction of her likeness takes on a different identity and starts bearing very special significance. This in turn complicates another tension, that between original (the model) and copy (the statue), for how can a goddess be the copy of a woman? And so on.\textsuperscript{23} To reconcile these and many potential other tensions is impossible, so it is comforting that the texts at stake are not interested in solutions as much as in complications and in exploring the statue of Aphrodite as a site for duplicity. The author of the \textit{Erôtes}, for instance, downplays all other aspects in favour of the confusion between marble and flesh, and adds another tension of his own, that between different sexual responses to the statue.\textsuperscript{24} These tensions (woman and artwork, copy and original, mortal and divine) are also articulated in the story of Callirhoe, the heroine of Chariton’s novel, precisely as a consequence of her resemblance to Aphrodite. Hunter has rightly suggested that one of the models behind Callirhoe may be not just any Aphrodite but especially the Cnidian one, in light of the use of her iconography in one of Callirhoe’s descriptions, and Morales has added to this by highlighting that aspects of Callirhoe’s story align well with Phryne’s.\textsuperscript{25} Hunter goes further when pointing out that the anecdote of the young man (not necessarily, I assume, the version found in the \textit{Erôtes}) may also have been inspirational for Chariton’s idea of presenting Callirhoe like a statue, and when, in a subsequent study on readership of novels, he briefly mentions the \textit{Erôtes} again, noting that “the stain upon the marble, ejaculated upon the statue of Aphrodite, may be paradigmatic for a real

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\textsuperscript{23} Morales 2011 offers a stimulating analysis of sources on Phryne and the Cnidian Aphrodite. See especially 85-88 on the dilemmas raised by this work of art.

\textsuperscript{24} For the impact of the \textit{Erôtes} on the history of sexuality see Foucault 1984, 211-227; Halperin 1992; Goldhill 1995, 102-111; Hubbard 2009.

\textsuperscript{25} Hunter 1994, 1074-1075 and Morales 2011, 93-100.
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or imagined response to the impossibly beautiful and statue-like heroines of the novel”. I concur with both ideas and will add to the second one later, but closer and wider analysis can consolidate the affinity between the two texts and enrich the discussion on their relation. In what follows I will illustrate how Chariton’s Callirhoe contributed to the configuration of the Aphrodite in the Erôtes. Similarities appear in the way in which the two are presented and in the reactions they cause in the audience. Moreover, the attendant scene in the temple in the Erôtes re-enacts a similarly important scene of Chariton’s novel. The novelistic narrative of the Erôtes may lack the beautiful heroine everything revolves around and everybody falls in love with, but if we allow the statue of Aphrodite to embody Callirhoe, even that cliché is fulfilled.

First of all, talking about Callirhoe means talking about Callirhoe and Aphrodite, for a complex narrative strategy employed by Chariton makes his heroine undergo a process of assimilation with the goddess. Initially this takes the form of the comparison to the goddess on account of beauty, a trope which has one of its oldest examples in Odysseus paying compliments to Nausicaa and which is common novelistic material. Chariton’s remarkable innovative addition to this is what Thomas Hägg dubbed the “emplotment of a metaphor”: the similarity between Callirhoe and Aphrodite goes from being a compliment to being a fact, and, as such, it has consequences. Starting from Callirhoe’s arrival in Ionia, part of the development of the plot is brought about by the confusion between her and the goddess, especially in scenes revolving around the temple which hosts the goddess’ statue. Towards the beginning of her stay, Callirhoe is advised to go to pray to the goddess and told that looking at Aphrodite will be like looking at an image of herself, as if she were standing

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28 Hägg 2002.
in front of a mirror. As she is doing that she is seen by Dionysius, the foremost man of the Ionians, who thinks she is a manifestation of the goddess and falls in love with her. From then on he does not seem to be able to draw the line between the woman and the goddess, and he further aggravates the situation by dedicating a golden image of Callirhoe in the temple, next to the statue of Aphrodite, almost to recreate the moment when he first laid eyes on her (3.6.3). When informed that two strangers (Chaereas and his friend Polycharmus) were particularly taken by the puzzling display of artworks in the temple, he will fret about their presence, revealing, on top of his anxiety, the effects of his initial perception and of the dedication of the image: ‘Why were they worshipping my Aphrodite?’ (διατί δὲ τὴν ἐμὴν Ἀφροδίτην προσεκύνουν; 3.9.5). He has made Callirhoe into a double of the goddess and indulges for as long as he can in the illusion he has created. The Ionians partake in this charade, particularly after Callirhoe has agreed to marry Dionysius. She walks out of the temple to a crowd of sailors kneeling before her as if before Aphrodite (3.2.14), and their wedding is cheered on by the shout ‘Aphrodite is getting married’ (ἡ Ἀφροδίτη γαμεῖ, 3.2.17). The temple’s attendant testifies to the widespread wonder about the matching images in the temple when she tells Chaereas that many have felt the same shock he had upon seeing them. To be sure, Chariton does not allow the reader to take Callirhoe’s divinity too seriously. First of all the confusion seems to affect in

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29 2.2.6: ‘My lady, you’ll think that you’re looking at a statue of yourself when you see Aphrodite’ (δόξεις, ὦ γύναι, θεασάμενη τὴν Ἀφροδίτην εἰκόνα βλέπεις νεώτης). Chariton’s Greek text is taken from Reardon’s Teubner and translations from Trzaskoma 2010 and sometimes adapted. Here and passim I refer to Chariton’s text by referencing the numbers only.

30 2.3.6: ‘Be merciful, Aphrodite! May your appearance be a blessing to me!’ (ἵλεως εἴης, ὦ Ἀφροδίτη, καὶ ἵπ’ ἄγαθο μοι φανείης).

31 3.6.4: ‘Take heart, my child. The goddess has astonished many others beside you. She makes appearances and shows herself clearly.’ (θάρρει, τέκνον· καὶ ἄλλους πολλοὺς ἢ θεὸς ἐξεπλήξετο· ἐπιφανῆς γὰρ ἦστι καὶ δείκνυσιν ἑαυτῆν ἐναργῶς).
particular the inhabitants of Ionia, culturally prone to the cult of Aphrodite.\textsuperscript{32} Dionysius is under the spell of love also because he was an ardent believer to begin with (2.2.5). Moreover, it is possible that the Ionians are simply playing along with their master’s delusion in order to please him, their sincerity lessened by the suggestion that they were only pretending to worship Aphrodite.\textsuperscript{33} On the other hand, Callirhoe as a devotee always maintains the appropriate distance between herself and Aphrodite and is insistent in deprecating the Ionians’, and especially Dionysius’, attitude (2.2.6, 2.3.7).\textsuperscript{34} The same goes for Callirhoe’s first husband Chaereas; though he has all sorts of problems trying to reunite with her, mistaking her for the goddess is not one of them: he can tell immediately that the golden image in the temple in Miletus represents his wife and not Aphrodite (3.6.3-6). Accordingly, in the end he is the only pretender to obtain the real Callirhoe, whereas the Persian king will be left with his own wife and his longing for Callirhoe (8.5.5-8),\textsuperscript{35} and Dionysius with the double, his portrait of Callirhoe in the temple.\textsuperscript{36} Though it is a prerequisite of all heroines of Greek novels to be divinely beautiful, the bond between Callirhoe and Aphrodite is exceptional and functional to the plot. It does not follow, obviously, that Callirhoe is in the background of any mention of Aphrodite in literature that postdates Chariton, but if one considers that Aphrodite is at the heart of the \textit{Erôtes}, it is worth exploring this work’s links with the novel that has, in many ways, Aphrodite at its centre.

Secondly, talking about Callirhoe means talking about the iconic nature which accompanies her from the beginning and is part and parcel of her ‘double’ predicament with Aphrodite. As has

\textsuperscript{32} Tilg 2010, 24-36.

\textsuperscript{33} 2.3.9: ‘They pretended they were showing reverence to Aphrodite’ (\textit{προσεποιοῦντο δὲ [πάντες] τὴν Αφροδίτην προσκυνεῖν}).

\textsuperscript{34} Zeitlin 2003, 82.

\textsuperscript{35} Willingly or not, his marriage mirrors the misfortunes of Callirhoe and Chaereas, including \textit{Scheintod}: ‘the queen was lost and then, once lost, she was found’ (\textit{ἀπολέσθαι βασιλίδα καὶ ἀπολομένην εὑρεθήναι}, 8.5.5).

\textsuperscript{36} 8.5.15: ‘He found great solace in the thought of a long journey, of ruling many cities, and of the images of Callirhoe in Miletus’ (\textit{μέγα νομίζων παραμύθιον πολλὴν ὁδὸν καὶ πολλὰν πόλεων ἐγεμονίαν καὶ τὰς ἐν Μιλήτῳ Καλλιρόης εἰκόνας}).
been noted, this is seen in some passages where her description oscillates between that of a mortal and that of a statue.\textsuperscript{37} The first, at her first appearance, is when she is called the ‘ornament (ἀγαλμα) of all Sicily’ (1.1.1), which a first-time reader is likely to understand as the ‘pride’ of the island. How entirely an \textit{agalma} she is (in the sense of ‘statue in honour of a god’) will become clear when she does become one once her portrait is dedicated in a temple, but both before and after that her statuary nature is hinted at when she is seen in the flesh.\textsuperscript{38} For example, radiance emanates from her as if she were the golden statue and not the woman on her first appearance in Babylon, which the Persian viewers take as a sign of divinity.\textsuperscript{39} This epiphany in Persia echoes a scene that takes place in Ionia shortly after Callirhoe’s arrival, when she is bathed by servants, and the details of light and touch create a plastic effect which evokes statuary: ‘Her skin at once shone palely, reflecting the light like marble. But her flesh was so delicate they were afraid that even to lay a finger on it would leave a severe wound’ (ὁ χρώς γάρ λευκός ἐστίλυεν εὐθύς μαρμαρυγ ὑπομονήν ἀπολάμμπων· τρυφερὰ δὲ σάρξ, ὥστε δεδουκέναι μή καὶ ἡ τῶν δακτύλων ἐπαφή μέγα τραύμα ποιήσῃ, 2.2.2). It is with this perception that the servants tell her that she could see herself in the statue of Aphrodite if she went to the temple (2.2.5-6), and when she does, her posture is described with a term used for statues as well as for images in dreams (ἔστωσα, 2.3.5). Dionysius sees her in that posture, and the fact that later he puts the portrait of her in that same position suggests that the impression he received of her at that time may well have been that of an artwork. Hunter has suggested that the bathing scene evokes not just any statue but the Cnidian Aphrodite in particular, and a later comparison to the Aphrodite


\textsuperscript{38} On the significance of \textit{agalma} Hunter 1994, 1074; Zeitlin 2003, 79-80.

\textsuperscript{39} 5.3.9: ‘Callirhoe’s face shone forth, and it dazzled everyone’s eyes, like a bright light suddenly appearing in the depths of night. Stunned, the barbarians knelt in reverence.’ (ἐξέλαμψε δὲ τὸ Καλλιρόης πρόσωπον, καὶ μαρμαρυγ ἐπαπάπει δὲ τὰς ἀπάντων ὄψεως, ὅσπερ ἐν νυκτὶ βαθείᾳ πολύδο φωτὸς ἀφριδίου φανέντος· ἐκπλαγέντες δὲ οἱ βάρβαροι προσεκύνησαν).

On how Callirhoe is looked at especially in Persia see Llewellyn-Jones 2013.
Anadyomene (8.6.11) confirms that there are famous iconographies of Aphrodite operating in the presentation of Callirhoe. This can be taken further to say that the special connection between Callirhoe and the Cnidian Aphrodite did not escape the attention of the author of the *Erôtes*, who in turn exploited Callirhoe when constructing the scenes around the statue. To show this I will look first at how the reactions to Callirhoe (especially of those who see her as an image of Aphrodite) are echoed in the *Erôtes* by the reactions of the spectators of the statue of Aphrodite.

We can see this at a general level if we think about how the multitude of suitors drawn to Sicily to see its *agalma* (1.1.1) compares to the scores of visitors drawn by the fame of the Cnidian (*Erôtes* 11), but also in the details of men’s responses once they have seen what they were after. Shouting is a favourite. It is what Dionysius does upon first seeing Callirhoe in the temple and believing she is Aphrodite (‘when Dionysius caught sight of her he shouted (ἀνεβόησεν)’, 2.3.6), as well as the Milesians at the wedding of him and Callirhoe (‘everyone shouted (ἀνεβόησαν), ‘Aphrodite is getting married!’’, 3.2.17). It is also Charicles’ first reaction after seeing the statue (‘Charicles at any rate raised a mad distracted cry (ἀναβοήσας)’, *Erôtes* 13), imitated shortly after by Callicratidas (‘the Athenian… suddenly raised a shout (ἀνεβόησεν) far more frenzied than that of Charicles’, 14). Charicles’ shout is worth examining closer: ‘Charicles at any rate raised a mad distracted cry and exclaimed, ‘Happiest (ἀναβοήσας, Εὐτυχέστατος) indeed of the gods was Ares who suffered chains because of her!’ It is directed to Ares, who famously had sex with the goddess while she was married to someone else. In Chariton the same address is used by Leonas, Dionysius’ administrator, to his master, promising that he will obtain the woman of his dreams and picturing Callirhoe in that role: ‘Leonas cried out, ‘You’re fortunate (ἀνεβόησεν εὐτυχής) master, both in your dream and in real life’ (2.1.3). The identical address is appropriate, because Dionysius had sex with his Aphrodite while she was married to someone else. The suddenness of the viewers’ shocked reactions is a proof of their genuineness. A sudden reaction (‘so Statira was surprised, and she

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suddenly (αἰφνίδιον) bolted up off the couch’, 5.9.1) is prompted by Callirhoe in Babylon when queen Statira sees her and thinks she is the manifestation of Aphrodite, but a more incisive case for comparison is Theron’s staging of Callirhoe’s first public appearance among the Ionians. Theron takes her to the villa where the buyer is waiting, lets her hair loose and opens the doors for a grand entrance that leaves everyone breathless: ‘He opened the door (διανοίξας τὴν θύραν) and told her to go in first. Leonas and everyone were suddenly struck with astonishment (αἰφνίδιον κατεπλάγησαν)’ (1.14.1). Unsurprisingly, the onlookers believe she is a manifestation of Aphrodite. Reversing the movements of spectators and spectacle, a parallel scene takes place in the Erôtes when the trio is led inside the temple from the back: ‘Then, when the door had been opened (ἀνοιγείσῃ τῆς θύρας) … we were filled with an immediate wonder (θάμβος αἰφνίδιον) for the beauty we beheld’ (Erôtes 14). Finally, Chaereas’ first kiss to Callirhoe (‘Chaereas ran up and kissed her (προσδραμὼν αὐτὴν κατεφίλει)’, 1.1.15) is copied by the only certainly heterosexual reaction to the Cnidian in the Erôtes, Charicles’: ‘And, as he spoke, he ran up (προσδραμὼν) and … started to kiss (κατεφίλει) the goddess with importunate lips’ (Erôtes 13). What happens in front of the quasi-statue Callirhoe seems to happen in front of the ‘actual’ statue of Aphrodite in the Erôtes as well. This also applies to the role played by the attendant.

A scene in Chariton’s novel is set in the temple of Aphrodite in Miletus and revolves around a small group of viewers, the images of Aphrodite and Callirhoe, and the temple’s attendant. For a full appreciation of its importance, a little introduction is required. The scene takes place in Book Three, some time after Callirhoe’s wedding with Dionysius (3.2). Regarding his playing with focalisation, time, and space, this is one of Chariton’s finest moments.41 Ever since 1.8 the narration has followed Callirhoe and those around her, from her abduction from the tomb in Syracuse to the arrival in Ionia and the events culminating in the wedding with Dionysius, immediately after which Chariton decides to update the readers on the deeds of Chaereas. As soon as Dionysius becomes the

41 See Hägg 1971, 141-143 and Morgan 2007a, 448-449 for narratological analysis.
second husband (paving the way for another ‘double’ situation), focalisation shifts from husband number two back to husband number one, who is seen on the day after Callirhoe’s funeral and followed in his search for her all the way to Miletus. By the time he has arrived, the events in Miletus have progressed since the wedding; a few days after Chaereas’ arrival Callirhoe too visits the temple, now a mother (3.9.1). Writing Chaereas’ journey over those seven months (cf. 3.7.7) of Callirhoe’s life is an effective authorial choice. The decision to remarry marks Callirhoe’s solution of her main internal struggles (abortion versus remarriage), and there would be little room for character development in the months following the wedding, at least until a new event (Chaereas’ arrival) disturbs the status quo. Moreover, Callirhoe’s second, bigamous life is only a sidepath which can never become the main road. So instead of showing us a new life she cannot possibly keep on living, Chariton moves to Chaereas; his actions trigger the events that will eventually bring it to an end. The arrival of Chaereas realigns the time and space of two branches of the narrative and triggers the gradual end of Callirhoe’s Milesian story arc. It is a momentous time, and its fulcrum is the images of Callirhoe and Aphrodite in the temple.\footnote{For temples as symbolic spaces see De Temmerman 2012a, 493-494.}

Chaereas and Polycharmus arrive in Ionia weary from their journeys and pessimistic about the chances of finding Callirhoe:

μεταξύ δὲ ἀλύσοντες περιπέπεσον τῷ νεῷ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης. ἔδοξεν οὖν αὐτοῖς προσκυνῆσαι τὴν θεόν, καὶ προσπεσών τοῖς γόνασιν αὐτῆς Χαρέας “σὺ μοι, δέσποινα” <φησί>, “πρώτῃ Καλλιρόην ἐδείξας ἐν τῇ σῇ ἑορτῇ: σὺ καὶ νῦν ἀπόδος, ἣν ἐχαρίσω.” μεταξύ <δ’> ἀνακύψας εἴδε παρὰ τὴν θεόν εἰκόνα Καλλιρόης χρυσὴν, ἀνάθημα Διονυσίου. Τοῦ δ’ αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ. κατέπεσεν οὖν σκοτοδινάσας· θεασαμένη δὲ αὐτὸν ἡ ζύκορος ὁδὸρ προσήνεγκε καὶ ἀνακτωμένη τὸν ἄνθρωπον εἶπε “θάρρει, τέκνοι· καὶ ἄλλους πολλοὺς ἡ θεός ἐξέπληξεν· ἐπιφανής γὰρ ἔστι καὶ δείκνυσιν ἐαυτὴν ἐναργῶς. ἀλλ’ ἀγαθοῦ μεγάλου
In their wandering they came to Aphrodite’s temple and decided to show reverence to the goddess. Falling at her knees, Chaireas said, “Mistress, you first showed me Callirhoe at your festival. Now return to me the one you favored me with.” While his head was raised, he saw next to the goddess a golden statue of Callirhoe, an offering of Dionysios. His knee gave way, as did his dear heart. A wave of vertigo hit him and he collapsed. The temple attendant saw him and brought him some water. When she had revived him, she said, “Take heart, my child. The goddess has astonished many others besides you. She makes appearances and shows herself clearly. But this is a sign of great blessing. Do you see the gold statue? This woman was a slave, but Aphrodite has made her the mistress of all of us.” “Who is she?” asked Chaireas. “She is the mistress of this estate, my child. The wife of Dionysios, the leading man of Ionia.”

What shocks whom, why, and according to whom, is, perhaps intentionally, unclear. Given that she only mentions the golden image later, the attendant’s words concerning the Milesians may imply that their shock is due to the fact that they see Aphrodite both as a statue and in the flesh, that is, as Callirhoe. Being used to manifestations of Aphrodite (‘the goddess shows herself (ἐπιφανῆς) there’, 2.2.5), they are happy to assimilate the goddess and the woman, who has made these manifestations even clearer. Of course it is possible that they are startled by the juxtaposition of the statue of the

43 3.6.3-5.
goddess and the portrait of the woman that looks like her. Regardless, the attendant, who is aware of the belief of the people but also of the fact that Callirhoe is only a woman, assumes that Chaereas is like all the other visitors, and produces the story of the lucky woman Callirhoe by way of rescuing him from the confusion. But Chaereas has a completely different perspective on the situation. His shock is due not to the iconography of Aphrodite and her assimilation to the appearances of Callirhoe (in the flesh or in her golden portrait), but to his ability to immediately recognise the iconography of Callirhoe and distinguish it from that of the goddess. He is a unique viewer and a unique listener, for he is the only one, on whom the story that accompanies the artwork has the opposite effect than the intended one. Far from being a good omen, the attendant’s reading of the golden image tells him that his wife is living in a new and prosperous marriage. The space in the temple in front of the images thus becomes the place where the clashing of different visions and interpretations is played out. Problems concern not only the interpretation of the object of vision (the Milesians looking at Aphrodite and Callirhoe), but also that of the viewer (the attendant looking at Chaereas). The same place is witness to a scene which echoes this one and reaps its fruits. The birth of the baby is celebrated by Dionysius with a public festival that culminates in the temple of Aphrodite. After Dionysius has expressed his gratitude to the goddess, Callirhoe asks to be left alone to pray to Aphrodite. The ‘double’ predicament shows all of its actors at close distance: the statue of Aphrodite, Callirhoe, and Callirhoe’s portrait. After her prayers Callirhoe starts to cry, and the attendant comes to the rescue:

“τί κλάεις” εἶπεν, “ὦ παιδίον, ἐν ἄγαθοῖς τηλικούτοις; ἡδὴ γάρ καὶ σὲ ὡς θεὰν οἱ ξένοι προσκυνοῦσι. Πρῶην ἦλθον ἐνθάδε δύο νεανίσκοι καλοὶ παραπλέοντες· ὅρ

44 Montiglio 2012, 35-36.
δὲ ἑτερος αὐτῶν θεασάμενός σου τὴν εἰκόνα, μικρὸν δὲν ἐξέπνευσεν. οὕτως ἐπιφανὴς εἴ Ἀφροίτη πεποίηκεν.”

“My child, why are you crying in the midst of such blessings? Why, even foreigners show reverence to you as goddess! Yesterday two handsome young men who were sailing by came here. One of them saw your statue and nearly breathed his last. That’s how famous Aphrodite has made you!”

The attendant reiterates her wrong reading of Chaereas in the previous scene with her wrong reading of Callirhoe, because, not knowing what is at stake, she tries to comfort her by exploiting her confusion with the goddess as if it were a solution and not a problem. For the second time the attendant’s story means one thing to her and another to her listener. In both cases she tells an intendedly uplifting story to the only audience whose interpretation turns it upside down: an unknown woman’s success story sounds in Chaereas’ ears like his condemnation to unhappiness by the hands of the woman he knows best; and the story of the stranger adoring Callirhoe as a goddess is immediately recognised as the story of her closest relation looking for her as a woman.

The scenes set in the temple are pivotal to the development of the novel’s plot. It is in front of the statue of Aphrodite that Dionysius falls in love with Callirhoe, that Chaereas learns about Callirhoe’s new life, and that Callirhoe learns that Chaereas is still alive. The last two scenes in particular collaborate to produce an exchange of information that triggers all future events with a domino effect. They are symmetrical, and their chronological vicinity proves captivating for the

45 3.9.1.

46 Images of the protagonists in dreams are never far away from the physical ones. See Auger 1983 on how they too contribute to plot development.

47 Dionysius’ search for Chaereas (3.9.3) and Chaereas’ funeral (4.1.7), which brings Mithridates into the story and, consequently, the story all the way to Babylon.
readers, once they understand that the protagonists almost put an end to their separation: Chaereas’ arrival in Ionia realigned the two timelines in which the narrative had been split after Callirhoe’s abduction and nearly reunited him with Callirhoe. The fact that they missed each other by so little generates frustration as well as suspense for the next opportunity. The subsequent narrative will again be split between the actions of Chaereas and those of Callirhoe; the two branches undergo another reunion and another separation in Babylon, but their distance in time and space will never be as pronounced as it had been before the temple scenes in Miletus. The space in front of the images is a meaningful stage for the novel, chosen carefully and exploited extensively. It is walked only by the main characters (plus the attendant), each of them playing out their interpretation of the double predicament of the woman and the goddess. Ultimately, it contains the main thrust of the novel, that is, the difficulty at restoring a unit (Callirhoe, the marriage with Chaereas) that has doubled (Callirhoe/Aphrodite, the second marriage). No reconnection is possible as long as the predicament is still active: the final reunion can happen only once Callirhoe is one again, having left her double and her second life behind.

In many ways the Erôtes recreates this space and puts it at its centre, and, in a scene that evokes Chaereas’, articulates in it some of the dynamics surrounding Callirhoe. Much like Chaereas and Polycharmus in Miletus, Lycinus, Charicles and Callicratidas arrive in Cnidus after their sea voyage, go to the temple of Aphrodite, and look at the statue in awe. We have already seen how their reactions to the statue mimic the reactions to statue-like Callirhoe. Moreover, something about the artwork escapes their understanding, and an attendant comes to the rescue with an explanatory story. The story revolves around a man who fell in love with Aphrodite, and eventually sets in motion the rest of the narrative.48 This consists of Charicles and Callicratidas going to another place to defend their views in front of a judge, Lycinus, which is similar to what Chaereas and Dionysius, the two

48 In light of his treatment of Callirhoe as a double of Aphrodite, and of the fact that in the end he will end up keeping the artwork and not the real woman, there is ground to consider Dionysius the agalmatophile of Chariton’s story.
lovers who see the statues differently, do by going to Babylon to stand trial and be judged by the Great King. In terms of plot, the scene in the temple in the Erôtes replays salient points of Chariton’s novel. Equally important is what happens in terms of themes. Similarly to the one in Miletus, the scene in front of the Cnidian Aphrodite makes the temple the space where viewers’ responses clash. The same statue looks differently and means different things to different spectators, Charicles feasting his eyes on it because he sees a woman and Callicratidas because he sees a boy, and the same attendant’s story means something different to different listeners, each finding in it the confirmation of their viewing. As said earlier, the Erôtes gives us the most elaborate version of a story that had been told many times before. While its nucleus does not change, much of the elaboration, especially the setting for, and the responses to, its telling, re-enacts scenes that are central to the plot and themes of Chariton’s novel.

It is obvious what facilitated the connection of the temple scenes in Chariton and in the Erôtes: it is the common ancestry of their central figures. As I have already mentioned, scholars have suggested Chariton’s use of Praxiteles’ statue for Callirhoe’s bath scene. Helen Morales has taken this further by highlighting the similarities between Callirhoe and Phryne, the hetaira whose beauty became the stuff of legends in fourth-century BC Greece and who is said to have been Praxiteles’ model for the Cnidian Aphrodite.49 Anecdotes about her revolve in particular around the viewing of her body, which is usually a public event akin to a spectacle. Such is the case of her trial, where her acquittal was not as much the result of Hyperides’ defense as of the unveiling of her body and the exposure of her breasts, the last resort upon realising that otherwise the verdict would be unfavourable.50 Athenaeus’ version is particularly successful in showing the awe-striking effect of Phryne’s body on the viewers, pointing out her special bond with Aphrodite, of whom she was

49 Morales 2011.
50 S.E. M. 2.2, Ath. 13.590d-f.
We are also told that the exposure generated even more curiosity, which was satisfied in a memorable bathing scene, after which she was consecrated to the realm of art via her association with Aphrodite:

The parts of Phryne’s body that were not seen were actually the most beautiful. As a consequence, it was not easy to get a glimpse of her naked, because she used to wear a tunic that clung to her body, and avoided the public baths. But at the Eleusinia and the Posidonia festivals, with all the Greeks watching, she took off her robe, let down her hair, and entered the sea; Apelles drew the inspiration for his ‘Aphrodite Rising from the Sea’ from her. So too the sculptor Praxiteles, who was in love with her, used her as the model for his Cnidian Aphrodite.52

Morales does not consider the episode of Phryne’s public bath, but her point is strengthened by it. It is after Callirhoe’s bath at 2.2.2 that the servants tell her that she resembles the statue in the temple exactly, and later she is also compared to Aphrodite Anadyomene (8.6.11). On top of having used Phryne as a model for the Cnidian Aphrodite, Praxiteles is also said to have made a golden statue of Phryne herself, which he dedicated in Delphi. This raises a question: were people (either in Cnidus or Delphi) thinking they were seeing Aphrodite or Phryne?53 A passage from Pausanias’ book on

51 Ath. 13.590e: ‘Hyperides spoke in support of Phryne, and when his speech accomplished nothing, and the jurors seemed likely to convict her, he brought her out in public, ripped her dress to shreds, exposed her chest, and at the conclusion of his speech produced cries of lament as he gazed at her, causing the jurors to feel a superstitious fear of this priestess and temple-attendant (ζάκορον) of Aphrodite, and to give in to pity rather than put her to death’ (transl. Loeb). The importance of a ζάκορος of the temple of Aphrodite both in Chariton and in the Erôtes may well stem from this.

52 Ath. 13.591f.

53 Morales 2011, 87 asks good questions with regard to this. She also sees the golden statue of Phryne as a precedent for the golden statue of Callirhoe at 3.6.3 (94-95).
Boeotia sets the stage for this very problem. In Thespiae, already home of the celebrated statue of Eros by Praxiteles, the same place hosts both a statue of Aphrodite and one of Phryne (Paus. 9.27.5). One solution to this problem of viewing and believing is found in the first of Alciphron’s *Letters of Courtesans*, where Phryne, in one of the rare occasions where her voice is heard, tells Praxiteles not to worry about offending the gods because the Thespians do not mind her being between Eros and Aphrodite. Phryne proceeds to invite Praxiteles to join her in the *temenos* and celebrate those gods. Callirhoe is equally aware of the complications caused by how the Ionians see her (the problem is increased by the dedication of her portrait next to that of Aphrodite). But unable to stop people from seeing what they want to see, her solution will be to leave everything behind, the images, the Ionians, and their convictions, and return to her initial world in Syracuse, where people always seem to have been able to reconcile her supernatural beauty with her non-divinity. Considering what happens to Callirhoe and her double situation, Morales is right to say that “Phryne is an important intertextual figure for Callirhoe”.  

Both the iconography and the anecdotes surrounding the Cnidian Aphrodite influenced the construction of Callirhoe, for they revolved around irresistible beauty and the subsequent confusion

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54 Alciphr. 4.1: ‘Yes, I stand in the middle of the precinct near your Aphrodite and your Eros too. And do not begrudge me this honour. For it is Praxiteles that people praise when they have gazed at me; and it is because I am a product of your skill that the Thespians do not count me unfit to be placed between gods. One thing only is still lacking to your gift: that you come to me, so that we may lie together in the precinct.’ (transl. Loeb). See Morales 2011, 90-91. Sex in the *temenos* is also what happens at the end of *Erôtes* 12. Uninterested in the anecdotes about the model of the statue, the author of the *Erôtes* never mentions Phryne, but he is certainly aware of them and of their geographical location: ‘We don’t know as yet, Charicles, whether we won’t hear many stories of this sort when we come to Thespiae.’ (*Erôtes* 17).

55 8.6.11: ‘They thought that she had grown so much more beautiful that you might truly have said that in looking upon her you were seeing Aphrodite rising from the sea’. Like in a previous instance (‘everyone thought she looked like Ariadne asleep’, 1.6.3), the Syracusans, unlike the Ionians, seem to know the difference between the goddess and her representation, and only compare Callirhoe to the latter.

56 Morales 2011, 96.
between mortal and divine and between life and art, which are some of the driving forces of the novel. In turn, in his reworking of Greek novels, the author of the Erôtes employed these aspects of Chariton’s Callirhoe for the construction of the female figure at the centre of the dialogue. The setting of the scene, the reactions to the statue, the role of the attendant as deliverer of important information and, inadvertently, bringer of clashes that reveal the multiplicity of relations between viewers and viewed, are all taken from the temple in Miletus and restaged in the temple in Cnidus. These are more than nods to the novel. They reveal our author as an attentive reader engaging with momentous scenes from it, understanding the mechanisms and models at work behind their composition, and able to re-mould them for his own work. At the same time the result is not a replica, the dichotomy of viewing no longer being primarily between human and divine, original and double, but between different sexual preferences. Whichever the responses by Dionysius and Chaereas to seeing Callirhoe or her images are, they never departed from a heteronormative parameter, which is exactly what the responses by Charicles and Callicratidas disrupt. The audience reading the Erôtes against the backdrop of the novels may have been alert to this from the start of the dialogue: ‘Your sportive talk about love (Ἐρωτικῆς παιδιᾶς), Theomnestus, my friend, has filled these ears of mine since dawn’. This is a third-party’s point of view of Theomnestus’ love stories with both women and men: an erotic game. The combination of παιδιά and ἐρωτικός is less common than one might think. It occurs a total of four times in extant Greek literature. Only one of these is not found in a Lucian-related work: in Chariton when the eunuch Artaxates decides not to remind the Great King of Callirhoe, now that the ongoing war has finally managed to distract him from the woman: ‘Artaxates too kept silent because he was not sure it was the right thing, with the king facing danger, to bring up his amorous amusement (παιδιᾶς ἐρωτικῆς)’ (6.9.4). This is a third-party’s point of view on the king’s unreciprocated passion for Callirhoe, which is presented as if it were a temporary distraction. In the Erôtes Theomnestus’

57 Apart from the Erôtes also in De domo 24 (of a scene with Branchus and Apollo in a painting) and Lexiphanes 3 (of the game of kottabos).
erotic game has not lost the sense of fleeting entertainment, but has been extended to both sexes. The ‘erotic game’ of the beginning of the Erôtes anticipates both the diverse sexual responses of the rest of the dialogue, and, from what we have seen about its composition, the literary play with erotic narratives.

**Conclusions**

Works that are intertextually linked with Callirhoe are a more fruitful ground for the observation of Chariton’s reception than the sparse testimonia we possess. It has been shown that Achilles Tatius elaborates the love triangle in Chariton into the love triangle of Leucippe, Clitophon, and Melite, and that the friendship of Chaereas and Polycharmus in Chariton is morphed into two of the mini-stories in Lucian’s Toxaris.58 In both cases verbal echoes and structural similarities encourage the recognition of the model, also in order to highlight points of departure and innovation. This article has enriched the picture and, by highlighting a pattern of reception, also could be a guide for future enquiries. It seems that what ancient authors recognised as Chariton’s forte were powerful plot mechanisms (e.g. the love triangle) served by a purposeful structure (e.g. the handling of time and focalisation on the different actors) and able to produce memorable scenes. Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus may have been better candidates for compilers of florilegia who were looking for pearls of style and wisdom, but Chariton’s well-orchestrated story, centred on iconic female beauty, produced rich material for potential storytelling. The recipients that have been identified so far belong to a group of usual suspects who practised prose fiction and are therefore likely, even expected, to

58 See Bird 2019 for Achilles Tatius and ni Mheallaigh 2014, 39-71 for Lucian. As a coda it is worth pointing out that Toxaris and the Erôtes also share the combination of more than one Greek novel, reworking as they do not just Chariton but also Xenophon of Ephesus (as I suggested for the Erôtes), and Achilles Tatius. While this does not prove that the Erôtes was written by Lucian, it suggests that authors who did not write love novels themselves had a notion of a certain unity of the genre.
draw inspiration from their predecessors. But identifying what early readers appreciated can provide a valuable perspective onto later ones too.\textsuperscript{59}

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\textsuperscript{59} I thank Rebecca Langlands, John R. Morgan, Koen De Temmerman, and Claire Rachel Jackson, for reading a version of this and providing useful advice.


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