Slavery is everywhere and nowhere in the ancient novel. While enslaved characters can play pivotal roles in the narrative, they frequently serve simply as foils to the noble protagonists. Moreover, although the elite heroes of the Greek novels are often enslaved, this is only ever a passing state: they later return to social prominence, while other slaves in the narrative are denied the same opportunities for social promotion and psychological subjectivity. The Latin novels engage with slavery more explicitly, although not without difficulties. Petronius’ *Satyricon* paints a complex and contested picture of slaves and freedmen, and Lucius’ experiences in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* have been seen as psychologically analogous to slavery, although this necessitates the assumption that enslavement is much the same as being a donkey. Consequently, novelistic slavery is a paradox: central to the narrative structure and content, but also temporary and externalised.

This volume offers a welcome attempt to grapple with this paradox. The fourteen chapters, originally delivered at the 7th Rethymnon International Conference on the Ancient Novel (RICAN 7) in 2013, cover a pleasingly diverse range of texts, including not only the canonical Greek and Latin novels, but also the fragmentary *Babyloniaka*, *Life of Aesop* and the pseudo-Lucianic *Onos*. This diversity is paralleled by a variety of historical, literary, metaphorical, and philological approaches, which respect and reflect this multifaceted topic. The flipside, however, is that this plurality can seem chaotic, especially since it is not always clear why a text requires a one methodology over another. Still, this is to some extent an issue inherent to any edited volume, and given the complexity of its theme, the diversity of texts and methodologies is overall one of its strengths.

C. Panayotakis’ introduction primarily summarises each chapter, but also establishes an important principle for the volume, namely that the societal and narrative functions of slavery are inextricable from each other. The opening chapters by J. Hilton and K. De Temmerman epitomise this, as they contextualise novelistic enslavement within historical, social, and literary frameworks. Hilton argues that while the Greek novels do not question slavery, they give voice to enslaved characters, in particular female experiences of enslavement. Hilton’s comparisons with Dio Chrysostom on the internal freedom of philosophical virtue in contrast to external status are stimulating, although the focus on such contextual parallels means that the temporary enslavement of the protagonists in each text only receives a brief analysis. This, however, is covered by De Temmerman’s
chapter, which explores the tensions inherent in the protagonists’ transitions from nobility (eugeneia) to enslavement (douleia) and back again. The focus here is on rhetoric and characterisation rather than historical context, and De Temmerman’s arguments about the fluidity of status in the novels, in particular the mythic and rhetorical resonances of Callirhoe’s enslavement, are convincing. Neither chapter, rightly, aims to be comprehensive and their respective arguments can stand on their own, but the juxtaposition of more historical and more literary approaches effectively builds a holistic and insightful view of novelistic enslavement.

W. M. Owens’ chapter is perhaps the most divisive in the volume, both for the boldness of the argument and the assumptions inherent in its premise. Owens argues that the protagonists’ enslavement and restoration to elite status in Chariton’s Callirhoe not only acknowledges former slaves as readers, but also appeals to them specifically by offering a restorative, ‘therapeutic’ narrative about enslavement. While there is a brief contextual survey to support this thesis, it is too general to be convincing. Should we really take the tenth-century Suda’s mention that the likely-Hadrianic Hermippus wrote a now-lost work on educated slaves as evidence that ex-slaves were not only sophisticated readers of novelistic fiction, but also a prominent enough social group that Chariton would specifically appeal to them? Doubtless Owens goes into more detail about this in his recent monograph (The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel: Resistance and Appropriation, Routledge, 2019), and the reading of Callirhoe as ideologically conservative and implicitly subversive simultaneously does capture something of the novel’s paradoxical spirit. Here, however, the overly-general approach and overstuffed argument raise more questions than answers.

S. M. Trzaskoma argues that despite the Ephesiaka’s reputation as haphazard, the treatment of slavery in the novel reveals a more deliberate narrative architecture, and offers a nuanced reading with wider resonance for key themes such as character development and sexual morality. Given that Trzaskoma champions the novel’s sophisticated narrative construction, however, the idea that Anthia is punished for Habcoromes’ hubris towards Eros, resulting in his metaphorical and literal enslavement to love, simply because of her gender, is not especially satisfying (66–9). Nonetheless, Trzaskoma’s argument that enslavement provides opportunities to showcase the protagonists’ mutual devotion during their separation is persuasive and does much to rehabilitate the novel as a deliberate and sophisticated work.

From here, K. Dowden looks at Iamblichus’ fragmentary Babyloniaka, preserved primarily in Photius’ ninth-century Bibliotheca. Dowden argues Iamblichus uses slavery-related terms far more than any other Greek novelist bar Chariton, although the question of
how much of Photius’ language can be attributed to the Babyloniaka needs more explanation than it receives. Dowden ranges admirably from fragments to summary to Suda quotations (often overlooked because of their brevity) and offers valuable close readings of this rarely-studied novel. Yet, the conclusion that slavery in the novel is largely a by-product of despotism raises questions: if despotism is a result of the novel’s ‘orientalising context’ (91), how does this interact with the Roman legal contexts against which Dowden reads the novel? Reference to Helen Morales’ 2006 article on Iamblichus, which explicitly tackles Rome, empire, and Eastern stereotypes in the novel, might have been productive here.

A. Billault’s contribution is one of the shortest, but comprehensively surveys appearances of slaves in Leucippe and Clitophon to argue that the novel reflects the realities of ancient slavery while also drawing on New Comic stereotypes. Billault’s analysis is well-considered, but could have benefitted from more consideration of the uniqueness of Clitophon’s first-person narration: how far can the novel’s portrayal of slavery be separated from Clitophon’s perspective? While Billault suggests that masters generally treat slaves in the novel well, based on Satyrus and Clio’s apparent lack of mistreatment (99), the emphasis given to Leucippe’s traumatic experiences might be more indicative of Clitophon’s priorities as a narrator than anything else.

E. Bowie considers Longus’ presentation of slaves and masters in tandem with the portrayal of animals and humans, and concludes that these relationships thematise power in a way that invokes wider questions about imperial rule. Bowie demonstrates the wide-ranging ancient symbolism of animals, but also how these animal-human relationships highlight issues of political power. The final section on the impact of Roman politics on Longus’ literary world is particularly thought-provoking and brings out neatly the wider resonance of slavery as both social phenomenon and literary metaphor.

In the first of two chapters devoted to Heliodorus, S. Montiglio argues that portrayals of slavery in the Aithiopika reflect the novel’s movement across geography and genres, as New Comic-style slaves play a large role in Athens and Persia, but disappear as the protagonists move towards Ethiopia. Montiglio’s analysis of the intersection between space, literary tradition, and morality is brief but perceptive, and touches on wider themes of intertextuality and cultural perspective which are crucial to the Aithiopika. I. Repath and J. R. Morgan then explore Heliodorus’ portrayal of love through the metaphor of slavery, arguing for an opposition of eros between the heavenly love of Plato’s Phaedrus and the illicit lust of the mythical Phaedra. Here, Demainete and Arsake become foils for Charikleia’s chaste love, and their enslaved counterparts Thisbe and Cybele literalise the metaphor of servitium amoris. Close readings showcase impressive knowledge of the text and its wider
literary context, although it is regrettable that these two papers do not talk to each other more. Both consider how Thisbe and Cybele subvert slave-master relationships and link this to wider ethical issues, but more interaction between the two likely would have enriched the arguments of both.

J. Bodel, turning to the Latin novels, argues that while the verisimilitude of Petronius’ freedmen in the Cena Trimalchionis has attracted most attention, they also play a thematic and structural role. Detailed close readings underpin Bodel’s analysis, and the payoff is rewarding. In contrast to Bodel’s tight focus, C. Panayotakis’ approach to Petronius is more wide-ranging. While some may disagree with the argument that Encolpius and his coterie are free men rather than freedmen, Panayotakis’ wider point about the fluidity of boundaries between enslaved and free within the novel is well-made. This is most visible in the interaction of beauty and slavery, which destabilises these hierarchies. This perhaps could have benefitted from dialogue with De Temmerman’s chapter, which complicates the picture of the Greek novels here adduced as a foil to the Satyricon, but Panayotakis’ argument is thought-provoking nonetheless.

R. May then claims Apuleius’ Photis is not drawn solely from love elegy, as previously claimed, but also Roman Comedy, which also plays a structural role in the novel. May’s nuanced analysis neatly illuminates the generic interplay underlying the Metamorphoses, and her arguments about comedy as a paradigm for Lucius’ relationship with Photis and later devotion to Isis are convincing. Against May’s generic perspective, M. Paschalis adopts a more narrow linguistic approach and argues that the pseudo-Lucianic Onos exploits the linguistic terminology for slavery in ways not replicated in Apuleius’ Metamorphoses. While Paschalis rightly cautions against reading too much into this, the conclusions here could go further: does the use of slavery-related language in Loukios and Palaestra’s erotic encounter perhaps testify to the Onos’ literary sophistication through its engagement with the servitium amoris metaphor?

Finally, J. B. Lefkowitz argues that the Life of Aesop’s transitions between slavery and freedom reflect the tensions between impermanence and fixity, orality and script, which underlie the work and the entire fable genre, and become key to the work’s narrative architecture. Aesop’s physical experiences as a slave are thus linked to the creation of the text itself, with the result that the corporeal becomes the textual corpus. Lefkowitz’s analysis is intricate but builds to a persuasive conclusion, and the transition between literary portrayals of slavery and its wider metaphorical significance forms a fitting epilogue to the volume.
Despite any individual issues, the variety of approaches here is impressive, and in many cases offer the first detailed consideration of the respective texts and topic. While the papers largely stand on their own, many gain from their juxtaposition with each other and more cross-referencing might have built a more cohesive picture of novelistic slavery. Nonetheless, the volume offers a valuable contribution to novel scholarship by treating this topic holistically and brings out many worthwhile insights both for literary treatments of slavery and ancient fiction more widely.

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