

WAR AND PEACE IN THE ANCIENT GREEK NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates how war and peace are represented in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, the *Ninus* fragment, Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe*, Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, and Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*. With the exception of the *Cyropaedia* and possibly the *Aithiopika*, these romances were composed at the height of the *pax Romana* when warfare between nations within the Roman Empire had declined. Nevertheless, war and battles constitute significant elements in these narratives, although they are often set in the remote past at the time of the Persian Empire and are frequently pastiches drawn from the historians. In Chariton, Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus, military episodes have an important narratological function. Attitudes to war vary: it is an intrusive element in the lives of most of the characters, and military bravado and imperial expansionism are sometimes viewed with irony. Occasionally the romances describe contemporary conflicts in considerable detail.

The ancient Greek romances were mostly composed at the height of the *pax Romana*¹ and are generally concerned with times of peace rather than war.² In Xenophon of Ephesus, for example, war is almost entirely absent.³ Where war

¹ The date of the *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus remains a problem, but it is likely to have been written in the 4th century; Morgan 1996:417-419.

² For the *pax Romana*, see Wengst 1987:1-54; Melko & Weigel 1981:107-21; Petit 1976; Stier 1975. With regard to the novel, Holzberg (1995:31) states: 'After power had passed from Alexander's successors to the Romans and after the fall of the Roman Republic, with the consequent end to wars and pirate terrorism, life became on the one hand more peaceful, and the economic situation probably took a turn for the better in most cases.' On the other hand, Hägg (1983: 84-86) talks of the 'insecurity of the individual' as a result of 'the activity of pirates and robbers'. A trend from an ambiguity about war to values that centred on the civilian may be observed in Hellenistic Greek art (Lise Hannestad 2001:117), while Roman art conveys a sense of the increasing stress of continual warfare (Niels Hannestad 2001:146-54, esp. 153).

³ There is mention of an *eirenarch*, however (2.13.3; 3.9.5), for which see Rife 2002: 93-108. The distinction between war and brigandage, which of course is ubiquitous in Xenophon, is consistently blurred in the ancient novels. In this article I address

does break out in these narratives, it is often just one more trial that the young people have to endure before their final and inevitable reunion. In Chariton 7.5.4, Callirhoe accuses Aphrodite of sending one more hardship to her: 'Now I have experienced war - the one misfortune left for me' (ὁ μόνον ἔλπιέ μου ταῖς συμφοραῖς, ἤδη καὶ πολέμου πεπείραμαι).⁴ Armed insurrections and inter-state violence in the ancient novel do not generally involve contemporary conflicts - more usually wars between the ancient Persian Empire and her subjects - sometimes a metaphor for the Roman Empire⁵ - are involved. In the case of Heliodorus, these may have occurred some seven or eight centuries before the date of composition of the romance in very remote regions of the earth (especially the siege of Syene in Book 9). As a result these romances often portray wars unrealistically.⁶ Thus Bakhtin makes war and battles part of the 'chronotope' of the ancient romances.⁷ Fusillo argues that in describing wars the novels simply imitate their 'historiographical matrix' and rewrite it in bourgeoisie colours - the primary function of such accounts being narratological.⁸ Morgan comprehensively demonstrates the 'historiographical pose' of Heliodorus, of which warfare constituted a significant element. Battle descriptions in particular in the ancient Greek romances are often literary in character,⁹ and wars certainly do break out opportunely at times. Thus the litigation between Dionysius and Chaereas at the court of the Great King is suddenly interrupted by news of a rebellion in Egypt.

international wars and violent incidents that escalate into major military engagements. Thus the Theron episode in Chariton is not discussed here, although his trial and execution are interesting from a legal point of view.

⁴ All translations in this article are my own. I have used the following editions of the ancient romances: Chariton (Garnaud), Achilles Tatius (Molinié), Longus (Reeve), and Heliodorus (Rattenbury and Lumb).

⁵ Schwarz 2003:375-94.

⁶ Studies of the reality of ancient warfare include Chaniotis 2005; Van Wees 2000, 2004; Hanson 1989; Connolly 1981; Warry 1980; Garland 1975.

⁷ Bakhtin 1981:88. On Bakhtin and ancient narrative, see most recently Branham 2005.

⁸ Fusillo 1989:62-63.

⁹ Morgan 1981:221-56. Scarcella (1992:71) believes that wars in the romances are in any case but pale reflections of the true thing and are included to provide unexpected reversals of fortune in the narrative and tests of endurance for the lovers. Scarcella's chapter is the only work that I know of on war in the ancient novels and provides much useful detail on the subject.

πάσαν δὲ σκέψιν καὶ πάσαν ἐρωτικὴν ὁμιλίαν ταχέως μετέβαλεν ἢ Τύχη, καινοτέρων εὐρούσα πραγμάτων ὑπόθεσιν· βασιλεῖ γὰρ ἦκον ἀπαγγέλλοντες Αἴγυπτον ἀφεστάναι μετὰ μεγάλης παρασκευῆς. τὸν μὲν γὰρ σατράπην τὸν βασιλικὸν τοὺς Αἴγυπτίους ἀνῆρθέκηναι, κεχειροτονηθέναι δὲ βασιλέα τῶν ἐπιχωρίων, ἐκείνον δὲ ἐκ Μέμφεως ὀρμώμενον διαβεβηκένασιν μὲν Πηλοῦσιον, ἤδη δὲ Συρίαν καὶ Φοινίκην κατατρέχειν, ὡς μηκέτι τὰς πόλεις ἀντέχειν, ὥσπερ χειμάρρου τινὸς ἢ πυρὸς αἰφνίδιον ἐπιρρυέντος αὐταῖς. πρὸς δὲ τὴν φήμην ἐταράχθη μὲν ὁ βασιλεὺς, κατεπλάγησαν δὲ Πέρσαι· κατήφεια δὲ πάσαν ἔσχε Βαβυλῶνα.

'Fortune found new material for the plot and quickly brought about a change in all these speculations and all this advice about love. Messengers came to the King telling him that a very serious revolt had broken out in Egypt: the Egyptians had got rid of the royal satrap and had elected a king from the natives. He had set out from Memphis and had passed through Pelusium and was already plundering Syria and Phoenicia, to the point that the cities were no longer resisting since he had suddenly rushed on them like a river in flood or a fire. At this news, the King was thrown into confusion, and the Persians were dumbstruck; deep depression settled over the whole of Babylon.' (*Char.* 6.8.1-2)

The outbreak of a dangerous revolt in Egypt enables the plot (*ὑπόθεσις*) to move forward and is clearly introduced (initially at least) as a narratological device.¹⁰ Moreover, the heroes of the ancient romances, and Chaereas in particular, have been judged pusillanimous and unmanly, although this may at least partly be attributed to rhetorical amplification.¹¹ There is, it may be said, almost an inverse relationship between the Greek romances and the

¹⁰ On the 'open-endedness' of the plots of the ancient Greek romances, see Nimis 1994, 1999. On Chariton's handling of his plot, see Perry 1930: esp. 110-14; Hägg 1971; Reardon 1982:1-27, esp. 11-12. On the plot in ancient narrative generally, see Lowe 2000. For the role of Fortune in Chariton, see Hunter 1994:1062; Robiano 1983:259-86.

¹¹ On the 'hapless heroes' of the romances, see Konstan 1994:15-26, who is constructing a more specific argument, and does not discuss the war narrative in Chariton (p. 16). For another view of Chaereas, see Hunter 1994:1079, who notes the poor treatment Chaereas has received from critics, but who also does not examine his role as a general. There is also a brief discussion in Schmeling 1974:130-33, who notes that in Books 7-8 Chaereas 'appears more like an early ancient hero' (p. 132). See also Helms 1966:28-41, where Chaereas' strengths of courage, cleverness, and concern for others are documented in some detail and contrasted with the rhetorical excesses of his laments, for which in general see Birchall 1996:1-18.

Hellenistic historians - for the former, war is something of an interlude, for the latter romantic novellae alleviate the grind of continual fighting.¹²

And yet life in the provinces of the Roman Empire in the first two centuries of our era was not untroubled by violent outbreaks of lawlessness that required the intervention of the state and its legions.¹³ The *pax Romana* in reality directly benefited only the élite ruling class of Rome.¹⁴ Recent studies of the revolt of the βουκόλοι in Achilles Tatius have confirmed that it may have been modelled on the contemporary revolt by the ‘unholy inhabitants of Nikokis’ (ἀνόσιων Νεικοκεϊτῶν) mentioned in *PTilmouís* 104 and in Cassius Dio (72.4).¹⁵ Similarly, there is a strong possibility that the siege of Syene described in Book 9 of the *Aithiopica* may reflect contemporary elements of the siege of Nisibis.¹⁶ This article discusses the representation of such encounters, as well as international warfare and battles, in the ancient Greek romances. Rather than focusing exclusively and comprehensively on the logistics and strategy of military engagements, however, it considers also the attitudes to war that are articulated in the course of these narratives.¹⁷

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Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* served as the model for many of the Greek romances and some say it was itself a novel.¹⁸ It contains the tragic novella of Pantheia and Abradatas, which provides a strong critique of imperial warfare,¹⁹ and is

¹² Trenkner 1958: esp. 23-30.

¹³ Hägg (1983:84-86) talks of the ‘insecurity of the individual’ as a result of ‘the activity of pirates and robbers’. See also Shaw 1984; Hopwood 1983, 1989; Millar 1981:63-75; Riess 2001.

¹⁴ Wengst 1987:1-54.

¹⁵ See Alston 1998:129-54 and Rutherford 2000:106-21.

¹⁶ On this complex question, which cannot be discussed here, see Bowersock 1994: 149-60; Lightfoot 1988:105-25; Szepessy 1975:279-87; 1976:247-76; Maroth 1979: 239-43; Morgan 1979 *ad loc.*; Lacombrade 1970:70-89; Colonna 1950:79-87.

¹⁷ For a discussion of war and peace in Classical Greek literature, see Spiegel 1990; Fitzgerald 1931; Caldwell 1919:20-34, 70-79, 125-37. Spiegel’s account covers Greek literature from Homer to the fourth-century orators and does not include the novels. I thank Jean Hill (née Ballantine) for showing me her UCT MA thesis (Ballantine 1949) - an interesting study for its time.

¹⁸ Model: see Reardon 1971. Novel: see Tatum 1989:xiii.

¹⁹ On the theme of war and peace in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, see Due 1989:158-62; Gera 1993:221-45, esp. 241: ‘Panthea has done a complete turn-about in her attitude towards war’; Nadon 2001:152-57 at 155: ‘the tragedy of Panthea and Abradatas draws attention to the cold, unerotic, and perhaps even truncated nature of Cyrus’ soul’. Reichel (1995:7-11) only addresses the question of genre; Tatum (1989:163-88) talks of

distributed episodically throughout most of this extended historical biography. It is very briefly recapitulated here. Pantheia, the wife of Abradatas of Susa, was taken prisoner by Cyrus in his war against the Medes. The Persian king's generous treatment of her wins her support and she persuades her husband Abradatas to defect to the Persian side. Abradatas does so and volunteers to lead Cyrus' new unit of scythed chariots into the battle of Thymbrara.²⁰ In a scene reminiscent of the famous parting of Hector and Andromache in the *Iliad* (6.390-493), Pantheia expresses her undying love for her husband before the battle, presents him with a suit of golden armour, and urges him to serve Cyrus well by fighting with glorious courage (6.4.2-11). As her husband leaves for battle, she kisses his chariot and follows him for a long time unnoticed. Abradatas meets a horrific death in the battle (his body is dismembered). When Cyrus hears of his death he hurries to the scene and finds Pantheia mourning and cradling her husband's mutilated body in her arms. She tells him that both of them were to blame for her husband's death (καὶ ταῦτα, ἔφη, οἶδ' ὅτι δι' ἐμὲ οὐχ ἥκιστα ἔπαθεν, ἴσως δὲ καὶ διὰ σέ, ὦ Κῦρε, οὐδέν ἦπτον, 7.3.10). Cyrus expresses concern for her well-being but she commits suicide nonetheless and her servants follow her into death. Her suicide, like that of Lucretia (Liv. 1.57-60), is eloquent.²¹

Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* often shows the influence of Xenophon (see below), but does not contain a similarly powerful critique of war. This romance is given a detailed historical context - the relationship between the city of Syracuse and the Persian Empire in the 4th century BCE.²² The Egyptian rebellion against the Persian masters (mentioned above) occupies the whole of Book 7 of the romance and constitutes one of the major trials faced by Chaereas and Callirhoe. Chariton explicitly informs us in his recapitulation of the plot (8.1.4)²³ that he believed his readers would find his final chapter (τὸ τελευταῖον τοῦτο σύγγραμμα), which concerned lawful love (ἔρωτες δίκαιοι) and legal marriage (νόμιμοι γάμοι), most enjoyable (ἡδιστον) and a purification (καθάρσιον) of the sad events that had come before: piracy, slavery, lawsuits, fighting, starving to death, wars, and conquests (ληστεία καὶ δουλεία καὶ δίκη καὶ μάχη καὶ ἀποκαρτέρησις καὶ πόλεμος καὶ ἄλωσις) - an emphatically syndetic list.²⁴ This

'the transformation of romantic hero and heroine into tragic victims of the Assyrian war' (179). Other readings are no doubt possible.

²⁰ Anderson (1970:165-91) analyses the tactics in this fictitious battle in detail.

²¹ On the Lucretia myth, see Donaldson 1982.

²² Hunter 1994:1055-86.

²³ Hägg 1971:246-67.

²⁴ On the 'subjectivity' of Chariton here, see Perry 1930:129-30 n. 43. On the link between Chariton here and the historians, see Hunter 1994:1070-71.

passage emphasises the importance of warfare in the narrative - it is referred to in three aspects: fighting, war, and conquests - and describes it as grim (σκυθρωπά). Nevertheless, if Chariton's words here are read with Aristotle's rules for the plots of tragedy in mind (*Poetics* 1449b26-28), he could be taken to suggest that the sufferings that the lovers undergo constitute the essential elements of 'pity and fear' in drama that are purged by a sudden reversal in the plot.²⁵ In other words, the war narrative gives an essential emotional complexity and direction to the romance.²⁶

The military episodes in Book 7 also serve to prove in action what the trial in Babylon²⁷ had failed to establish - that Chaereas is more worthy of Callirhoe's love than his rivals are (see especially 8.4.2) - and in so doing provide the impetus for the resolution of the plot. They also strengthen the character of Chaereas, who is transformed by his successes as a general. He even ventures some manly advice to an Egyptian soldier about how to handle women (7.6.10). The contrast with the earlier books is marked. Whereas before Chaereas ignominiously lost possession of the Sicilian war trireme he had commanded when he set out on a mission to recover Callirhoe, and was enslaved to the Persian satrap Mithridates (3.7), he now sets out with his friend Polycharmus to join the Egyptian rebels with the aim of inflicting as much harm as possible on the Persian king, who had awarded Callirhoe to a Greek landowner, Dionysius (7.1) in return for his loyal support in the war. Chaereas soon distinguishes himself (7.2.6) through his nobility, his hostility to the King of Persia, and his desire to prove that he was not a man to be despised (οὐκ ἦν ἐγκαταφρόνητος, ἀλλ' ἄξιος τιμῆς).

Sieges and battles feature prominently in the narrative, but Chariton often gives these conventional themes a new and surprising twist. For example, Chaereas proves his military credentials by capturing Tyre (7.2-4).²⁸ Here the

²⁵ The recapitulation of the plot itself has this effect according to Hägg 1971:259. For Chariton and drama, see Schmeling 1974.

²⁶ For the importance of war in the plot of Chariton, see Lowe 2000:229-30, although Lowe reads the Greek novels as epic rather than dramatic fiction.

²⁷ On the trial in Babylon to determine who was legally the husband of Callirhoe, see Schwarz 1999.

²⁸ Comparison between the siege of Tyre in the Alexander historians (Arrian 2.15.6-2.24.5; Plut. *Alex.* 24-25; Curt. 4.2.1-4.4.21) on the one hand, and the *Alexander Romance* (1.35) and Chariton (7.2-4) on the other, is instructive. The romances compress the narrative focus of their attention almost exclusively on the main characters. In general, battles are extraordinarily difficult to narrate since so much happens in different places in a relatively short space of time, and because the experiences of individuals in fighting need not be typical of the overall outcome. On Tolstoy's view that battles were impossible to describe, see Greenwood 1975:29.

reader anticipates a similar account to that of how Alexander famously captured the city by constructing a mole between the mainland and the island city. However, Chariton appears to think that the two were already connected by a causeway,²⁹ and instead of giving the usual account, he relates how Chaereas deceives the inhabitants by pretending to be disaffected soldiers of the pharaoh at the head of a band of 300 Spartan, Corinthian, and Sicilian mercenaries. This change emphasises the heroic role of Chaereas in capturing the city with a small number of troops, rather than the technical complexity of the construction of the mole to the city and the efforts of the Tyrians to frustrate its construction. Chaereas' bold, nationalistic speech before the attack stands in sharp contrast to that of the Egyptian king, who advocates withdrawal to Pelusium. His heroism is reinforced by intertexts from the top shelf of Greek military history: there are echoes of Homeric battle descriptions (*Iliad* 9.48-49), the funeral speech of Pericles in Thucydides (7.3.9; cf. Thuc. 2.37.1), Herodotus' account of the battle of Thermopylae (7.3.9; cf. Hdt. 7.186), the *Alexander Romance*, and Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (7.4.9; cf. *Cyr.* 7.1.32). Chariton's description of the confused struggle in the streets of Tyre (7.4), which enabled Chaereas' small band to gain the upper hand, lacks the pathos of Thucydides' account of the Theban night attack on Plataea (2.4), perhaps because this would have detracted from the achievement of Chaereas.

A further example of Chariton's elaborate treatment of commonplaces of military history is to be found after the final encounter between the Egyptian and Persian forces. The Egyptian King has assumed control of the troops on land and Chaereas takes command of the Egyptian navy. He is victorious, but the pharaoh is defeated. Chaereas captures the Persian women who had been left behind on the island of Arados, among whom were the Persian Queen, Stateira, and Chaereas' wife, Callirhoe. An Egyptian soldier attempts to console Callirhoe, thinking that she was the queen, by telling her that the admiral (Chaereas) would marry her.³⁰ Callirhoe takes this news badly and prays for torture and death rather than this fate. The soldier reports her reaction to Chaereas (who does not know that she is among the female prisoners). He chaffs the soldier about his inability to handle women, and

Compression is not the only way that fiction deals with this problem. Xenophon considerably expands his final battle in the *Cyropaedia* to convey a clearer idea of how the engagement turned out, and to give his own ideas on military tactics. See Anderson 1970:165-91.

²⁹ According to Plepelits 1976:18, Chariton's error was the result of using the 'Vorstufe des Alexanderromans', since *Alexander Romance* considered Tyre a normal city on land. Nevertheless, he has not simply followed this account to no purpose.

³⁰ The text here is seriously lacunose and confused.

self-deprecatingly notes her low estimation of him, finally suggesting ironically that she may have lost a husband (7.6). The episode underlines Chaereas' new-found confidence. The roles of the two lovers are reversed; whereas Chaereas was suicidal and self-destructive at Callirhoe's death (1.5-6), it is now she who asks for a sword to do away with herself when the possibility of a third marriage is suggested to her. Here too, the model for Chaereas' chivalric behaviour is Alexander (compare Arr. 2.12.3-8, quoting Ptolemy, Aristobulus, and one other version; Plut. *Alex.* 21, emphasising the sexual restraint of Alexander; Curt. 3.12.1-25, a long account³¹; Diod. Sic. 17.37.3-38). As in all these accounts, Chaereas is informed of the lamentations of the women by an intermediary (in Chariton this is a nameless Egyptian soldier, in the Alexander historians he is Leonnatus), who informs them of the kindness of his commander towards women (Alexander's sexual self-restraint is commended particularly by Plutarch). However, Chariton introduces several significant changes to this familiar anecdote. He makes Callirhoe a confidante of the Persian queen - a detail that may originate in the *Alexander Romance* (2.22), where Roxana, Alexander's wife, appears among the captives as the daughter of Darius.³² Secondly, the Egyptian soldier informs Callirhoe that his commander would marry her. This element probably derives from Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (5.1.6) where Panthea, the exceptionally beautiful wife of Abradatas of Susa, is captured by Cyrus. She is consoled by Cyrus' courtiers with the news that Cyrus would marry her, but on hearing this, she bursts into tears. Unlike Alexander, Cyrus refuses to visit Panthea, lest he be overcome by desire for her (likewise Chariton does not visit the women's quarters).³³ These modifications of the standard account of the episode clearly enhance the character of Chaereas (by his association with Alexander and Cyrus), add sexual restraint to the number of his virtues,³⁴ and intensify the dramatic possibilities of the scene, especially in respect of the irony in Callirhoe's rejection of marriage to her husband.

Finally, the concluding scene in the harbour of Syracuse explicitly alludes to the famous naval battle in which the Athenian expeditionary force was defeated in the harbour (Thuc. 7.71), except that the events are seen from the *Syracusan* point of view:

³¹ Atkinson 1980 *ad loc.* On the novelistic inclinations of Q. Curtius Rufus, see Currie 1990:70, though curiously he does not discuss this episode in detail.

³² Plepelits 1976:18.

³³ See Plepelits 1976:186-87 n. 181); Perry 1967:169-70. On the relationship between the *Cyropaedia* and the Greek romances, especially the Pantheia story, see Reichel 1995:7-11.

³⁴ For sexual restraint (*enkrateia*) as a Greek male virtue, see Foucault 1986:63-78 and Balot 1998:139-62.

ταχέως οὖν ὁ λιμὴν ἐπληροῦτο, καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖνο τὸ σχῆμα τὸ μετὰ τὴν ναυμαχίαν τὴν Ἀττικὴν· καὶ αὐταὶ γὰρ αἱ τριήρεις ἐκ πολέμου κατέπλεον ἐστεφανωμέναι, χρησάμεναι Συρακουσίῳ στρατηγῷ· συνεμίχθησαν δὲ αἱ φωναὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης τοὺς ἀπὸ γῆς ἀσπαζομένων καὶ πάλιν ἐκείνων τοὺς ἐκ θαλάσσης, εὐφημαίαι τε καὶ ἔπαινοι καὶ συνευχαὶ πυκναὶ παρ' ἀμφοτέρων πρὸς ἀλλήλους.

'So the harbour quickly filled up; the scene resembled the naval battle of the Athenians – these triremes were also sailing back from battle decorated with garlands under the command of a Syracusan admiral. The voices of those on the sea greeting those on land mingled with those responding to them in turn; blessings, cries of praise, and prayers, were continually being exchanged by both sides.' (8.6.10)

The shift in emphasis from the life and death struggle of the Athenians to escape from Syracuse to the festive return of the lovers in Chariton contrasts the very different preoccupations of the historian and the writer of romance. A tragic defeat is transformed into a triumphant public celebration of victory. The emotional charge is directed towards Chaereas' successful resolution of the capture of Callirhoe. In his final tableau (8.6.8), Chariton emphasises the military rank of Chaereas (σχῆμα ἔχων στρατηγοῦ) and the splendour of the sight of Callirhoe lying on a golden bed clothed in Tyrian purple (ᾧφθη Καλλιρόη μὲν ἐπὶ χρυσηλάτου κλίνης ἀνακειμένη, Τυρίαν ἀμπεχομένη πορφύραν) - the spoils of his involvement in Egyptian revolt.

Chariton often emphasises the psychological aspects of warfare.³⁵ The restoration of the royal harem to the Persian king, for example, is in line with Onasander's advice to generals to be merciful to a defeated enemy in order to avoid the stubborn resistance that those who are badly treated may put up (35.2, 38). Chariton also notes the importance of prompt and decisive action (6.8.4), and the confidence inspired in soldiers by an able general (7.5.9 - the reaction of the land and sea forces to the appointment of Chaereas to command the navy is instructive here). Once again this is in keeping with Onasander's precepts (for example, 1 'On the Choice of a General', and 13 'On the Importance for Morale of Courage in Defeat'). This is his account of the Persian court on receiving news of a serious revolt in Egypt:

ἐβουλευέτο περὶ τῶν καθεστηκότων καὶ ἄλλος ἄλλο τι παρήνει·
πᾶσι δὲ ἤρεσκε τὸ σπεύδειν καὶ μηδὲ μίαν ἡμέραν, εἰ δυνατόν,
ἀναβαλέσθαι δυοῖν ἕνεκεν· ἵνα καὶ τοὺς πολεμίους ἐπίσχωσι τῆς

³⁵ This is one of Chariton's 'main interests'; Hägg 1971:294.

πρὸς τὸ πλεῖον αὐξήσεως καὶ τοὺς φίλους εὐθυμότερους ποιήσωσι, δείξαντες αὐτοῖς ἐγγύθειν τὴν βοήθειαν· βραδυνόντων δὲ εἰς τοῦναντίον ἅπαντα χωρήσειν· τοὺς μὲν γὰρ πολεμίους καταφρονήσειν ὡς δεδιότων, τοὺς δὲ οἰκείους ἐνδώσειν ὡς ἀμελουμένους ... ῥάσθη δὲ ἐστὶ Πέρσαις ἢ παρασκευὴ τῆς δυνάμεως. συντέτακται γὰρ ἀπὸ Κύρου, τοῦ πρώτου Περσῶν βασιλεύσαντος.

'There was a discussion about the situation and there were many different views, but everybody agreed that they should hurry and not delay for a single day, if possible, for two reasons: to stop the enemy growing in numbers and to make their friends more confident by showing them that help was at hand. But if they procrastinated, everything would turn out differently: the enemy would despise them thinking that they were afraid, and their own side would give up believing that no-one was concerned about them . . . Persia can mobilise its forces very easily. Instructions had been laid down by Cyrus, the first king of Persia.' (6.8.4-6)

Here the concerns of the military strategist and the novelist work together. The novelist wishes to convey the psychological state of the Persian King, while the military strategist counts the cost to troop morale from any delay. The detail of troop mobilisation in particular, has the academic tone of the military historian.³⁶ The central concern, however, is how war affects the personal lives of individuals. The two themes of love and war are intricately intertwined in Chariton. Chaereas had joined the Egyptian rebellion after failing to have his claim to Callirhoe upheld. Similarly, the jealous rivals for the love of Callirhoe ally in a 'war' against the successful suitor, Chaereas (1.2.1; 1.2.5; cf. 5.4.1; 5.8.1: 'men easily go to war over the love of a woman'). Lovers look forward to war as a way of proving their worth (6.9.2), or taking their minds off love (6.9.4), or bringing a change in their fortunes (7.1.10), although it might also present them with difficulties they had not foreseen (7.3.3), and is the polar opposite of love (7.1.5). Finally, Chariton turns on its head the conventional idea that love resolves strife when he concludes that war resolves the romantic conflict between the rival lovers of Callirhoe (πόλεμος γὰρ ἄριστος κριτὴς τοῦ κρείττονός τε καὶ χείρονος, 8.4.2).

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³⁶ On Persian conscription and mobilisation, see Briant 2002:749-50, drawing on Xenophon's account of the Persian *syllagos* (*Oec.* 4.6; *Cyr.* 8.6.15).

A number of passages in the ancient Greek novels show that their young lovers have a more negative view of war.³⁷ Longus, for example, gives a most convincing account of the outbreak of a low-level war between two Greek city-states, Mytilene and Methymna, on the island of Lesbos (2.12-3.3.1). He was familiar with Thucydides and wrote his novel as a ‘history of love’ (ιστορίαν ἔρωτος).³⁸ This may have been why he explains the outbreak of war through a complex series of accidental ‘causes’ (the mooring-rope of a yacht belonging to rich Methymnaean youths is stolen, they replace it with green withies which are eaten by goats, and a gust of wind blows their yacht out to sea). The young men of Methymna fix the blame for this accident on Daphnis, the goatherd, and attempt to enslave him, but he is defended by his fellow farm-workers in an improvised trial. In a public meeting of their fellow citizens, the Methymnaeans then misrepresent their loss as an act of war (πόλεμον νόμῳ) on the part of the people of Mytilene. The assembly at Methymna is persuaded to take vengeance and vote ‘to attack the Mytileneans without sending any herald to declare war (πόλεμον ἀκήρυκτον ἐψηφίσαντο), and issue orders to their general to launch ten warships, and pillage the enemy coast’ (κακουργεῖν ... τὴν παραλίαν) (2.19). In the course of this operation Chloe is captured and taken on board the Methymnaean ships to be their slave. Daphnis despairs, wishing for ‘death or another war’ (θάνατον ἢ πόλεμον δεύτερον, 2.22), but the Nymphs reveal to him that Pan, who is ‘more accustomed to army camps than we are, and he has fought many wars already, abandoning the countryside’ (συνήθης γὰρ στρατοπέδοις μᾶλλον ἡμῶν καὶ πολλοὺς ἤδη πολέμους ἐπολέμησε τὴν ἀγροικίαν καταλιπών, 2.23.4), will rescue her. The Methymnaeans are then miraculously seized by panic - an event the wise men in the community knew was the result of some wrongful action on their part - although they are unable to understand what it was (2.26). Pan himself appears in a dream to the Methymnaean general, Bryaxis, and instructs him to release Chloe. He complies, but the people of Mytilene nevertheless decide on reprisals (ὄπλα κινεῖν) for this attack. They call up 3,000 infantry and 500 cavalry under

³⁷ The heroes and heroines of the ancient romances are without exception adolescents. Longus makes Daphnis 15 and Chloe 13 at the beginning of his novel (1.7.1). Xenophon’s hero Habrocomes is about 16 (1.2.2) and his girl-friend Antheia is 14 (1.2.5). In Achilles Tatius, Kleitophon is a 19 year-old ‘youth’ (*neaniskos*, 1.2.1, 1.3.3) and Leukippe a ‘young maiden’ (*parthenos*, 1.4.2), who move in the highest and wealthiest social circles. Heliodorus makes his heroine Charicleia 17 at the end of the novel (10.14) the same age as her intended Ethiopian husband, Meroebos (10.23). Chariton’s Callirhoe had never been out in public before the narrative commences (1.1). On youth in the ancient world, see Kleijwegt 1991.

³⁸ Hunter 1996.

their general, Hippasus, and march overland to Methymna, since they are afraid to sail there during winter (3.1). Hippasus makes straight for the enemy city, hoping to surprise it, as he considered pillaging the fields of the Methymnaeans beneath his dignity. Close to the walls he is met by a herald bringing terms for a truce - full restitution of all goods and peace on land and sea (3.2). Although he possesses full powers to decide as he saw fit, Hippasus encamps close to the city and awaits the decision of the assembly in Mytilene who accept the terms - 'Being faced with a choice between war and peace, they found peace more profitable' (πολέμου γὰρ καὶ εἰρήνης ἐν αἰρέσει γενόμενοι τὴν εἰρήνην εὕρισκον κερδαλεωτέραν, 3.2.5). This was no doubt acceptable to the general who had earlier found a secluded bay where he allowed his men to enjoy the 'pleasures of peace' (τῆρ' ἐν εἰρηνικῇν, 2.25.2).

The role of Pan is central to this narrative. In the novel Pan is linked to Dionysus, who is the god 'whose power is felt throughout the novel' (Hunter 1983:37, 111 n. 63). The two gods are in any case closely related. In the novel Pan's function is to protect his herds and those who care for them.³⁹ His tactics are generally unmilitary, but this did not prevent his power in warfare from becoming the subject of military manuals. Polyaeus (1.2) confirms the link between Pan and Dionysus; he calls Pan the general of Dionysus, who named the phalanx and invented military tactics (τάξις), especially the use of horns of battle on the right and left (see also Luc. *Bacch.* 4; Diod. 1.18). Pan is the god who instills panic (πανικὸς φόβος) in battle through the war-cry.⁴⁰ Onasander Tacticus (41.2) advises the use of night attacks when besieging cities, since the darkness exaggerates the severity of the dangers. Aeneas Tacticus (27) shows just how common panic attacks could be in ancient warfare and suggests various counter-measures to prevent them breaking out.⁴¹ Finally, Herodotus (6.105) records the appearance of Pan to Philippides before the battle of Marathon, although the god played no actual part in the battle.

In Longus, as in pastoral generally, war is an intrusion into an idyllic, youthful world.⁴² It is a disruptive force that disturbs the equilibrium of country life that proceeds almost on the premise of peace. The intervention of the powers of nature as manifested in Pan are required to restore the balance. Peace comes only when the Nymphs and Pan are appeased by reli-

³⁹ On Pan in general, see Borgeaud 1988:96-97 and *passim*.

⁴⁰ Morgan (2004:191) notes the military side of Pan; see also Rosenmeyer 1969:241-42 for the violence latent in this rural god.

⁴¹ Aeneas states that the term itself is Peloponnesian, specifically Arcadian (27.1).

⁴² Morgan 2004 *ad loc.* (3.1); MacQueen 1990:64. For this theme in Virgil's pastoral poetry, see Segal 1981:271-300; Wilkinson 1966:320-24.

gious ritual (2.31). The novel therefore implicitly rejects warfare and violence.

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The voice of youthful antipathy to warfare can also be seen in one of the earliest fragments of the Greek novels, the *Ninōs* fragment,⁴³ which dates to the 1st century BCE. This piece derives its material from Ctesias' *Persika* (Diod. 2.1-20). According to this account, Ninus was the legendary King of the Assyrians and a 'by nature a warlike man and emulous of valour' (φύσει πολεμικὸς καὶ ζηλωτῆς τῆς ἀρήτης), who conquered Babylonia, Media, and indeed all of Asia, except the Indians and Bactrians. He married a Syrian woman, Semiramis 'whose nature made her eager for great exploits' (φύσει μεγαλεπίβολος). She became a formidable warrior-queen, who invaded Ethiopia and India in a campaign of world-conquest. While there are mythical and romantic elements in Ctesias' account of Semiramis' miraculous birth, remarkable beauty, and sexual predation (she never married after Ninus' early death and made away with her lovers after having intercourse with them), his account is nevertheless one of imperial adventurism and war-mongering. The *Ninus* fragment transfers this story into the world of Hellenistic warfare. Here Ninus' army consists of Greek and Carian mercenaries and light-armed troops together with 70,000 Assyrian infantry, 30,000 cavalry, and 150 elephants. Column B.II of the fragment shows a concern about the terrain over which the army needs to pass, and for the logistics of transporting the elephants safely. Column B.III has Ninus deploying his army for battle with cavalry on the wings, light-armed troops inside them, and the infantry phalanx at the centre. This appears to have been the conventional plan,⁴⁴ but some details show awareness of the need for careful positioning of the foot-soldiers. The turreted elephants are carefully spaced out and corridors are left in the infantry formation to allow the animals to flee the battle without disrupting the fighting. Each corridor was 'so calculated that it could be quickly closed up [on command] and again opened - the one manoeuvre to receive the retiring beasts the other to stop a charge of the enemy' (ὥστε ἐπιμῦσαι τε ὀπότ[ε βουλευθεῖ]η δύνασθαι καὶ πάλιν διεκ[σ]τῆναι, τὸ μὲν εἰς [τὴν ὑπο]δοχὴν τῶν θηρίων, τὸ δὲ εἰς] κώλυσιν τῆς εἰσδρ[ομῆς τῶν] πολεμίων). The fragment concludes with the usual pre-battle speech to the troops. While the romantic elements have been played

⁴³ See Stephens & Winkler 1993:23-71.

⁴⁴ Stephens & Winkler 1995:61 compare Polybius' account of the battle of Raphia (5.82.3).

up in the narrative - Ninus and Semiramis are teenagers seeking permission from their future mothers-in-law to marry - the military details are carefully described and recognisable, if rather schematic. But this novel fragment also gives a unique and characteristically youthful perspective on war. In column A the seventeen-year old Ninus appeals to Semiramis' mother to allow them to marry. He declares that the marriage cannot be postponed since a risky life of continual warfare awaits him (μ' ἐκδέχονται καὶ ἐκ πολέμων πόλεμοι) and that, although he is no coward, 'the uncertainty and incalculability of the times that lie ahead of me urge haste' (σπευσάτω τὸ ἀστάθμητον καὶ ἀτέκμαρτον τῶν ἐκδεχομένων με χρόνων) so that if he dies in battle a pledge (ἐνέχυρα) - in other words a child - will be left behind for their parents to continue the royal line. Ninus concludes with a familiar theme from love elegy - he confesses that he is her daughter's prisoner of war (αἰχμάλωτος). Ninus' mother then consults Semiramis on the matter, pointing out that he has not forced himself on her despite his victories in war.

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Achilles Tattius, as ever, provides a rather different and more cynical take on the feelings of a soldier in love on the point of leaving for war. His narrator, Clitophon, relates how the general Charmides, who had fallen in love with Leucippe during the course of his campaign against the βουκόλοι, asked the Egyptian Menelaus to convey his feelings to her as follows:

ἐν πολέμῳ δὲ τίς ἐπιθυμίαν ἀναβάλλεται; στρατιώτης δὲ ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων μάχην οἶδεν εἰ ζήσεται; τοσαῦται τῶν θανάτων εἰσὶν ὁδοί. αἴτησαί μοι παρὰ τῆς Τύχης τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, καὶ μενῶ. ἐπὶ πόλεμον νῦν ἐξελεύσομαι βουκόλων· ἔνδον μου τῆς ψυχῆς ἄλλος πόλεμος κάθηται. στρατιώτης με πορθεῖ τόξον ἔχων, βέλος ἔχων. νειίκημαι, πεπλήρωμαι βελῶν· κάλεσον, ἄνθρωπε, ταχὺ τὸν ἰώμενον· ἐπείγει τὸ τραῦμα. ἄψω πῦρ ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους· ἄλλας δᾶδας ὁ Ἔρως ἀνήψε κατ' ἐμοῦ· τοῦτο πρῶτον, Μενέλαε, σβέσον τὸ πῦρ. καλὸν τὸ οἰώνισμα πρὸ πολέμου συμβολῆς ἐρωτικῆ συμπλοκῆς. Ἀφροδίτη με πρὸς Ἄρεα ἀποστειλάτω.

'Who postpones their desires in war? Does a soldier who has a battle on his hands know whether he will live? There are so many different roads to death. Let Fate guarantee my safety and I will wait. I am about to go to war with savages (βουκόλοι) now, but there is another kind of war in my soul. A warrior, armed with bows and arrows, is laying into me: I am beaten! I am full of arrows! Call the doctor quick, man! The wound is

driving me on! I shall carry fire against my enemies, but Love has lit another kind of torch in me. Menelaus, put this fire out! An erotic engagement would be an excellent omen before we close together in war. Let Aphrodite send me against Ares.' (4.7.3-5)

The differences between these two declarations are transparent. In the first a young prince earnestly seeks permission to marry from a teenage girl's mother. In the second, a battle-hardened general seeks to seduce a prisoner of war. Both make use of the argument that war makes life uncertain.

The *topos* that love is a kind of war (the *militia amoris*), is also expressed by Achilles Tatius' narrator, Clitophon, who describes his assault on Leucippe as follows:

ἐπιτηρήσας οὖν ὅτε τοῦ φωτὸς τὸ πολὺ τῆς αὐγῆς ἔμαραι-νετο, πρόσειμι θρασύτερος γενόμενος πρὸς αὐτὴν ἐκ τῆς πρώτης προσβολῆς, ὥσπερ στρατιώτης ἤδη νεικηκῶς καὶ τοῦ πολέμου καταπεφρονηκῶς· πολλὰ γὰρ ἦν τὰ τότε ὀπλίζοντά με θαρρεῖν· οἶνος, ἔρως, ἐλπίς, ἐρημία.

'So I waited until the light of the sun began to wane, and then I advanced on her, growing bolder as a result of my first attack, like a soldier who has already won a victory and has nothing but contempt for war, for there were many things that armed my confidence - wine, desire, expectation, solitude.' (2.10.3)

In general, Achilles Tatius provides his readers with a realistic view of war through the account of his narrator, Clitophon. The plot of *Leucippe and Clitophon* is framed by the outbreak and conclusion of a war between Thrace and Byzantium. The narrative begins when the Byzantine general Sostratus sends Panthea, his wife, and Leucippe, his daughter, from Byzantium to Tyre to escape the hazards of war (τῆς τοῦ πολέμου τύχης) that had broken out between the two cities (1.3.6), and ends when Clitophon returns Leucippe to Byzantium when peace has been restored (8.18.1).

The most important military incident in the novel, however, concerns the capture of the hero and heroine in Book 3 by the βουκόλοι.⁴⁵ Achilles Tatius' novel is set at the time of the Persian rule of Egypt (610-333 BCE) and Rutherford states that the myth of the βουκόλοι dates at least to the early Hellenistic period.⁴⁶ However, papyri from the 2nd century (*PThmouis* 104) mentioning the 'unholy inhabitants of Nikochis' (ἀνόσιοι Νεικοχειτοί), a reference in Xenophon of Ephesus (3.12), and the historical narrative of

⁴⁵ See Alston 1998 and Rutherford 2000.

⁴⁶ Rutherford 2000:109.

Cassius Dio (72.4), indicate that the account in Achilles Tatius was probably referring to a contemporary uprising suppressed by Roman soldiers under Avidius Cassius in 171 CE. According to the *Suda*, Achilles was an inhabitant of Alexandria, and his version of Clitophon's description of this military engagement is sufficiently detailed to suggest that he is recounting contemporary reports, whether oral or written, of the engagement.

Achilles narrates how Leucippe and Clitophon take a boat along the Nile to Alexandria but are attacked near a *polis* (this may be Bubastis) and captured by large, black bandits (λησταιί) called βουκόλοι, who speak a foreign language and who are led by a chief whom they called a King (3.9.3). Later, a man with long hair arrives on a horse without saddle blanket or other equipment (3.12). He announces that the head pirate (λήσταρχος) had decreed that if any of the prisoners was a virgin, she should be brought 'to the god' and sacrificed as a purification of the army (καθάρσιον τοῦ στρατοῦ). Leucippe is, of course, immediately identified as the appropriate victim and taken by force from Clitophon. All the prisoners are taken to the head pirate. When they are two stades from the village (κόμεης) a military phalanx of 50 'hoplites', some with small shields others with large ones, appear and attack the bandits who fight back with sharp clods of earth (3.13). The soldiers defend themselves and attack in formation - first the light-armed javelin-throwers and then the 'hoplites'. The narrator notes how their experience makes up for their lack of numbers. In the confusion Clitophon and the other prisoners escape to the soldiers. The cavalry (not mentioned until now) then charge and surround the bandits. A massacre ensues and eventually, in spite of the some resistance the remaining combatants are taken prisoner. The next day the soldiers filled in the canal (διώρυχα) that lay between them and the bandits (3.15). They cross over and camp on the other side (5.16). An escaped prisoner (Menelaus) then informs the general (3.24) that the next village was full of thousands of desperate men. However, the general confidently declares that his 5,000 soldiers are a match for them, despite the delay in arriving of a further 2,000 reinforcements from Heliopolis (who were awaiting the arrival of the phoenix). The general therefore decides to return to a village and takes Clitophon, Leucippe, Menelaus and Satyrus back with him. The soldiers and the recovered prisoners are billeted in the village (4.1).

The satrap of Egypt sends an emissary with a letter with orders to attack the brigands (4.11.1-2). The soldiers rush to arm themselves and to report to their commanders (λοχαγοῖς). The general announces a password (σύνθημα) and gives orders to the soldiers make camp and to take up positions. Clitophon describes the topography of battle site (near Kerkasoros) and the nature of the terrain (lakes and islands - one of which is named Nikochis).

The βουκόλοι plan to screen their fighters with old men offering terms. The general rejects these. The old men then surrender but ask to be killed in the town. The general agrees to this request and releases his soldiers from their formation (τὴν παρασκευὴν τῆς μάχης μεθήσει). Meanwhile the βουκόλοι had posted scouts (σκόποι) to break the irrigation dam (4.14.1-3) and to send the waters against the soldiers as soon as they saw them crossing the causeway. The trap is sprung and what had been a land battle becomes an engagement on water. A larger force of soldiers now appears from the capital (ἀπὸ τῆς μητροπόλεως, 4.18.2) and razes the βουκόλοι town to the ground. Leucippe, and Clitophon continue their journey to Alexandria together with a fisherman, Chaereas, who lived on the Pharos island. He had joined the expedition against the βουκόλοι as a mercenary and was now free to leave.

There are a number of relevant points to observe in this narrative. Clitophon's description provides more realistic (unliterary) detail than is usual in ancient fiction. This may be because Clitophon is portrayed as a skilled fighter and his interest in military affairs is therefore in character for the narrator of the events. After he escapes from the βουκόλοι (3.14.2), for example, he demonstrates his knowledge of cavalry manoeuvres (τὰ τῶν πολεμούντων σχήματα) to the 'general' who is so impressed with them that he assigns him a place in his army together with the services of a batman. The narrative is also of interest in itself, since it features a complex strategy of deception by the βουκόλοι, exploiting to the full their knowledge of local conditions.⁴⁷ The incident was sensational both for the fear that urban-dwellers had of the rural outlaws, and for the unpredictable fortunes of the battle. However, both Clitophon and Cassius Dio describe the treachery and cruelty of the βουκόλοι in a fairly dispassionate manner. The former turns the event into a rhetorical set piece on the paradox of a sea battle on land. The latter notes the cruelty and treachery of the herdsmen along with the courage of their leader in battle.

Second, Clitophon's detailed narrative suggests that Roman legions and tactics are used in the campaign. Significant points include the billeting of soldiers on an Egyptian village,⁴⁸ the command structure (satrap, general, λοχαγός, soldiers corresponding to prefect, legate, centurions, and soldiers), the practice of encampment to consolidate a strategic position, and the close maintenance of military formation. This gives the narrative a contemporary edge.

⁴⁷ On deception in archaic and classical Greek warfare, see Krentz 2000:167-200.

⁴⁸ For the Roman practice of billeting soldiers in Egyptian villages, see the edict of Germanicus in AD 19 (*Select Papyri* II.211); *SEG* 8.794.

Third, the sacrifice of Leucippe corresponds in some way to the ritual killing of the centurion's companion in Cassius Dio. In Dio's account, this incident should be connected with the desperation of the βουκόλοι and the important role played by the priest, Isidorus (whose counterpart is Thyamis in Heliodorus). The revolt follows a pattern familiar from other rebellions against Roman rule. The revolt of Boudicca, for example, likewise followed severe oppression culminating in violent resistance under the leadership of a charismatic figure (Tac. *Ann.* 14.31-37; *Agr.* 16.1-2; Cass. Dio 62.1-12). The sacrifice appears to have been intended to bind the rebels in a common cause through the commission of an atrocity. In Clitophon's account, the motive for the sacrifice is understood differently as a rite of purification. This suggests a psychological explanation for the killing of a victim in the context of a battle. Conventionally, animal sacrifices were made before a battle as an act of divination and propitiation.⁴⁹ The slaughter of an animal takes the place of a human (whether one of the enemy or one of the sacrificing army). While Achilles' account of Callirhoe's sacrifice is elaborately fabricated, there is a realistic context in which the theatrical elements are set.⁵⁰

This incident therefore shows a degree of detail in the narration of the suppression of the revolt by the 'Persian' authorities that is unusual in the ancient Greek romances and is unnecessary for the development of the plot.⁵¹ Clitophon certainly does not play a central role in this engagement. He finds himself on the periphery of the battle and, despite his bravado and claims to military expertise, is more interested in self-preservation than in influencing the outcome of events.

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In Heliodorus, there is a detailed and unusual account of the aftermath of a battle (6.12-15). His narrative, which has strong overtones of the witch Erichtho's necromancy in Lucan (6.413-830), describes how Calasiris and Chariclea come across an old woman mourning the death of her son on a battlefield near Bessa in Egypt. The old woman informs them that the

⁴⁹ Parker 2000:299-314, esp. 308. For the religious interpretation of this sacrifice, see Henrichs 1972. Winkler (1980:155) prefers to interpret it as 'aesthetic rather than literary'. Hopwood (1998:201) compares the oath taken by the Catilinarian conspirators.

⁵⁰ For the theatricality of this episode, see Morales 2004:167-69.

⁵¹ Morales (2004:128-29) discusses the 'hyperrealism' of Achilles Tatius, but in a different context from this extended narrative, or the technical details of the shipwreck (3.1-3).

villagers had ambushed a Persian troop that was escorting a prisoner (Theagenes) to the Great King. Her son was killed in the fighting. This is how she describes his death (6.13.2-4):

ἐπειδὴ τὴν ἔφοδον ἔσομένην ἔτεκμήραντο προλοχίζουσι τέτινας ἐνέδρας καὶ δεξάμενοι τοὺς ἐναντίους ἐπικρατέστεροι γίνονται, οἱ μὲν κατὰ στόμα ἐκ τοῦ εὐθέως μαχόμενοι οἱ δὲ κατόπιν ἐκ τῶν λόχων ἀπροφυλάκτοις σὺν βοῇ τοῖς Πέρσαις ἐπελθόντες. καὶ πίπτει μὲν ὁ Μιτράνης ἐν πρώτοις μαχόμενος πίπτουσι δὲ σὺν αὐτῷ σχεδόν τι πάντες, οἷα δὴ κυκλωθέντες καὶ οὐδὲ φυγῆς τόπων εὐμοιρήσαντες, πίπτουσι δὲ καὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων ὀλίγοι· καὶ γίνεται τῶν ὀλίγων βαρεῖα βουλήσει δαίμονος καὶ παῖς ὁ ἐμός, βέλει Περσικῶ πρὸς τὰ στέρνα, ὡς ὀράτε, βληθείς· καὶ νῦν ἡ ἀθλία τὸν μὲν θρηνῶ κείμενον, τὸν δὲ ἔτι μοι μόνον παῖδα λειπόμενον ἔοικα θρηνήσειν, ἐκστρατεύσαντος κακέϊνου τῇ προτεραίᾳ μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν ἐπὶ τὴν Μεμφιτῶν πόλιν.

‘Since they had guessed that there would be an attack, they laid ambushes at various points beforehand, took on their opposing numbers and got the upper hand, some fighting directly, face-to-face, others falling with a shout on the Persians who had not taken precautions against the ambushes in their rear. Mitranes fell fighting in the first line, and almost all of his men fell with him, for they were completely encircled and had no way of escape. A few of our men also fell, and by the heavy will of the daimon my son was one of the few, struck by a Persian dart in his chest, as you see. And now poor woman I lament over his body, and I think I shall soon be weeping too for the only son who is left me, for yesterday he joined the campaign against the city of Memphis with the rest.’

That night the old woman conducts sorcery to revive her dead son in order to ask him what would happen to his brother. The corpse comes to life and tells her that her second son would also die, and that she herself would meet a violent death as punishment for her evil practices. He also reveals that Calasiris would prevent war breaking out between his sons and that Charicleia would eventually be reunited with her lover and would reign as queen in a country on the borders of the earth.

This is a curious narrative from many points of view. First, the causes of the conflict are initially unclear and multiply from different points of view as the narrative unfolds.⁵² The old woman states that the villagers were a ‘warlike race’ who lived off the proceeds of brigandage. They initially attack the

⁵² On the complexities of Heliodorus’ plot and ‘the reconstruction of backstory from multiple embedded voices’, see Lowe 2000:235-40, 249-58.

Persians in order to capture the handsome Theagenes. It then appears from the people of Bessa as though the Egyptians are actually defending themselves against a Persian attack. They lay ambushes, and after an initial success, decide to launch a pre-emptive attack the Persian governor at Memphis, because they feared that the Persians would wipe out their village (cf. Hdt. 6.31). In addition they hoped that this assault would give them possession of the city, and the power to re-establish their leader, Thyamis, as priest. Second, while the narrative is told from the perspective of the old woman of Bessa, her account is taken over by the prophecy concerning the main characters of the romance. Finally, the old woman's narrative shows an unusual interest in the progress of the battle and the fate of her enemies the Persians, especially Mitrane, rather than in the death of her son. She observes the arrow in her son's chest with surprising objectivity and lack of emotion. Although a battle description from the perspective of a mother losing both her sons in a military engagement has the potential of providing a weighty critique of war, this is never made, despite the inclusion of the jarring detail that the conflict arose in part to prevent further warfare over the Egyptian priesthood. The old woman is a marginal character and her loss is subordinated to the literary and narratological purpose of the episode.

A further passage (9.11) reinforces the impression that battle scenes in the *Aithiopika* lack convincing realism. The incident occurs after the siege of Syene, when the inhabitants of the town realise that the Persian garrison had fled during the night, leaving them to face the anger of the Ethiopians. The omniscient author relates how they aimed to appease the anger of the Ethiopian king:

ἔγνωσαν οὖν πανδημεὶ τῆς πόλεως ἔξορμήσαντες ἐγχειρίζειν
 ἑαυτοὺς τοῖς Αἰθίοψι καὶ ὄρκους πιστοῦσθαι τὴν ἄγνοιαν, εἴ πως
 εἰς ἔλεον ἐπικλασθεῖεν. ἀθροίσαντες οὖν πᾶσαν ἡλικίαν καὶ
 κλάδους εἰς ἰκετηρίαν ἀναλαβόντες κηρούς τε καὶ δᾶδας
 ἀψάμενοι καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ γένη καὶ ἔδη τῶν θεῶν ὥσπερ κηρύκεια
 προβεβλημένοι διὰ τε τοῦ ζεύγματος ὡς τοὺς Αἰθίοπας ἐλθόν-
 τες, ἰκέται πόρρωθεν γονυπετοῦντες ἐκάθηντο καὶ ὑφ' ἐν σύν-
 θημα καὶ φωνὴν γοῶδη μίαν ἐλεεινὴν ὀλολυγὴν ἰέντες ἰκέτευσον.
 οἰκτιζόμενοι δὲ πλεόν, τὰ νεογνὰ τῶν βρεφῶν ἐπὶ γῆς προκατα-
 βάλλοντες φέρεσθαι ὡς ἔτυχε μεθῆκαν, διὰ τῆς ἀνυπόπτου καὶ
 ἀνυπαιτίου μοίρας τὸ θυμούμενοι τῶν Αἰθίοπων προμαλάσ-
 σοντες. τὰ βρέφη δὲ ὑπὸ πτοίας τε ἄμα καὶ ἀγνοίας τῶν
 πραπτομένων τοὺς μὲν φύντας καὶ τρέφοντας, τάχα που τὴν
 ἄπειρον ἀποτρεπόμενα βοήν, ὑπέφευγεν, ἐπὶ δὲ τὴν ἄγουσαν ὡς
 τοὺς πολεμίους τὰ μὲν εἶρπε, τὰ δὲ ψελλιζόμενα τὴν βάσιν καὶ
 κλαυθμυριζόμενα ἐπαγωγὸν ἐφέρετο, καθάπερ σχεδιαζούσης ἐν
 αὐτοῖς τὴν ἰκεσίαν τῆς τύχης.

‘They decided to rush en masse from the city and put themselves in the hands of the Ethiopians, and to swear on oath that they had not known [about the escape plan of the Persians], in the hope that he might be moved to pity. People of all ages gathered together. They took up branches in supplication, lit candles and torches, and placing the priestly caste and the images of the gods in front of them like heralds, they came over the bridge towards the Ethiopians; they fell to their knees at a distance as suppliants and at one concerted moment they raised a single pitiful wail of lamentation. To excite even greater compassion they set their new-born babies on the ground in front of them and allowed them to go wherever chance took them, to soften the will of the Ethiopians through the least suspicious and most blameless part [of the population]. The toddlers out of terror and ignorance of what was happening fled from their parents and carers, and, perhaps because they were turning away from the unending wailing, took the road leading to the enemy, weeping imploringly, just as if fortune was using them to improvise a scene of supplication.’ (9.11.4-6)

The episode has the potential to exploit the pathos of war. However, in the context, this passage is implausible, since the Syenians already had experience of the merciful nature of the Ethiopian king, Hydaspes, and they had been guilty of no actual offence. Besides, no toddlers in this situation are likely to have wandered away from their parents towards the enemy through fear of their cries.⁵³

Heliodorus’ spectacular description of a full-scale battle between the Persians and Ethiopians at Elephantine (9.14-20) is detailed but entirely literary. His description includes the gold and silver armour of the Persians (Hdt. 9.22; 7.83; 7.41), the eclipse of the sun by the Ethiopian arrows (Hdt. 7.226), scythed chariots (Xen. *Cyr.* 7.1.31), armoured cavalry (Xen. *Cyr.* 6.4.1; 7.1.2), specifically cataphracts (Polybius 31.3.9; Ammianus 25.1.12; 16.10.8; Julian *Or.* 1.37; 2.57; Liban. *Or.* 59.70; Plut. *Crass.* 27), turreted elephants (Aelian, *NA* 13.9; Strabo 15.1.22; Philostratos, *VA* 2.6), the storage of arrows in the hair of the Somalian archers (Lucian, *De salt.* 18).⁵⁴ The participants in the battle include Persians, Medes, Egyptians, Libyans, Meroites, Somalis (men from the land of Cinnamon), Trogodytes, Blemmyes, Seres, and Ethiopians.

The battle shows similarities with the Battle of Thymbrara in Book 7 of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*. Both are climactic battles set at the end of a fictional narrative, both include armoured cavalry, turreted elephants, scythed chariots, and a veritable United Nations of allies. However, although in both

⁵³ Morgan 1979:1.102, *ad loc.*

⁵⁴ On all these points, see Morgan 1979 *ad loc.*

accounts there is a romantic interest (Pantheia and Abradatas in Xenophon, Theagenes and Charikleia in Heliodorus), this motif is worked out very differently. In Xenophon, Abradatas dies tragically in battle, and his death brings the justification of the war into question - a point of view expressed elsewhere in the *Cyropaedia* (1.5.7-14).⁵⁵ In Heliodorus, Hydaspes is consistently portrayed as a merciful ruler with a just cause in the war against the Persians. Ethical issues are raised only later, when the question of sacrificing the prisoners is debated.

Heliodorus gives his battle scenes a façade of historical realism by including plausible information,⁵⁶ which very few would have been in a position to question. For example, the war between the Persians and Ethiopians concerns control over the emerald mines (τὰ σμαράγδεια μέταλλα) on the borders between Egypt and Ethiopia, which he suggests had been the subject of diplomacy for ten years. These mines were located at Smaragdus Mons (Pliny, *HN* 37.69; Strabo 17.815). The Romans controlled them in the 2nd and 3rd centuries (Aelian, *NA* 7.18; *CIG* 3.4839; *IGR* 1274 referring to Gallienus), but ownership of them was beginning to be contested by the Blemmyes in the 3rd century (Ephanius, *De XII Gemmis* 20; Olympiodorus of Thebes 37).⁵⁷

However, warmongers are often represented ironically in the *Aithiopia*. The reaction of the community at Delphi to the abduction of Charicles' daughter, Charicleia, by a group of Thessalians led by Theagenes, illustrates this.⁵⁸ The narrative is told by an Egyptian priest, Calasiris, who is involved in the abduction and manipulates events to his own advantage. Ironically, while Charicles is apathetic in this crisis, he is roused to action by Calasiris, who identifies the culprit and urges Charicles to call an assembly to discuss what action to take. During the debate, a Delphic citizen, Hegesias (his name means 'Leader'), echoing Thucydides, urges action 'which is of decisive importance in all things, especially in war' (τὸν χαιρὸν ... πρᾶγμα ὁ μείγιστην ἐν ᾅπασιν ἔχει καὶ πολέμοις οὐχ ἥκιστα τὴν ῥοπήν, 4.20; cf. Thuc. 1.41.2). Two resolutions are passed: that the Thessalians be captured and impaled alive, and that the acolyte of Artemis should not in future present the prize in the running race to the victor (since it was in this way that Theagenes had met and fallen in love with Charicleia). The entire community, including women, then launches itself in pursuit of the fugitives.

⁵⁵ Due 1989:158-62.

⁵⁶ Morgan 1981:221-56.

⁵⁷ See the commentary of Morgan (1979) at 9.6 and his later article (1981:221-56).

⁵⁸ For the practice of 'abduction marriage', cf. Lateiner 1997:409-39.

The ironical tone of the narrative here, the exaggerated violence of Hege-sias' proposed punishment, and the futility of the proposal to ban the public function of Artemis' acolyte suggest an air of scepticism towards such emotional decisions to go to war.

A similar tone of irony towards war in Heliodorus can be found in the battle scene in Book 1. Here, through a series of intertexts (especially *Iliad* 6.492: πόλεμος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει and Aristophanes, *Lys.* 520: πόλεμος δὲ γυναιξὶ μελήσει) the bandit leader Thyamis is portrayed as a cowardly braggart (δὲ πόλεμος ἡμῖν μελήσει, 1.28.1), who hypocritically claims that women are of little importance in times of war, while ensuring that Charicleia, with whom he is in love, is left securely in a cave away from the battle.⁵⁹ Rather than allow her to fall into enemy hands he savagely murders her (or thinks that he does - in fact he kills the wrong woman).⁶⁰ The contrast with the scene between Hector and Andromache in *Iliad* 6 is emphatic. Thyamis' actions underline his characterisation as an ἀλαζών, but war is represented as confused and bloody chaos (1.30.3).

Later it is revealed that Thyamis is in fact the son of the Egyptian priest, Calasiris, and heir to his priesthood at Memphis. He storms the town of Bessa and overcomes his brother Petosiris in single combat around the walls of the city in a manner reminiscent of the duel between Eteocles and Polyneices in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*. This duel is brought on by the intervention of Arsace the wife of the Persian governor, Oroondates. To avoid the exposure of her earlier lascivious attempt to seduce Thyamis, she proposes that instead of cutting the people of Bessa to pieces with the Persian troops under her command, she would allow the issue to be resolved by the personal combat of Petosiris, who had witnessed her attempted seduction of his brother, and Thyamis himself. She declares (7.4.3) that 'the people of Bessa are sick with the madness of war' (πολέμου ... μανίαν ἐνοσήσατε πάντες μὲν Βησσαεῖς) and that private issues should be settled by the individuals concerned. Fortunately, fratricide is prevented by the sudden arrival of Calasiris, the father of the two brothers. Despite at first not being recognised, Calasiris is able to halt their 'fated frenzy' (ἐκ μοιρῶν μανίαν). In this way 'the impious strife of brothers' (ἄθεσμος ἀδελφῶν πόλεμος) was averted and peace restored.

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⁵⁹ Schatzmann 1999:41-44.

⁶⁰ He is a savage 'who kills everything he loves before he dies' (*Aith.* 1.30), a phrase famously adapted by Shakespeare (*Twelfth Night* 5.1.121-23).

Warfare is therefore represented in a complex manner in the ancient Greek romances. The story of Pantheia and Abradatas may be read as a critique of military imperialism, and Longus and the Ninus Romance - both of which focus on the concerns of youth - hold warfare at a distance. Chariton includes extensive military material that he deploys in an original manner to lend the narrative an emotional complexity, to drive the plot forward, to emphasise the characterisation of his hero, and to draw out the psychological impact of these events on the lives and emotions of his characters. Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus stand apart, although for different reasons. Clitophon appears at ease when he becomes involved in a military action against the βουκόλοι and describes the involvement of mercenaries in the suppression of what may have been a contemporary Egyptian revolt in great detail. His involvement and that of his acquaintance, Chaereas, is peripheral and self-interested. On the other hand, while Heliodorus occasionally describes military encounters in the manner of the Greek historians and may have had contemporary battles in mind, nevertheless, his characters reveal a more ironical scepticism towards warriors and warmongers than does Achilles Tatius, although he stops short of giving voice to the real sufferings of war.

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