

PART EIGHT

THE NOVEL



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### CHARITON

K. de Temmerman

#### *Narrator's Space and Frames*

Chariton's *Callirhoe* is the oldest extant novel in the European literary tradition. Its opening sentence is at once its most conspicuous reference to the narrator's own space: he presents himself as 'Chariton of Aphrodisias', which recalls Herodotus' self-presentation in his Proem, and is, given its obvious thematic appropriateness to the narrator of a narrative identified in the same paragraph as a love story (*pathos erōtikon*, 1.1.1), possibly a pseudonym ('Mister Charming from the City of Aphrodite').<sup>1</sup> Since this narrator at several other occasions fictitiously depicts himself as contemporary to the events narrated (the period before Alexander's conquest of Asia, that is), the identification of his home town is anachronistic (it was founded about two centuries later).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the narrator's presentation of the Euphrates as the border of the Persian empire (5.1.3) reflects the reality of Chariton's own day (first century AD).<sup>3</sup> Other instances where the narrator's space is perceptible are equally intrusive, albeit not in terms of chronology but rather in terms of identity. For example, the narrator compares an ongoing trial in Babylon with famous festivals of panhellenic proportions, such as the Eleusinian nights and the Olympic games (5.4.4; 6.2.1), to convey the impatience and excitement of *Persian* onlookers. Such *comparantia* are conspicuous narratorial markers of Greekness and emphatic intrusions of the narrator's space upon the setting. They are instances of a broader tendency in Chariton, as well

---

<sup>1</sup> Pace Tilg 2010: 19, 26, 31, 50, who simply discards the possibility of a pseudonym or literary pose in Chariton's self-introduction (but accepts such a possibility in Xenophon of Ephesus, 87).

<sup>2</sup> See SAGN 1: 480.

<sup>3</sup> Baslez 1992: 203. On other anachronisms in Chariton, see Billault 1989: 547.

as in other narrative fiction of the imperial period (such as (→) Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*), to use Greek reference points to comment on non-Greek phenomena, a technique well-known from historiography).<sup>4</sup>

Apart from such narratorial intrusions, Chariton's novel contains a number of other references to places that do not act as setting for the plot (e.g. Acragas, 1.2.4; Epirus, 1.1.2; Libya, 3.3.8; China, 6.4.2). All of these are stray references scattered throughout the narrative (a distribution of space that opposes Chariton's novel to (→) Achilles Tatius, where such spaces are often given elaborate descriptions). The space that most conspicuously does not act as setting for the plot is Athens, whose famous defeat by the Syracusans is often evoked.<sup>5</sup> The presence of Athens as non-setting becomes tangible when Callirhoe's kidnappers reach the coast of Attica (1.11.4) and consider the possibility of taking her to Athens but finally decide not to do so and set sail to Miletus instead (1.11.5–7). This tantalizing marginalization of Athens is put into relief all the more by, and can plausibly be taken to interact with, the pervasive presence of Athenian discourse in the literary texture of the novel.<sup>6</sup> It is also conspicuous in other novelistic literature (such as Heliodorus),<sup>7</sup> but inverts common practice in other authors more or less contemporary to Chariton (such as (→) Plutarch), where Athens is a location of supreme importance.

Some frames evoked are famous places recalling Athenian and Spartan victories over the Persians. Such spaces often occur in speeches. Callirhoe, for example, evokes a contrast between Chaereas and Artaxerxes (and the Persians in general) by drawing attention to the fact that Syracuse could not be beaten even by the Athenians, who *did* beat the Persian king at Marathon and Salamis (6.7.10). Chaereas, for his part, reminds three hundred Dorian soldiers whom he has selected to capture Tyre that an equal number of Spartans at Thermopylae confronted an enemy far more numerous than the current Tyrian enemy (7.3.9). This famous paradigm of Hellenic bravery is echoed a little later and simultaneously supplemented with another such paradigm when Chaereas

---

<sup>4</sup> See (→) Herodotus. Connections between Chariton's novel and historiography have been well documented (W. Bartsch 1934; Laplace 1997: 39–53, Trzaskoma 2011). On historiography and novelistic fiction in general, see J.R. Morgan 2007a.

<sup>5</sup> See 1.1.1.2; 2.6.3; 3.4.18, 10.8; 5.8.8; 6.7.10; 7.2.3, 3.7, 5.8; 8.2.12. On Syracuse and Athens in Chariton's novel, see Laplace 1997: 53–62.

<sup>6</sup> See S.D. Smith 2007: 99–198.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, J.R. Morgan 1989. On the depiction of Athens in the novels, see also Oudot 1992.

associates himself explicitly not only with Leonidas but also with Othryades<sup>8</sup> (7.3.11), another Spartan hero and leader of 300 soldiers at the battle of Thyrea. As these two examples indicate, such *lieux de mémoire* are typically evoked by characters as part of rhetorical strategies. This use of frames inscribes itself in a long-standing literary tradition (e.g. (→) Lysias) and is particularly reminiscent of historiography. Chaereas' speech even seems to be a reworking of a speech delivered by Xenophon in the *Anabasis* (3.2.8–39): like Chaereas' speech, this speech is addressed by a commander to army troops in militarily difficult times. And like Chaereas' speech, it meets with unanimous approval, develops the theme of Spartan origin, addresses the problem of being outnumbered and the question of whether or not to return home and, finally, evokes Marathon, Salamis and Plataea (albeit implicitly; 3.2.11, 13) as part of an argumentative strategy.<sup>9</sup>

### *Forms of Setting*

Setting accounts for the majority of references to geographical space in Chariton. Although the narrator explicitly presents his narrative as 'a story that happened in Syracuse' (1.1.1),<sup>10</sup> geographical setting in the novel mainly gravitates towards three cities consecutively (Syracuse, Miletus, Babylon).<sup>11</sup> Books 1 to 4 are set in Syracuse and Miletus (with short episodes on the Ionian sea, Miletus' harbour Docimus, the city of Priene, Lydia and Caria). Books 5 and 6 are set mainly in Babylon (characters are said to pass through Armenia, 5.2.1, and Cilicia, 5.1.3, on their way there). Books 7 and 8, finally, come full circle by taking the setting back to the west of the Euphrates (Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia, Aradus, Chios and Cyprus) and ultimately to Syracuse. As this overview indicates, Chariton is no exception to the overall rule that routes in the novels are easy to follow and that narrators are concerned with

<sup>8</sup> I here follow d'Orville's (1750) *editio princeps*, which corrects the manuscript (L) reading of *Mithridatou* and is followed by Molinié [1979] 2002 and Goold 1995. However, Blake 1938 and Reardon 2004 read *Miltiadou*.

<sup>9</sup> See Trzaskoma 2011: 26–27 (with further references) on some of these similarities.

<sup>10</sup> Translations of Chariton's text are taken from Reardon [1989] 2008, slightly adapted where appropriate or necessary.

<sup>11</sup> On the depiction of specific geographical areas in novelistic literature, see Bompaire 1977; Bonneau 1992 and Ruiz-Montero 1994a: 1028–1029.

sketching a plausibly realistic geography.<sup>12</sup> This tendency is also found in earlier Greek narrative, such as (→) Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, and reminiscent of the historiographical concern of evoking or pretending geographical precision. In addition, the historiographical dimension in Chariton's handling of setting is also evident in his preference for regions at the periphery of the Greek world rather than at its centre. This preference is shared by other novelists,<sup>13</sup> but Chariton centres on Achaemenid Persia in particular, the same realm adopted by Herodotus.<sup>14</sup>

Another historiographical feature of the handling of space in most Greek novels, including Chariton's, informs the transitions between settings. When episodes at different places are presented as happening simultaneously, the transition between them is often constructed from a narratorial, panoramic perspective. After having related events in Miletus, for example, the narrator overtly intervenes to announce that he will now 'relate what happened in Syracuse' in the meantime (3.2.17).<sup>15</sup> Such overt narratorial interventions to change setting usually take the syntactical form of *men ... de* constructions, the device *par excellence* since Homer.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, when events in different settings are presented as happening consecutively, the narrator often constructs transition between these settings by adopting a shifting scenic actorial standpoint: the physical movements of characters are instrumental in introducing new areas into the story and generating transitions between them.<sup>17</sup> In other instances, the transition between settings follows the movements of letters rather than persons.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Alvares 1996 shows maps that outline the movements of the protagonists in the novels.

<sup>13</sup> Bierl 2006: 75–76.

<sup>14</sup> Lowe 2000: 112–113.

<sup>15</sup> Other examples are 7.4.11, 6.1; 8.6.1.

<sup>16</sup> Hägg 1971: 186, 314–316; Konstan 2002: 9. For Homer, see SAGN 2: 31.

<sup>17</sup> This type of transition is what Konstan 2002: 2 calls a 'trail'. When, for example, we are told that Hermocrates inspects Sicily and others are sent to the Italian mainland, these places never act as setting because we are following Chaereas as he sails the Ionian sea, where he finds Theron's ship, which eventually leads him to Miletus (3.3.8–4.1). More examples are 1.11.1, 8; 3.4.1–5.9; 3.6.1–4.1.12; 4.2.1–5.3; 5.3–6; 7.2.2–9, 3.1–4.10 and 4.13.

<sup>18</sup> Setting shifts from Priene to Miletus, for example, when letters are intercepted by a magistrate who has them sent to Miletus (4.5.6), where the subsequent scene unfolds (4.5.7–6.4).

It is well known that Chariton's narrator does not give much detailed information about setting.<sup>19</sup> Landscapes are hardly depicted at all and, as in most of the other Greek novels, the countryside is associated with general notions of retreat and quiet reminiscent of those thematized in rhetorical textbook descriptions.<sup>20</sup> When episodes are set in cities, space is likewise usually determined by and limited to rhetorical standard *topoi* (like those seen at work in Menander Rhetor) of urban description, such as streets, temples, theatres, town squares, harbours and gymnasia.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, details are often limited to what is functional to the immediate narrative context. Attention is paid, for example, to the strong geographical position of Tyre and its walls and gates because the entire episode is geared towards demonstrating Chaereas' success in capturing this city (7.2.8–9).<sup>22</sup> Such a strictly functional use of spatial detail may be read not so much as a marker of idealization (as suggested by Saïd 1994: 224–225), but rather as the adoption of a technique reaching back to (→) Homer, found also in most of (→) Herodotus' accounts of cities and picked up by Lucian in *How History Ought to Be Written* (57).

Most spaces are referred to by short indications, while longer ekphrases of settings are rare; one of the few examples concerns the courtroom in the royal palace in Babylon.<sup>23</sup>

There is a special room in the palace (*en tois basileiois*) which is designated a law court (*dikastērion*), an unusually big and beautiful room. In the middle stands the king's throne; on each side are places for the king's friends, those who in rank and ability count among the very first in the land. Around the throne stand captains and commanders and the most distinguished of the king's freedmen—one could well say of such an assembly,

The gods, sitting at Zeus' side, held debate.  
Those involved in the case are brought in in silence and trepidation.  
(5.4.5–7)

This description, which opens with the 'there is a place X' motif reaching back to (→) Homer, is interwoven with the themes of authority, hierarchy and dominance so central to Chariton's novel. The organization of the description is instrumental in developing these themes. It is spatial and

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Cuny 2005: 220, 223.

<sup>20</sup> Saïd 1987: 156.

<sup>21</sup> Saïd 1994: 219.

<sup>22</sup> Saïd 1994: 225.

<sup>23</sup> Other examples are an ekphrasis of a funeral procession (1.5.2–3) and one of Tyre (7.2.8–9).

hierarchical at the same time: after characterizing the room in its totality ('big and beautiful'), the narrator focuses on its centre, where the throne of the king stands. Then, the focus gradually moves from the centre to the periphery (first the king's friends on each side of the throne, then the captains and commanders around the throne, and finally the people involved in the case, whose physical position in the room is literally marginal, as they are just being brought in). This movement mirrors the hierarchical relations between the people in the room: the king, in the centre, is the highest judicial authority in the room and is surrounded by inferiors (friends, captains and commanders).<sup>24</sup> The physically marginalized people entering the courtroom belong to the lowest hierarchical level, as they are the object of the trial. Moreover, the hierarchical levels and the unidirectional power relations enacted by this description are echoed by the quotation of the Homeric verse which in the *Iliad* opens the famous deliberation of the gods in the fourth book; it evokes the Olympian assembly room as a frame, thereby casting the courtroom as the setting of the exercise of omnipotent, divine power. The connection between spatial description and the thematization of power is in itself reminiscent enough of historiography and biography (→ Herodian, Plutarch). In addition, the fact that the courtroom in Chariton is part of the *palace* presents this description as a variation upon a well-known *topos* in Greek historiography from the imperial period, where the space of the palace is frequently a synecdoche for imperial authority.<sup>25</sup>

### *Thematic and Symbolic Functions of Space*

Since travel is one of the main ingredients of the ancient novelistic genre, the plot is immediately connected with changes in geographical setting;<sup>26</sup> in other words, space has a thematic function. Space is, of course, instrumental in generating the separation and reunion of the protagonists, which are often felt to constitute the thematic core of the novels.<sup>27</sup> As a place of storms, shipwrecks and pirates, the sea is

<sup>24</sup> See also S.D. Smith 2007: 82.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, (→) Herodian.

<sup>26</sup> See Romm 2008.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Konstan 1994: 48–59; Konstan 2002: 1 (separation tests mutual and symmetrical passion and narrativizes the evolution of love); Cuny 2005: 227 (succession of spaces thematizes the unparalleled beauty of heroines).

particularly frequent as a topos inducing separation.<sup>28</sup> At times, space is also instrumental in enhancing dramatic effect: whereas Chariton's omniscient<sup>29</sup> primary narrator regularly communicates to the narratee where characters are, the characters themselves often do not know where others are—a situation played out memorably when Chaereas enters the Babylonian courtroom to the complete surprise of all but the narratee (5.8.1).

In Chariton, the thematic function of space is further underlined by a remark made by Aphrodite at the end of the story: she judges that Chaereas has made 'honorable amends to Love', which consist precisely in wandering the world: 'having harassed by land and sea the handsome couple she had originally brought together, she decided now to reunite them' (8.1.3). Thus, the totality of the physical movements of the protagonists through space is cast as a prerequisite of the novel's happy ending and, in a metaliterarily self-conscious way, as one of the topical elements constituting its subject matter.

Foreign places where the adventures take place are opposed to the closed realm of the house from which the protagonists set out in the beginning of the story and to which they return at the end.<sup>30</sup> This opposition is first established in the beginning of the novel and taken up at the very end. In both instances, it articulates space as gender-specific. Whereas Chaereas in the opening lines of the novel is depicted in public spaces such as the gymnasium (1.1.5) and the palaestra (1.4.3), Callirhoe, when taken by her mother to the temple of Aphrodite on the occasion of a religious festival, has not yet ever been in public (1.1.5). Her repeated depiction within the confines of her own bedroom (*epi tēs koitēs*, 1.1.14; *ton thalamon*, 1.3.4) in the initial paragraphs of the novel underlines her social isolation, which is also clear from the fact that she does not know anything (1.1.14) about preparations being made for her own marriage (initiated in the public setting of the theatre).<sup>31</sup> As a device highlighting her socially secluded position, the confinement of her social space to the

<sup>28</sup> Although this motif reaches back, of course, to the *Odyssey*, it also deviates from maritime representations in epic and historiography, where the sea can also be read as a marker of cohesion and unity rather than separation (see (→) Homer).

<sup>29</sup> See SAGN 1: 479.

<sup>30</sup> See Létoublon 1993: 61 and Lowe 2000: 228.

<sup>31</sup> A similar connection between female seclusion and isolation from public knowledge occurs in 8.3.4 (Statira is in the hold of the ship and knows nothing of what happens outside).

house not only rehearses a traditional spatial constellation known from other literary genres (see, for example, (→) Euripides) but also constructs a ring composition within the novel, which concludes with her prayer in Aphrodite's temple 'before she enters the house' (8.8.15). Here, as in the first episode, her presence in the house is opposed to public space, evoked by Chaereas' and the people's presence in the theatre (*tōi theatrōi*, 8.8.15).<sup>32</sup> Moreover, her progression from the temple to the house recalls and reverses her movement from the house to the temple in the opening episode. The conclusion to the novel thus literally brings her back to the protective, closed and isolated realm which she left at its beginning.<sup>33</sup> The narratee is invited to view the entire story between those two episodes as consisting of 'outer spaces' opposed to and separated from the familiar, closed space of the house.<sup>34</sup>

Outer, public space is also thematically functional in Chariton in that characters are shown to exploit the spatial dynamics of social (self-) positioning and control. As one would expect, such control is often indicative of a desire to establish or reaffirm power on political and military levels. Artaxerxes, for example, rides out to war and stations himself 'in a conspicuous position in the front ranks of the by no means negligible company that accompanies him' (6.9.2), whereupon the narrator evokes epic heroism by commenting that it was clear he would distinguish himself (*aristeias*, 6.9.3). In other words, Artaxerxes consciously uses space as a tool to articulate relationships of power.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, control over public space is also instrumental in establishing *emotional* control. When Callirhoe expresses a desire to erect a tomb for Chaereas near Aphrodite's temple so that posterity would be reminded of their love, Dionysius disagrees because he wants to keep that spot for himself. He therefore suggests a place in the city and adduces its visibility as an argument (4.1.5). This passage clearly imagines buildings as

<sup>32</sup> See also Hermocrates' presence in public space (the main square, *tēs agoras*, 8.6.3) at the time of the protagonists' arrival.

<sup>33</sup> On the security of the home city in particular, as opposed to the dangers elsewhere, see Perkins 2001: 124.

<sup>34</sup> On the space in which the adventures occur ('adventure space') as opposed to the protagonists' home space ('biographical space'), see Bakhtin 1981: 86–101; Beaton 2000: 182.

<sup>35</sup> Another example is 1.6.2–5 (Hermocrates adopts spatial organization in Callirhoe's funeral procession and Theron's crucifixion to reaffirm his position as first man of the city; see S.D. Smith 2007: 57–58, 73–75). Examples involving division and distribution of land: 7.5.7; 8.8.14.

partaking in a rhetoric of space. Control over space is staged in function of a rhetorical agenda envisaging both future commemoration and also instantaneous visibility and renown (as in the case of Callirhoe's tomb in Syracuse, 1.6.5).

Bakhtin famously highlights the inextricable connection between space and plot when he argues that space in the ancient novelistic genre is interchangeable: 'For a shipwreck one must have a sea, but which particular sea [...] makes no difference at all'.<sup>36</sup> This emphasis on the exclusively thematic function of space has been challenged on several occasions. It is well known, for example, that geographical settings in the novels are often semantically charged. Achaemenid Persia, for example, was regarded as a setting perfectly suited to erotic intrigue since Herodotus and Xenophon.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the novels are spatially constructed around thematically opposed geographical zones (Greece vs. barbary, city and country, Europe and/or Asia and/or Africa) and around regions of contrasting political or civic order (democracy vs. tyranny, urban order vs. piratical anarchy).<sup>38</sup> In Chariton, the protagonists' peregrinations unmistakably follow a political trajectory from Syracuse, with its prominent democratic institutions such as the *stratēgia* and the *ekklēsia* (1.1.1, 11, etc.), over liminal Miletus to the despotic Persian empire.<sup>39</sup> This contrast between east and west contributes to the construction of a number of major themes, such as *paideia* as a marker of Greekness, the incompatibility of Greek intelligence, autonomy and *eugeneia* with barbarian, slavish obedience and the contrast between democracy and tyranny (all emblemized by a confrontation between Callirhoe and the Persian eunuch Artaxates, 6.4.10–7.13, to name just one episode).<sup>40</sup> But Chariton does not simply stage the contrast between east and west as a clear-cut rehearsal of a well-known literary tradition. Rather, the opposition is frequently destabilized by elements that implicitly *align* Syracuse with Babylon (such as parallel depictions of Artaxerxes and Hermocrates in their respective hierarchies)<sup>41</sup> and thus constitute a rhetoric of association that is also found in historiographers contemporary to Chariton (for example (→) Josephus' *Jewish War*). Moreover, the possible, implicit

<sup>36</sup> Bakhtin 1981: 100.

<sup>37</sup> Romm 2008: 113.

<sup>38</sup> Lowe 2000: 228–229.

<sup>39</sup> See Lowe 2000: 228–230; Cuny 2005: 223–226.

<sup>40</sup> See, among others, Bowersock 1994b: 40–43.

<sup>41</sup> S.D. Smith 2007: 80–86.

depiction of Syracuse as a locus for the thematization of Roman imperial politics<sup>42</sup> further deconstructs the boundaries of political ideology between west and east.

Another type of space that has a symbolic function in Chariton is domestic space. In the beginning of the novel, Chaereas' and Callirhoe's house is semantically charged as emblematic of the marital union of the protagonists—and its vulnerability. The protagonists' adventures throughout the eight books of the novel ultimately result from the plotting of the suitors, who adopt a conspicuously spatial mode of behaviour. It is specifically by intruding and discrediting the closed and secure space of Chaereas' and Callirhoe's house that they aim to destroy the protagonists' marital happiness: they secretly approach this house and hang wreaths about its porch, sprinkle it with scent, soak the ground with wine and scatter half-burnt torches around (1.3.2). Moreover, it is precisely the inviolability of the space of the house that is the focus of the ensuing discussion between Chaereas and Callirhoe. She refutes his accusation of having forgotten him and states that 'there has been no riotous party *at my father's house*. Perhaps *your porch* is used to parties, and your lovers are upset at your marriage' (1.3.6). Callirhoe herself, that is, adopts the spatial imagery established by the acts of the suitors to proclaim her own innocence. The suitors' next attempt, their effort to drive a wedge between Chaereas and Callirhoe again takes on, quite literally, a spatial dimension: an accomplice of theirs fools Chaereas into believing that Callirhoe is unfaithful and promises to show him the adulterer if he makes his wife believe that he has gone 'off to the country' (*eis agron*, 1.4.8). Moreover, the narrator is explicit that Chaereas sends a message to inform Callirhoe of his departure because 'he cannot bear to go into the house himself' (1.4.8). Again, then, the house is conceived of as an inviolable, clean space which does not tolerate transgression. In addition, domestic space is clearly articulated as a locus of isolation and the preservation of female chastity but at the same time highlights the fragility and vulnerability of this social boundary. This concept of domestic space not only echoes traditional, male concerns with female segregation and preservation of the citizen body as a whole,<sup>43</sup> but also has clear literary resonances (see e.g. (→) Euripides). In the novel, such usage is combined with the image of the house as a synecdoche for marital union.

<sup>42</sup> As argued by Connors 2002.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Nevett 2010: 145.

Perkins is right to point out that later novelistic texts such as the *Apo-cryphal Acts* adopt domestic space to convey precisely the disruption of the social institution of marriage so prominently foregrounded in these texts.<sup>44</sup> I would add that this trope in the *Acts*, which inscribes itself in a long tradition exploring the entanglement of domestic space and civic institutions, rehearses specific imagery already present in the novels: the depiction of domestic space as a locus thematizing both the established order and its possible disruption is operative in Chariton.

The symbolic function of space in Chariton is, of course, not limited to geographical settings or the protagonists' house. Temples are also semantically charged. Their importance is underlined by the fact that a series of events crucial to the plot development are all set in temples of Aphrodite at various locations (mainly Syracuse and Miletus).<sup>45</sup> Temples are also imagined as standing midway between the secluded space of the house and open, public space (in this respect, sacred space in Chariton resembles the space of the palaestra in (→) Plato). On a structural level, firstly, Callirhoe's transition from the house to the temple in the beginning of the story, and from the temple to the house at the end literally places the temple between the house and the outer spaces where the adventures take place. Such depiction of sacred space as transitional may be read as reminiscent of sanctuaries in (→) Pindar, which frequently provide temporal transitions between mythical heroes and contemporary athletes. In Chariton, the transition generated by sacred space is not of a temporal but of a spatial kind.

Secondly, temples of Aphrodite are permeable zones of contact, simultaneously secluded and open. On the one hand, they traditionally offer protective secludedness to people addressing the gods. Callirhoe, for example, prays to Aphrodite in her temple only after asking everyone to leave (3.2.12, 8.6). As places of worship, on the other hand, temples have a public character and are more open and accessible than the setting of the house. Plangon, for example, casts Aphrodite's temple in Miletus as a zone of fusion between people from nearby (*hoi geitones*) and people from the city (*ex asteos*), who all go there to make sacrifice (2.2.5).

<sup>44</sup> Perkins 2002: 122.

<sup>45</sup> Callirhoe meets Chaereas on her way to Aphrodite's temple in Syracuse (1.1.6; see also 4.4.9) and Dionysius, her second husband, in the shrine of Aphrodite in Miletus (2.3.5–6; see also 2.4.3; 5.5.5). In the same shrine she later realizes that Chaereas is in Miletus (3.9.1) and it is there that Chaereas, in turn, discovers that Callirhoe has married Dionysius (3.6.5). See also Cuny 2005: 228–230.

Moreover, various episodes in temples thematize the protagonists' belief in the ability of Aphrodite to *show* or reveal people. This ability establishes a ring composition in Callirhoe's final prayer to Aphrodite in the temple in Syracuse (8.8.15–16), where she consciously recalls and verbally echoes her first prayer to the goddess at the same place. Whereas she asks in the beginning of the story to 'give me the man whom you have just shown (*edeixas*) to me' (1.1.7), she thanks the goddess at the end of the story 'for showing (*edeixas*) Chaereas to me once more in Syracuse, where I saw him as a maiden at your desire' (8.8.16).<sup>46</sup> This attention paid to showing interacts with Aphrodite's ability to show *herself* in an epiphany—an ability often addressed in these temple episodes (2.2.5, 3.6, 6.4). This emphasis on (human and divine) appearances characterizes the temples in the story as zones of contact, not only between the divine and the human but also between people and, in particular, the protagonists in search of each other.

A fourth type of symbolically functional space deals with the semantics involved in the public or private character of settings (compare e.g. (→) Plato). As recent archaeological research suggests, the construction of private and public spaces was not constant in Antiquity but open to redefinition and negotiation.<sup>47</sup> In Chariton's novel, semiotics of secluded vs. open space, inside vs. outside, seen vs. unseen inform two main thematic realms: those of secrecy vs. publicity and emotionality vs. rationality. Secret or private information, and its communication, firstly, are often staged in secluded or remote settings, whose isolation often highlights the vulnerability of one of the characters involved.<sup>48</sup> When an accomplice of one of the suitors, for example, sets out to fool Chaereas into believing that Callirhoe is unfaithful, he takes him to a *remote* spot (*khōrion ēremaion*, 1.4.5), where he promises to tell him 'something important which affects your whole life'.<sup>49</sup> One type of space recurrently embodying this idea of secludedness and therefore appropriate for the

<sup>46</sup> This act of showing is repeatedly evoked throughout the novel (2.2.7; 3.2.12, 6.3).

<sup>47</sup> Nevett 2010: 143–145.

<sup>48</sup> Such vulnerability is clearly conveyed in 3.7.2 (where a garrison is encouraged to attack an enemy trireme because it is lying at anchor *in a secluded spot; lanthanei*), 6.5.1–6 (where Artaxates decides not to approach Callirhoe until she is all by herself; *monēs, monēn, monoi*).

<sup>49</sup> Moreover, once Chaereas has been led to believe that Callirhoe is unfaithful, he 'shuts himself up all night (*apokleisas heauton*, 1.5.1), trying to extort information from the maids'. More examples are 4.6.1 and 3.9.6–10.

contemplation as well as the communication of secret information is the *bedroom*. For example, Artaxerxes and his wife Statira are in bed at night, occupied with different thoughts kept secret from each other (6.1.6).<sup>50</sup>

Just as with geographical settings, the semantic charging of public and private spaces is not straightforward. Another type of remoteness, equally suitable for secret activities and the exchange of secret information is the countryside, despite the fact that this space is, of course, public rather than private. As a locus of secrecy, it is typically opposed to the city, which involves visibility and transparency. The sale of Callirhoe by Theron is a good example.<sup>51</sup> When Theron arrives in Miletus, he does not judge it prudent to look for a buyer openly (*phanerōs*, 1.12.1) but rather tries to make a quick sale privately (*krupha kai dia kheiros*, 1.12.1). Leonas is interested and suggests they go to Dionysius' estate in the *countryside* (*ton agron*, 1.13.5; *eis agron*, 2.1.3) to arrange the sale. Theron welcomes this idea because he prefers this remote location (*en erēmiai*) to the marketplace (*en agorai*, 1.13.6). In the country house, Callirhoe is sold to Leonas, but the absence of a contract leaves the sale incomplete. The transparency and legal correctness represented by this contract is clearly presented as belonging to the realm of the city: Theron suggests that Leonas 'go into town (*eis astu*, 1.14.3) and get the legal documents made out', and Dionysius advises him to go to the marketplace (*eis tēn agoran*, 2.1.6), where the legal documents will be taken care of. When he realizes that Theron has disappeared, he concludes that Theron has illegally sold someone else's slave and that this is why he did so in 'a lonely spot' (*ep' erēmias*, 2.1.8).

The spatial dynamics involved in hiding and communicating secret information also have a visual pendant: space is also instrumental in hiding and revealing female beauty in general, Callirhoe's in particular. As is well known, the novel recurrently stages a tension between Callirhoe's presentation as the object of public admiration (her beauty is said to be renowned in the whole of Sicily and Italy in the first lines of the novel)<sup>52</sup> and the efforts (of herself and others) to hide her beauty from the public gaze. It has been shown that the dynamics of veiling and unveiling play an important role in generating this tension,<sup>53</sup> but spatial

<sup>50</sup> Another example is 8.2.1–2.

<sup>51</sup> Another example is 3.2.7–10 (*en erēmiai* vs. *eis tēn polin*).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. 1.1.1–2. For public admiration for the protagonists, see 1.1.12–13, 5.3; 3.2.17; 4.1.11; 5.5.8; 6.2.1; 8.1.11, 12, 6.10.

<sup>53</sup> Whitmarsh 2004: 194.

organization is no less important. Dionysius' repeated attempts to hide Callirhoe's beauty from the public gaze provide a good example. He does not want to take her to his home in the city but uses the seclusion of his estate in the countryside (2.7.1). When he does travel to the city, he again takes care not to show her to the crowd (3.2.11) by having her taken by boat in the evening 'straight to his house'. While travelling to Babylon, he invites her to make the journey in a wagon whose canvas he closes to hide her from the lustful gaze of onlookers. The narratee is invited to see the canvas as a metaphorical veil by the narrator's use of the same verb to refer to Dionysius' action and the actual action of veiling earlier in the story (*sunekalupse tēn skēnēn*, 5.2.9; *sugkalupsamenē*, 1.3.6, 13.10; *sugkekalummenos*, 3.3.14). The narrator addresses, again in spatial terms, both Callirhoe's tendency to hide herself and Dionysius' intention to hide his wife in their confrontation with the Persian woman Rhodogyne, who challenges Callirhoe to a beauty contest and takes up her position 'in full public view' (*en tōi periphānēstatōi*, 5.3.6). Consequently, Callirhoe cannot stay hidden (*kekalummenēn*, 5.3.8) and Dionysius reluctantly asks her to come out of the carriage (*proelthein*, 5.3.8). But as soon as the contest is over, she re-enters the carriage and the canvas is closed again (*sugkekalummenē*, 5.3.10).

Spatial semiotics also thematize emotionality and rationality. As is well known, characters often withdraw from public interaction into private and familiar space to hide or handle discretely intense emotions such as shame, grief or love. Houses, bedrooms and gardens act as such secluded spaces.<sup>54</sup> Dionysius explicitly aligns his heart, the seat of his love for Callirhoe, with his house when reproaching Leonas for having 'brought fire into my house (*tēn oikian*)—or rather, into my own heart (*tēn emēn psukhēn*)' (2.4.7), an image emblematic of the characterization of inner, domestic space as appropriate for the negotiation of the emotion of love. Correspondingly, any *rational* attempt to deal with the emotion of love is usually anchored in *public* space, which can be instrumental in achieving contact with the beloved (as when Pharnaces, being in love with Callirhoe, invites her and her husband to his banquets, 4.6.2) or consolation (as when Leonas suggests to Dionysius that his grief over his deceased wife will be easier to bear in the country because of its distractions, 2.3.2).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> E.g. 1.4.11; 2.1.1, 3.8; 3.3.14, 10.3; 4.2.8.

<sup>55</sup> See also 6.3.9–4.9 (a hunting party as an attempt to make Artaxerxes forget Callirhoe) and 8.5.15 (Dionysius' public position as a means of consolation).

Again, however, the opposition between secluded, emotional space and public, rational space is complicated in a number of instances. In such cases, secluded space is presented as suitable for intensified *mental* activity, such as decision-making and, in some cases, plotting. An example is Callirhoe's deliberation about whether or not to have an abortion. When Plangon has discovered that Callirhoe is pregnant, each of them follows her own line of reasoning (*logismous*, 2.9.1) when on their own (*kath' heautēn*, 2.9.1). Plangon repeatedly comes to Callirhoe's quarters to talk about the matter (2.10.1, 11.4), but for the final decision Callirhoe goes up to her room (*to hyperōion*, 2.11.1) and shuts the door (*sugkleisasa tas thuras*, 2.11.1).<sup>56</sup>

### *Characterizing and Psychologizing Functions of Space*

Space in Chariton also has a characterizing function. Indeed, this function is often made explicit by narrators and characters alike. The people chosen by Theron to rob Callirhoe's tomb, for example, are depicted in harbours (1.7.1, 3; 3.4.1.1) and spend their time in brothels and taverns (1.7.3). The narrator is explicit that their presence in these environments makes them 'an army fit for such a commander' (1.7.3). Similarly, the tyrant of Acragas argues that Callirhoe does not know what malice and suspicion are, whereas Chaereas has been brought up in gymnasiums (1.2.6) and therefore is 'experienced in the misbehaviour of young people'. This comment plays upon the traditional characterization of the gymnasium as a standard setting for pederastic courtship and seduction (see, for example, (→) Plato), a notion picked up also in other novels (X.Eph. 3.2.2; Ach.Tat. 8.9.4) and rehearsed by Callirhoe when she refers to Chaereas' lovers (1.3.6). As these examples indicate, setting is not only considered to be metonymically relevant to the characterization of those who appear in them; the narrator as well as the characters repeatedly make this function explicit (as in (→) Herodianus and (→) Josephus).

Less emphatically communicated by the narrator, but equally significant for the characterization of a few characters, is the psychologizing function of space. Characters themselves experience different settings in a number of ways and are defined, at least in part, through their interaction with significant spaces. At times they adjust their behaviour or

---

<sup>56</sup> Other examples are 1.7.1, 12.2; 2.4.3; 4.4.6; 5.2.3, 10.6.

speech to the space where they find themselves, and which they invariably consider hostile. Callirhoe, for example, feigns consent to share the king's bed when approached by Artaxates because she 'quickly realizes where she is, who she is and who her interlocutor is' (6.5.8).<sup>57</sup> At other occasions characters experience changes in geographical space as alienating and threatening. Callirhoe's sense of uprootedness and alienation, for example, is fleshed out by the presence in her speeches of what the narratee recognizes to be topical places in the novelistic genre.<sup>58</sup> Courtrooms and prison cells often figure in her soliloquies as markers of previous misfortunes (5.5.2; 6.6.3, 7.8). More specifically, she repeatedly associates the tomb in which she has been buried in Syracuse with new spaces. When she is given the most beautiful room of Dionysius' house in Miletus, for example, she defines it as 'another tomb' (*allos taphos*, 1.14.6).<sup>59</sup> Whereas in (→) Homer or (→) Pindar tombs are used as landmarks, in Chariton this topical space is staged as a recurrent *psychological* landmark.

The way characters experience space, now, is not fixed or static but subject to evolution. When Callirhoe, for example, has been abducted from Syracuse, the recurrent references in her speeches to foreign territory (*xenēn gēn*, 1.11.3), the loss of her country (*patridos ... esterēmai*, 3.1.6) and her status as a foreigner in Miletus (2.5.7) convey her awareness of being uprooted. When she arrives in Dionysius' house, Plangon immediately reassures her that she has come to a good house, where 'it will be like living in your own land' (*hōste en patridi*, 2.2.1). In this passage, Plangon installs an alignment between Syracuse and Miletus that will later inform Callirhoe's own discourse. When pregnant by Chaereas and deliberating whether or not to marry Dionysius in order to raise the child as *his* son, she identifies the two fathers of the child as 'one the first man in Sicily, the other in Ionia' and imagines that her son will 'sail in triumph in a Milesian warship and Hermocrates will welcome a grandson already fit for command' (2.11.2). In other words, Callirhoe casts her unborn child as an embodiment of the conflation between the Syracusan and Milesian spheres, between home and foreignness, thus proving

---

<sup>57</sup> On rhetorical guidelines on the importance of the setting of a speech or conversation, see Brethes 2007: 131–132. Similar examples of characters' awareness of this importance are 7.1.9 and 8.1.9.

<sup>58</sup> On some of such topical places, see Létoublon 1993: 61–80.

<sup>59</sup> Other examples are 5.1.7 and 7.6.8.

Plangon's prediction true. Moreover, her acts correspond to her gradual experience of Milesian space as familiar rather than threatening. For example, she hides herself from the public gaze in Miletus by going off to the quarters that she focalizes as *familiar* (*tēn oikēsīn tēn sunēthē*, 2.4.1) and, when informed about Chaereas' (alleged) death, she 'runs into the house (*ton oikon*, 3.10.3) that she had first entered when she was sold'. In both instances, then, Milesian space in Callirhoe's focalization becomes familiar and protective.

Later, when she is about to leave Miletus for Babylon, the alignment between Syracuse and Miletus resurfaces explicitly: she is 'distressed to be taken far from the Greek sea; as long as she could see the harbours of Miletus, she had the impression that Syracuse was not far away' (4.7.8). Whereas, at the beginning of her stay, Miletus represents foreignness and otherness for Callirhoe, she gradually appropriates this space by associating it with her old, original, space. The narrator is explicit, for example, that she finds her journey easy to bear as long as she hears Greek spoken and can see 'the sea that leads to Syracuse', but that she longs for her country and despairs of ever returning when crossing the Euphrates (5.1.3). In the soliloquy that marks her entrance into the Persian empire, the association of Syracuse and Miletus and its opposition to Babylon are conspicuous:

Now it is not Ionia where you keep me exiled; the land you allotted me up to now was admittedly a foreign country, but it was Greek, and there I could take great comfort in the thought that I was living by the sea. Now you are hurling me from my familiar world—I am at the other end of the earth from my own country. This time it is Miletus you have taken from me; before, it was Syracuse. (5.1.5–6)

The crossing of rivers is traditionally a symbolic moment in narratives of journeys (→ Herodotus). When crossing the Euphrates, then, Babylon becomes for Callirhoe the new geographical space that is the paradigm of otherness. But even the otherness embodied by Babylon is temporary and not absolute. When she later arrives on the island of Aradus, she not only contrasts (the size of) the island to Sicily but also opposes her present condition (in a warzone and surrounded by strangers and foreigners, 7.5.5) to her situation in Babylon: 'even Babylon was charitable (*philanthrōpos*) to me'. Throughout the narrative, then, Callirhoe's experience of individual geographical settings changes; simultaneously, a constant feeling of uprootedness underlies her perception of her own physical movements and the succession of settings in which she is placed, whereby she experiences the place that she has left as more favourable

than the place in which she finds herself. While it is true, as common opinion has it, that the Greek novels are about displacement and the dangers inherent in it,<sup>60</sup> Callirhoe's perceptions of and interactions with new spaces suggest that Chariton's novel at least is also about the ability of characters to deal with the consequences of such displacement and to adapt to new situations.

Dionysius' experience of different geographical settings as threatening is informed by a relativism similar to Callirhoe's. In Miletus, he fears that 'someone is hiding on the estate plotting to seduce his wife' (3.9.4). As soon as he leaves for Babylon, however, his fear increases and he repeatedly compares the danger of the seduction of his wife in this city to that in Miletus, which he *now*, in retrospect, characterizes as relatively small. He realizes, for example, that keeping watch over Callirhoe in Miletus was easier than doing so in the whole of Asia (4.7.7) and becomes aware of the fact that Babylon 'is no longer Miletus, and even there you were constantly on the alert for plots against you' (5.2.8; see also 5.10.3; 6.2.6). Dionysius' experience of space, then, like Callirhoe's, is not absolute. Miletus is initially experienced as threatening both by Callirhoe and Dionysius, but this experience evolves in function of new settings being introduced into their lives. As such, Miletus is more than simply a liminal or transitional space between Europe and Asia.<sup>61</sup> Rather, its liminal character is the object of shifting and evolving perceptions and negotiations from the characters involved. The notion that space is a relative concept was, of course, not new.<sup>62</sup> (→) Homer had already shown that spaces can have different values for different characters. Chariton, now, highlights that the way space is viewed and experienced by *one* character individually does not need to be static or absolute. Such perceptions, rather, are fluid, evolving and measured against other settings.

### *Conclusion*

The construction of space in Chariton's novel is interwoven with different literary traditions. Modes of writing reminiscent of (both classical and imperial) historiography are most prominent (intrusive narrator-space, plausibly realistic geography, etc.), but a number of forms and

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Perkins 2001: 125.

<sup>61</sup> As Lowe 2000: 229 and Cuny 2005: 224–225 have it.

<sup>62</sup> On other but comparable types of relativism in Chariton, see S.D. Smith 2007: 155–163 and de Temmerman 2010.

functions of space are also informed by spatial constellations reaching back to Homer (functional use of spatial detail, 'there is a place X' motif), Pindar (sacred, transitional space), Lysias (*lieux de mémoire* as rhetorical strategies), Plato (sacred space, gymnasium), tragedy (domestic space) and the rhetorical tradition (standard *topoi*).

On a thematic level, space is particularly instrumental in Chariton's thematization of power (a connection itself reminiscent of historiography): the narrator interweaves spatial depiction with themes of authority, hierarchy and dominance (e.g. Babylonian courtroom); characters use setting to enhance their own (political or military) self-positioning (e.g. Artaxerxes) or to establish (emotional or social) dominance (e.g. Dionysius), while others adopt frames as rhetorical tools (e.g. Chaereas). Four types of space are semantically charged throughout the novel: geographical settings (erotic and political resonances), domestic space (emblematic of established, marital order and its possible disruption), sacred space (transitional and permeable) and secluded vs. open spaces (documenting the communicability of hidden or secret information—and of female beauty as its visual pendant—and the tension between emotionality and rationality). Furthermore, the narrator as well as characters are often explicit about the characterizing function of space, whereas its psychologizing function is addressed more subtly. Not only is space in Chariton a relative concept, but individual experiences of space are also subject to psychological negotiation.