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**Longus. Daphnis and Chloe**

**Ewen Bowie, Longus. Daphnis and Chloe. Cambridge Greek and Latin classics. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. x, 338 p.. ISBN 9780521776592 \$45.95 (pb).**

**Review by**

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As part of a growing interest in the genre known as the “ancient novel”, this book offers a commentary on Longus’ *Daphnis and Chloe*, one of the finest surviving works of ancient Greek fiction. Although other (excellent) commentaries on this text have been published in recent years,[1] Bowie’s work is a very welcome addition. Its distinctive feature is its focus on Longus’s language, style, and literary skills, and on their implications for understanding the complexity, sophistication, and self-awareness of this pastoral novel, which should be read once every year, as famously suggested by Goethe, “so as to learn from it again and again, and to sense freshly its great beauty” (Conversations with Eckermann, 20 March 1831). The novel narrates the story of two foundlings, brought up by shepherds, who spend their puberty herding their foster-parents’ goats and sheep. They gradually discover love and sex, and, after a series of hazards, achieve marital union. Unlike other Greek novels, in which the young couple is separated, travel across the Mediterranean, survive shipwrecks, pirates, and kidnappings, and is finally reunited, Longus’s story is entirely set in Lesbos, an island famous for poetry and relatively poor in adventures. Its interest mostly lies in its literary sophistication, fine rhetorical style, and intertextual quality—the main focuses of Bowie’s commentary. The declared aim of the work, gestated for more than three decades, is to give “close attention to Longus’ language” (p. vii). The commentary thus provides a detailed analysis of Longus’s style, while at the same time paying attention to the novel’s reworking of many literary models.

The book is divided into three parts: an Introduction (pp. 1-23), preceded by a list of Conventions and Abbreviations (pp. viii-x); Text, accompanied by a readable apparatus (pp. 25-91); and Commentary (pp. 93-308). A Bibliography (consisting of Editions/Commentaries and Studies), a General Index, and an Index of Greek Terms Discussed follow.

The introduction, succinct yet very dense, discusses Longus’s intertexts, both in poetry and prose, and the author’s style and language, with a perceptive treatment of Longus’s syntax, choice of words, and lexicon. This paves the way for the detailed treatment of the same aspects in the line-by-line commentary. Bowie draws a clear picture of the ways in which Longus exploits the tradition of bucolic writing, best known from Theocritus’s poetry, and enriches its narrative by drawing on other poetic models, such as Archaic lyric, Ancient and New comedy, Hellenistic and Imperial epigrams, but also Homer and tragedy, as well as earlier Greek prose, from Plato (whose *Phaedrus* is also widely exploited by Longus’s predecessor Achilles Tatius) to Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. Although Longus’s debts to most of these models have already been investigated, others receive due attention here for the first time. In this regard, what seems particularly commendable is Bowie’s treatment of Longus’s reworking of the epigrammatic tradition, which ranges from the imitation of specific poems to the selection and re-contextualisation of peculiar phrases, occasionally fused with other intertextual models (Bowie attractively suggests, for instance, that the phrase τὸ ἔρωτος ληστήριον at the end of Book 1 results from the combination of the description of prostitutes as τὰ ληστρικά τῆς Ἀφροδίτης in AP 5.161.5 = HE 1000, an epigram whose authorship is disputed, with AP 5.215.6 = HE 4277 Ἐρωτος ὄρα, ξεῖνε, μαιφονίαν, most probably the last poem of Meleager’s Garland: see pp. 3 and 164).

Another issue dealt with in the introduction is the religious and cultic aspects of this pastoral romance, with a clarification of the different roles played by Eros, Pan, and the Nymphs. Merkelbach's interpretation, according to which the novel is a coded text fully intelligible only to initiates in Dionysiac mysteries, is rejected, in line with recent scholarly trends; at the same time, Bowie is inclined to trust the narrator, who in the preface presents himself as sincerely religious. In this sense, he is closer to Morgan's serio-religious interpretation of the work than to a certain scholarly tendency to think that Longus is merely playing literary games. A paragraph on the dualism 'city vs country', respectively seen as places of corruption and as an idealised world of integrity and moral values, follows; Bowie sensitively shows that Longus does not draw a black and white contrast, but a nuanced picture, where the flaws of his rustic characters are highlighted along with the positive contributions made by some citizens to the happy ending. Attention is then paid to the contrast between art and nature, another opposition on which the plotting of the novel is based; to Longus's dating (Bowie's conclusion, mostly based on stylistic and intertextual evidence, "is that Longus was writing around AD 220," p. 20); and to the reception and transmission of the novel. In no more than three pages, Bowie illustrates the influence exerted by this fascinating text on subsequent art, literature, music, and cinema, providing a picture that ranges from its early reception at the beginning of the third century AD to 20th-century fiction (most famously, *The Blue Lagoon* by Henry de Vere Stacpole) and movies (such as Yuri Kuzmenko's *Dafnis i Khloya*).

The text, preserved in two manuscripts, F (Laurentianus Conv. Soppr. 627; 13th century) and V (Vaticanus Graecus 1348; first quarter of the 16th century), is not based on a personal collation, but on the reports provided by Michael Reeve in his 1982 Teubner edition. The apparatus criticus is clear, although very selective with respect to scholarly conjectures. Text and commentary are conceived as complementary; the commentary does not devote much space to textual matters, so the reader must almost constantly refer to both in order to gain a clear picture of the text and its problems. One is generally put in the condition of extrapolating essential information, although there is probably some inconsistency in its distribution between text and commentary. At 1.14.2, for instance, in his note on οὐκ ἀνέκραγον, Bowie does not alert the reader that this is Tournier's conjecture for the transmitted ἀλλὰ ἔφαγον (which is retained, for instance, by Vieillefond), but this information can be extrapolated from the apparatus (although one is left to deduce what is wrong with the *paradosis*). At 1.21.2, on the contrary, it is not fully clear to my mind why Reeve's reasonable (and economical) correction περιεργία for the transmitted περιεργία is not registered in the apparatus, but just mentioned in passing in the commentary. There are also a few cases where Bowie's editorial choice is not explained at all: at 1.5.3, Bowie prints γνώρισματa (FV have σπάργανα γνώρισματa), without noting the deletion of σπάργανα in the text, and without explaining this choice in the commentary. One wonders whether this is simply a misprint, since γνώρισματa is almost certainly an intrusive gloss, and Bowie himself, at 2.1.4, seems to mention 1.5.3 as an occurrence of σπάργανα. Elsewhere, such a selective apparatus results in the editor glossing over possible problems. This is the case, for instance, with 1.30.6, where the reader is not informed that, for the phrase Μαρτυροῦσι τῷ λόγῳ μέχρι νῦν πολλοὶ τόποι τῆς θαλάσσης, βοὸς πόροι λεγόμενοι, a deletion has been proposed, on quite reasonable grounds (at least, to this reviewer's mind—see M.P. Pattoni, "In margine al testo di Longo", *Prometheus* 31, 2005, pp. 84-86).

Bowie also proposes a few conjectures of his own, and at least some of them are very convincing. At 2.14.3, for instance, Bowie's οἶδ' for FV's οἱ δ' is a straightforward change, which resolves the oddity of the combination of δ' οὖν with the repetition of the article in the manuscripts. An equally easy change, which gives a better syntax, is Bowie's ἐφίκετο for V's ἐξίκετο at 3.34.1. At 3.13.4, on the contrary, I find it excessive to print ἐφηβήσας instead of the transmitted ἐνηβήσας, on the grounds that ἐνηβάω in the required sense of "grow into adolescence" would only be paralleled by a 5th-century Spartan inscription. This seems to me a *lectio difficilior*, somewhat also supported by schol. ad Theocr. 8.3 (mentioned by Bowie himself), where ἔνηβος is defined as fifteen years or older. Doubt on the soundness of the text is admissible, but it would probably have been sufficient to propose the conjecture dubitanter in the

apparatus—as Bowie does, in the same passage, for εὐσωματία, his proposal for V’s ἀσχολία and F’s ἀσχαλία (editors here usually print Schäfer’s εὐσχολία, which is still the best solution to my mind). The bulk of the book is the commentary. Bowie’s notes, always characterised by admirable conciseness, illuminate more than one passage, helping the reader to fully appreciate the ancient author’s literary culture, sophistication, and wit. At 1.30.1, for instance, the phrase φίλημα φιλήσας ὕστατον ἀφῆκεν ἅμα τῷ φιλήματι καὶ τῇ φωνῇ τὴν ψυχὴν, describing Dorcon’s death, is read against the backdrop of the idea that a person’s soul might pass into his/her lover’s body through a kiss, as most famously expressed by an epigram ascribed to Plato, AP 5.77 = FGE 588-589, and this certainly improves our understanding of the text. When suggesting that Longus might be reworking a passage from previous literature, Bowie is always careful to point out whether there is any evidence that a specific text was still read in Longus’s time (this is the case, for instance, with Alcman PMG 58, possibly recalled at 2.5.5, known from Hephaestion 13.6, mid-second century AD, or with Empedocles, fr. 31B117 D-K, probably recalled at 2.7.1 and known to other rough contemporaries of Longus’s, e.g. D.L. 8.77). The reader thus finds in this book not only a full reconstruction of Longus’s intertextual allusions, but also a more general picture of what texts were read and admired by prose writers of the early Imperial age.

From a linguistic point of view, the reader is always given evidence to understand whether a word is also used by other novelists or is peculiar to Longus; whether it is already attested in Archaic and Classical literature, Hellenistic and Imperial Greek prose, or whether it is only found in Longus (e.g. 3.5.2 κίττοφάγος, a hapax probably reminiscent of epic compounds, such as σιτοφάγος or ὠμοφάγος). Bowie never fails to provide a convincing explanation for (apparent) peculiarities. As regards Atticism, for instance, Longus shows a clear tendency to follow the lexicographers’ prescriptions. One exception is εὐμορφος, condemned by Moeris ε 39 Hansen, but used by Longus at 1.18.2 and 4.32.1; as Bowie explains, this exception might be due to the word’s literary pedigree, since it appears in Sappho fr. 82(a) Voigt—in the comparative, like both instances in Longus. Other features typical of Longus’s prose, such as paratactic constructions marked by alliterations, isocola, and rhymes, a tendency to construct paired units, and apparently artless repetition, are not only duly pointed out, and explained as an overall mark of (sought-for) simplicity, but are also connected to the content: as Bowie shows, for instance, Longus’s symmetrical constructions often serve the purpose of presenting parallel actions, or parallel thoughts. What is very interesting, in this respect, is Bowie’s suggestion that most of Longus’s “exceptions”—that is, most of the passages where the syntax has several subordinate clauses—appear where the rural idyll is disrupted (e.g. at 2.19-29, recounting the Methymnan retaliatory expedition). In the case of this skilful author—whose sophisticated style was certainly appreciated by his educated contemporaries—form is meaning. This self-consciousness supports some metaliterary readings tentatively suggested by Bowie—such as the idea that at 2.39.2 with τὸ ἀφέλες, referred to Chloe’s naivety, “L. may hint to readers that they should admire the simplicity of his narrative” (p. 219).

Typos are few, and of a trivial nature (e.g. διὰ for διὰ at p. 140).

In sum, this excellent piece of scholarship illuminates many aspects of the stylistic and literary texture of Longus’s refined novel. It will be essential for both scholars and students interested in Daphnis and Chloe, ancient novels, and ancient Greek Imperial prose more generally.

## Notes

[1] In particular J.R. Morgan, *Longus. Daphnis and Chloe*, Oxford 2004, mainly focused on the narratological aspects of the novel, and M.P. Pattoni, *Longo Sofista. Dafni e Cloe*, Milano 2005, on the intertextual ones.