

O WENS (W. M.) *The Representation of Slavery in the Greek Novel. Resistance and Appropriation*. Pp. x + 244. London and New York: Routledge, 2020. Paper, £36.99, US\$48.95 (Cased, £96. US\$128). ISBN: 978-1-03-233764-7 (978-0-367-34875-5 hbk).
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This study on the representation of slavery in the ancient novel is well worth reading. O. expands on his chapter in the recent *Slaves and Masters in the Ancient Novel* (edd. S. Panayotakis and M. Paschalis [2019]) to offer a wholistic appraisal of how slavery can be read in the ancient Greek novels. In a nutshell, he argues that both Chariton and Xenophon inaugurated the genre, incorporating the perspective of slaves into their stories. O. makes a plausible case that both authors might have been ex-slaves. The later novels, those of Achilles Tatius, Longus and Heliodorus, he says, are narrated from an elite perspective and play with the trope of slavery within their individual sophistic styles. The overall argument of the book resonates well with what scholars have come to understand about the novels and with the divide between the earlier and the later novels.

What is most useful and valuable in O.'s approach is that he introduces a theoretical framework borrowed from the social sciences, from political scientist / anthropologist James Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1992), along with sociologist Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (1982). O. applies Scott's approach, using reader-response theory, to extract 'hidden transcripts' of putative real-life experience informing the narrative. This methodology allows him to read each ancient novel from multiple perspectives: from that of the experience of ex-slaves reflected in the trials of the novel's protagonists, to that of ex-slaves reading the novel, and to elite readers.

As with O.'s multi-valent approach to reading the ancient Greek novels, I can imagine at least two types of readers for this book. For readers unfamiliar with the texts of the ancient novels, in each chapter O. includes extensive summaries of the plots, annotated to highlight the aspects of slavery represented, together with some of the dominant scholarly interpretations. For readers familiar with the texts, O. structures each chapter to contain at its start a shorter summary of the arguments to be delivered over the course of the chapter, so that those readers can move quickly to the parts most interesting to them.

The book has a chapter devoted to each novel, with an additional chapter focused on the common themes of slave perspective in both Xenophon's and Chariton's novels. O. concludes by drawing connections between sites mentioned in those novels and the historical tradition of slave resistance, as well as speculating that Chariton's employer might have been one of Augustus' freedmen, and suggests that the novel's early associations with slavery influenced its poor literary reception.

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