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*IN MEDIIS REBUS: BEGINNING AGAIN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
ANCIENT NOVEL*

This article is part of a larger project on the ancient novels which I have dubbed the ‘prosaics’ of the ancient novels. By that term I mean an analysis that focuses on the ancient novels as a process rather than as a finished product, as a signifying practice rather than as an object, taking my cue from a book on the rise of French prose in the middle ages by W. Godzich and J. Kittay:

Trained as we are to perceive texts as totalities, we seek to apprehend their structure and, in the description of that structure, to assert our mastery over the text. Prosaics seeks instead to espouse the movement of the text as it manages the economy of its discourses, to establish where the thresholds of decision arise, what the decisions are, and what their motivations and determinations as well as their consequences have been. In other words, we must learn to follow the processive threading of the text.¹

This ‘prosaics’ approach is contrasted to a ‘poetics’ of form as Godzich and Kittay turn their attention to the special character of prose, defined as a discourse no longer organized around the activity of a performer (like the verse genres of antiquity and the middle ages), and the way that elements of the performer’s activity become redistributed and absorbed in the emerging practice of prose. Of particular interest is the way the cohesive and organizational functions of the performer’s presence becomes transformed in a discourse that is made up entirely of words. How can we think of this aspect of our texts that replaces the activity of the performer with words?

Godzich and Kittay make a preliminary distinction between the referential and text-economic aspects of a text. The former is concerned with the relationship of the text to its subject matter, whereas the text-economic forces of a discourse have to do with its forward movement, its ability to continue as text and not collapse under its own weight. ‘Constructing’ a text can be likened to the process of building a wall from bricks and mortar. The bricks can be thought of as the themes and ideas of a work; the mortar as the various means by which these bricks are arranged and presented, the ‘rhetoric’ of the text, as we say, the means by which the assent of the audience is gained, but also the means by which infelicities and gaps in the bricks can be glossed over. To take an example from the world of performance, an orator must engage in a to and fro movement (bricks and mortar)

¹ Godzich, Kittay (1987) 48. See Nimis (1994).

whereby he proposes certain formulations and then seeks assent to the correctness of these formulations. He shifts back and forth between two modes, making statements about the world as though they were self-evident, and then switching to a text-economic mode in order to elicit consent to his formulations; he does so by dialoguing with the audience, by saying things like, “Don’t you agree?” “Am I right?” or other such ‘rhetorical questions’. This need not be an explicit request for an expression of assent from the audience – indeed that can be rather dangerous; the orator need only mark the moment through certain formal devices, such as gestures, pauses, significant intonations, etc., encoding the moment of the audience’s assent, for that is all that is needed. In this way, step by step, brick by brick, the orator is able to create a discourse that cumulatively appears to the audience to be a progressive revelation of their own firmly held opinions.

In a narrative organized around the activity of one or more performers, such as epic or drama, devices that serve to sustain and knit together the various elements of the story can also take the form of some non-verbal activity. But in narratives like the ancient novels, where no performative presence or activity is presumed, where everything is just words, devices that serve to sustain and link together the various elements of the story can be marked by a switch from narrative to some other mode: description, summary, allusion, etc. In my previous work on the ancient novels I have identified various examples of such ‘mortar moments’.² What I want to address in this article is the case when a significant structural seam appears because the author makes a major adjustment to the direction of his story, and hence my title, second beginnings in the ancient novel, particularly second beginnings that occur in the middle of the novel, *in mediis rebus*. This topic was suggested to me in part by an article entitled ‘Proems in the Middle’ by G. B. Conte, who identifies a Hellenistic tradition, beginning with Callimachus and imitated by Virgil and others, of having a second proem half way through a work, which is specifically a place to discuss poetics and literary purpose. The regular recurrence in Virgil and others of a proem in the middle as a privileged locus of literary consciousness is described by Conte as a formal literary convention that eventually achieves the status of a rhetorical institution.³ I don’t intend to dispute Conte’s account of these proems in the middle in the works of Virgil and others; instead I wish to draw a contrast with his poetics of form by giving a prosaics account of certain medial moments in the ancient novels, focusing on how they function as text-economic elements.

To help draw the distinction, we can pose the following question: How much of a novel story does one have to have composed before beginning to

² Nimis (1998), (1999), (2001).

³ Conte (1992) 153.

write a novel? This is a seemingly paradoxical question, except that a poetics approach takes for granted that the definitive form of a literary work has eradicated all traces of the composition process itself in making some purpose or set of purposes permeate the work from one end to the other, so that at every point of the final product the author always already knows the rest of the story. Conte is quite clear about this:

Two different problems must be distinguished. The first is the diachrony of composition, the ups and downs that accompanied the composition of [Ennius'] *Annals*, and the resulting collocation of those two lines at one or another stage in the process of composition; the second is the definitive form in which the *Annals* appear (or rather, appeared to its ancient readers) at the end of that process.⁴

Whether such a clear distinction between process and product is valid for all works of literature is dubious, but long works of prose like the Greek novels, with their non-traditional plots and characters, have a special claim to a different assumption: that an author's intentions and interests might evolve in the very act of composing the novel, and that evidence of this development will be legible in the finished work. Indeed, it is a reasonable hypothesis that an ancient novelist would begin composing a story with a general idea of the whole plot, and with the first half or so worked out in some detail; and when he arrived at the middle, before launching into the less thought-out second half, he had to pause and reassess and decide what sort of novel he was going to write from this point on, a point he had reached in some sense for the first time. As such, the presence of 'text-economic' forces and functions, self-reflexive 'mortar moments', at this point in the text can be analyzed from a prosaics standpoint to help us identify the process by which the text effects a redirection of the story, and perhaps identify what led to that adjustment.

I have chosen two of our extant novels, Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe* and Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* for consideration. Both of these novels have strong claims to being especially well-formed 'objects' that can be profitably assessed by a poetics of form. Both Perry and Reardon, for example, consider Chariton's novel to represent a kind of ideal example of the genre.⁵ *Daphnis and Chloe* has been the object of numerous studies that focus on the architectonics of form in the story.⁶ While not denying the interest of these 'poetics' approaches, I would like to foreground the heterogeneity of these texts by focusing on the text-economic elements that bind together disparate elements, that reveal certain inconcinnities in the very act of covering them up. The point is not that these novels have no structure, but

⁴ Conte (1992) 155.

⁵ Perry (1967), Reardon (1991).

⁶ MacQueen (1990) is the most sustained such account.

rather that their composition is a dialectic of tentative form and moving forward: *prorsus*, the Latin word from which our word ‘prose’ derives. In these two novels there is a fairly well-defined caesura in the middle of the text marked by a combination of thematic and formal elements. I want to pay special attention to the way this point in the text is marked by simultaneous gestures of tentative closure and new beginning.

The very middle of Chariton’s novel spans the last several sentences of book 4 and the beginning of book 5, and is remarkable because it contains almost every sort of mortar imaginable in a prose discourse. For convenience sake I will quote the passage in English (4.7.3-5.1.2).⁷

While [Mithridates] was still pondering these matters and meditating revolt, a message came that Dionysius had set out from Miletus and was bringing Callirhoe with him. This upset Mithridates more than the summons to trial. Bewailing his lot he said, “What have I to hope for if I stay? Fortune turns on me in every way. Well, perhaps the king will take pity on me since I have done no wrong; and if I should have to die, I shall see Callirhoe once more. At the trial I shall keep Chaereas and Polycharmus with me, not only as advocates, but as witnesses too.” Accordingly he ordered all his household to accompany him, and set out from Caria in good spirits, confident that he would not be found guilty of any crime. So they saw him off, not with tears, but with sacrificial rites and a solemn escort.

In addition to this expedition from Caria, Eros was dispatching another from Ionia – more distinguished, for its beauty was more conspicuous and more regal. Rumor sped ahead of the lady, announcing to all men that Callirhoe was at hand: the celebrated Callirhoe, nature’s masterpiece,

“like Artemis or golden Aphrodite.” (*Od.* 17.37)

The report of the trial made her more famous. Whole cities came to meet her; people flocked in and packed the streets to see her; and all thought her still lovelier than rumor had made her out. The felicitations Dionysius received caused him distress, and the extent of his good fortune only made him more fearful, for he was an educated man and was aware how inconstant Eros is – that is why poets and sculptors depict him with bow and arrows and associate him with fire, of all things the most light and unstable. He began to recollect ancient legends and all the changes that had come over their beautiful women. In short, Dionysius was frightened of everything. He saw all men as his rivals – not just his opponent in the trial, but the very judge; he regretted, in fact, more rashly revealing the affair to Pharnaces,

“when he could have slept and kept his loved one” (*Men. Misoumenos*).

Keeping watch over Callirhoe in Miletus was one thing; in the whole of Asia, it was another matter. Nonetheless, he kept his secret to the end; he did not tell his wife the reason for the journey but pretended that the King had summoned him to consult him about affairs in Ionia. Callirhoe was distressed to be taken far from the Greek sea; as long as she could see the harbors of Miletus she had the impression that Syracuse was not far away; and Chaereas’s tomb in Miletus was a great comfort to her.

⁷ The translation is that of Gould (1995), slightly modified.

How Callirhoe, the most beautiful of women, married Chaereas, the handsomest of men, by Aphrodite's management; how in a fit of lover's jealousy Chaereas struck her, and to all appearances she died; how she had a costly funeral and then, just as she came out of her coma in the funeral vault, tomb robbers carried her away from Sicily by night, sailed to Ionia, and sold her to Dionysius; Dionysius's love for her, her fidelity to Chaereas, the need to marry caused by her pregnancy; Theron's confession, Chaereas's journey across the sea in search of his wife; how he was captured, sold, and taken to Caria with his friend Polycharmus; how Mithridates discovered his identity as he was on the point of death and tried to restore the lovers to each other; how Dionysius found this out through a letter and complained to Pharnaces, who reported it to the King, and the King summoned both of them to judgment—this has all been set out in the story so far. Now I shall narrate what happened next.

First note that I have underlined three words, Fortune, Eros and Rumor, (χ , ϵ , and ρ) that are portrayed in the text as what we call personifications. Eros is a mythological person in a more traditional sense, but in Chariton he appears and functions in much the same way as other more abstract agents, such as Fortune and Rumor. In fact we are told later in this same passage that Eros is a lover of novelties (ν), an epithet also used to describe χ , since both like to set up paradoxical situations and outcomes. As such, Eros and Fortune are figures of the author himself, who also delights, so it would seem, in telling novelties and setting up paradoxical outcomes. This accumulation of personified agents here raises the more general question of why they appear in the novels, and they call attention to an important aspect of prose discourse in general.

The introduction of personifications, such as Fortune and Eros, are infusions of narrative direction and energy into the text, explicit examples of the exercise of authorial control. These references invoke ideas about super-human narrative forces whose operations are left intentionally vague, but their presence assures the reader temporarily that everything is progressing according to some kind of plan, that this is not just some random series of events. Such infusions of narrative direction occur at places where Chariton felt the need to recreate verbally the organizational function of a performer. Fortune and Eros are, so to speak, epiphanies of a performative presence that assure us that this narrative has some guiding spirit, that it is held together by forces of continuity and control. In the history of prose this is a transitional moment, occurring at a time when the model of performance was still strong. Eventually even such abstractions cease to be invoked for they call too much attention to themselves as seams, as mortar. So although they serve to sustain the continuity of the prose discourse, they are also signs that the author intuitively felt that some more explicit exercise of

control was required to keep things going, and they are thus symptomatic of a ‘mortar moment’.

In this context, I want to turn to the third personification in this passage, the word μ , ‘Rumor’. μ has a broad range of meanings in Greek, but in Chariton regularly refers to a discourse which comes out of nowhere, as it seems, to broadcast far and wide some news without any discrimination about who is hearing it, and without caring what use they will make of it. This is not unlike the novelist himself, who composes for an audience he can only imagine and whose response he cannot completely predict; and indeed, this self-reflexive gesture inaugurates an intense thematization of the process of composing this story here at its mid-point.

μ is personified ten times in the novel, almost all of them in the first half, and it is usually introduced in the same way.⁸ μ “runs everywhere” (), she is “swift” (), a “messenger” () spreading “strange new things” (). The effect of this dispersion far and wide is often to bring people together () to witness something for themselves, often the beautiful heroine. Just so, as a prose discourse the novel is spread far and wide without any particular source or authority, and without being directed at anyone in particular; and at the same time it constitutes a kind of seeing and knowing that aspires to universality and transcendence. The beauty of Callirhoe is not just the opinion of the author, nor of the heroine’s family or her lovers; everyone comes to a general understanding and agreement. This is the aspiration of the novelist, not to persuade a particular jury, nor celebrate a particular victory, but to produce a discourse that transcends space and time. In our passage, for example, μ announces to all men the presence of Callirhoe, the famous (), literally, “shouted all around”), the absolute perfection (μ) of nature herself. Whole cities come out to see Callirhoe – here the phrasing recalls the opening of the novel, when the heroine’s μ brought suitors from everywhere (1.1.2). These references to completion and universal distribution and admiration reflect the author’s own goals for his narrative, to bring his story, whose title is simply *Callirhoe*, to an end that will be the source of the same kind of universal admiration as his heroine.

Next we switch to the character Dionysus, who is oppressed by the fame of his wife and the attention she is receiving. He reflects on the fickleness of Eros, remembers how other stories of beautiful women ended in reversals (μ). He becomes fearful of an unexpected outcome from the widespread publication of his wife’s beauty. These anxieties of the character Dionysus about how his story will end also reflect the dilemma of the

⁸ Representative examples occur at 1.1.2; 1.5.1; 2.3.9; 3.3.2; 3.4.1.

author himself at this point: How will Chariton bring his own story from this point to the end he had anticipated when he began? an end that will involve paradoxical recognitions and reversals. How, in other words, is he going to exert control over this powerful μ of Callirhoe? The explicit evocation of “ancient stories” (μ) and the way they end parallels the dilemma of the author as he searches for an appropriate way to bring this story to its proper end.

Another important form of mortar is the use of explicit allusions, of which we have two here: the first is to the *Odyssey*, implicitly comparing the heroine to Penelope, hinting at a possible shape for the story; and indeed an *Odyssey*-like scenario develops later in the novel insofar as there is a competition for the heroine and insofar as the *Odyssey*’s reunion of separated spouses is a common novel plot trajectory. The second allusion to Menander refers to one of the most important sources of forms of closure for the ancient novel: New Comedy; and Chariton’s ending indeed recalls many traditional motifs from that genre. Yet here this single line (“when he could be in bed embracing his beloved”) is from the opening of Menander’s *Misoumenos*, so that we have a reference both to a generic form of closure (New Comedy) and a particular opening gambit, a kind of second beginning.⁹

In this connection the statement that the “account of the trial (μ) made Callirhoe more celebrated” is pertinent. Gould renders μ as “talk of the trial,” which makes good sense because the trial hasn’t taken place yet, so this μ is just anticipatory. But μ is the regular word not for such anticipatory talk, but for a narrative account told from the perspective of its outcome, as in the expression μ a few lines later for the “ancient stories” of women’s changes; indeed the verb μ occurs in the first sentence of the novel describing the author’s own activity as a narrator: “I am going to tell you a story of erotic suffering,” and again in book 5.1.2 when he begins the second half. The account of the trial will indeed, once it takes place in book 5, increase Callirhoe’s celebrity, but that is something that Chariton is only anticipating at this point. In a poetics account, in which everything is presumed to be always already composed, this might be called an instance of foreshadowing, looking forward to what one knows will be coming; but from a prosaics perspective, this prolepsis is indicative of the author’s effort to knit together the two halves of the novel by weaving a connection between the μ of Callirhoe and the story of the trial he is now preparing to begin to narrate.

⁹ New Comedy motifs also appear in the early scenes of the novel, especially the frame-up scene (1.4) where Menander is quoted twice. At 1.1.14 Penelope is also invoked as a comparanda of Callirhoe by an allusion to *Od.* 4.703.

Another noteworthy characteristic of this passage is the profusion of comparative adjectives: Eros, we are told, was dispatching an expedition more celebrated (/), more conspicuous (/), more regal (). Talk of the trial made Callirhoe's fame more celebrated (/); yet the woman herself was greater () than rumor had made her out to be. Meanwhile, Dionysus is more fretful () and regretted being more hasty (). Conte notes that proems in the middle frequently register a change of subject matter as a change to some higher or greater or more important subject matter, as in the proem of book 7 of the *Aeneid*,¹⁰ and this series of comparative adjectives has a similar effect of reinvoking a sense of beginning again, of a renewed and more vigorous push forward to the end. The second half of Chariton's novel does in fact have a trial and a war and other manly things which focus more attention on the public sphere in which the hero Chaereas will become more prominent than the heroine Callirhoe. This redirection of the narrative is being articulated in this medial passage, where the particular path the narrative will take from this point on is being formulated more concretely for the first time. It is worth noting in this connection the view of Brigitte Egger that the novel seems divided against itself in its treatment of Callirhoe: on the one hand, Chariton foregrounds the potent eroticism of Callirhoe that overwhelms all men who see her, and hence makes her a powerful agent in the story in a novel way; simultaneously, however, Chariton evokes traditional restrictions on femininity that would put Callirhoe in her 'proper' place.¹¹ I would observe that although the novel ends on the latter note, it is the other element that has driven the narrative forward up to its midpoint, so that this caesura also marks a retreat into greater conventionality.

The last thing I want to talk about in this passage is the summary that begins book 5. As a narrative event, summary is a place where the forward movement of the text is halted, and units that have been already presented are surveyed, generally with an aim of taking stock of them in some way, especially to bestow on them some meaning greater than the sum of the parts. A summary occurs at a moment where for some reason it no longer seemed possible to 'let the events speak for themselves'. Indeed, since the beginning paragraphs, Chariton's novel has made little effort to produce a sense of narrative totality. But here at the middle, something made the author feel that it was necessary to produce such a summary. What does the author see when he surveys what has happened so far? As far as I can tell, there is only one aspect of plot-shaping at this point: the statement that "Aphrodite had engineered the marriage" (μ

¹⁰ Conte (1992) 152.

¹¹ Egger (1994).

μ) of the protagonists, for this is the first time that Aphrodite is mentioned in that role. But this is picked up in another summary at the beginning of book 8, where we are told that Aphrodite was punishing Chaereas like Poseidon punished Odysseus (8.1.2-3). That here in book 5 this mention of Aphrodite is an instance of explicit plot-shaping and revision is evidenced by the fact that till now Eros, not Aphrodite, has been identified as the one who engineered the marriage and was toying with the lovers' plight – indeed Eros is so identified at the end of book four (4.7.5). But from now on Chaereas is to be cast as a more central figure, becoming a kind of Odysseus-like sufferer, for whom Aphrodite seems more appropriate as an “angry god”; whereas Eros, who is , the impish deity who, like fire, is “most light and unstable,” was a more appropriate guiding spirit for the more open-ended and ‘novel’ part of the story.

To summarize, thematization of agency, particularly references to composition or distribution, allusions to other genres or stories, particularly their outcomes, comparative adjectives that look forward to ‘some greater subject’, proleptic gestures, and summary: these are some of the mortar elements in this example.

Let me turn now to Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*. This novel begins with a proem containing a description of a painted scene in a lovely grove observed by our author while he is hunting on the island of Lesbos, who then writes the story we read based on these paintings. The painted scene is a kind of preliminary outline of the novel, presenting a handful of events all of which take place in the first half of this novel of four books. As such, it puts forth in a general way the shape of the story by pointing to its New Comedy conclusion, with the recognition of the foundlings, and enumerates several of the episodes of the first half of the story. The proem represents the kind of material that it would be necessary to have in hand to begin composing a novel story: a beginning and end, some initial episodes, with the rest to be fleshed later. The final episode of book two is the last event mentioned in the proem (the oaths of the two young lovers:

μ). The beginning of book three, the midpoint of the novel, has an interesting mixture of elements of closure and opening; indeed it is much like a second beginning in the middle.

The book opens with a strange incident in which the two main cities of Lesbos are suddenly brought to a state of war by an incident that had occurred earlier in the story. The war that breaks out in the first paragraph is aborted in the next one, literally coming from and going nowhere. This brief war episode, with its “unexpected beginning and end” (3.3.1:) with no middle in between, is a reverse image of most novels, which typically have a generic and expected begin-

ning and end, between which there is an indefinite and indeterminate middle. This unusual episode thematizes narrative organization, especially focusing on proper beginnings and endings. This thematization is continued in the next paragraph, when the arrival of winter closes off all narrative possibility: a sudden snowfall blocks all the roads and locks all the farmers in their homes, compelling Daphnis and Chloe to wait for spring as if a rebirth from death (3.4.2: /). It is as though our author, having completed the episodes of the story identified in the prologue, is now preparing to launch off on a new path that was less fixed when he began, and is now mustering narrative resources for that effort by focusing on the problems of beginning and ending, and by gesturing toward the promise of full meaning.

The next paragraph switches into the mode of description, detailing the character of a lovely arboreal cave nearby, which reminds us of the grove at the beginning of the story where the hunter/author encountered the picture that stimulated him to write the novel. It is in this arbor that Daphnis now contrives to see Chloe by going there on a hunting expedition. Although it is a good distance away, “for love,” we are told, “every way is passable (μ) even through fire, water and snow,” a common enough sentiment in erotic literature, but also one that resonates with the textual dilemma of coming up with a path to continue the story, of getting through this narrative obstacle. When no one comes out of Chloe’s house spontaneously, there is an amusing monologue in which Daphnis imagines various scenarios to explain his appearance there, each paired with an imagined response from Chloe’s father (3.6.3):

“I’ve come to get a light for a fire.”
“Weren’t there neighbors close by?”
“I’ve come to ask for bread.”
“But your bag’s full of food.”
“A wolf chased me.”
“And where are his footprints?”

The authorial dilemma of what to narrate next seems to be reflected in Daphnis’s dilemma about what to do next, about how to present himself to the adult world in order to achieve his desires. In this novel, we readers have been invited all along to adopt the sophisticated perspective of the author, who finds humor and pleasure in the exaggerated innocence and ignorance of the two children; now Daphnis becomes assimilated to that same perspective as he becomes a hunter, like the author at the beginning of the story, and takes action to move the story along, eventually achieving sexual knowledge superior to Chloe from an older woman, and then becoming a suitor of Chloe.

At the same time, Chloe's passivity is emphasized in this section: without resource (μ) she sits at home learning domestic activities and listening to talk about marriage from her stepmother.¹² Indeed, as David Konstan has shown, critical to the thematics of the second half of the story is the asymmetry of the children's experiences as Daphnis becomes a suitor among other suitors:

The plot veers away from occasions of sexual frustration for the young couple and takes up the rivalry among suitors for the hand of Chloe, as though the problem of postponed gratification were now forgotten, or subsumed under the competition to acquire a spouse.¹³

Konstan notes that there is a dissonance within this text, a double perspective on sexuality that simultaneously construes marriage as the culmination of adolescent sexual experimentation, but also leaves room for an alternative, utopian image of sexuality that is not simply the prelude to phallic penetration. This dissonance results in a kind of textual amnesia in the second half about certain critical issues from the first half. This reorientation is signaled in the opening chapters of Book 3 and is rationalized by a kind of textual logic involving a series of comparative adjectives. Remember that poems in the middle frequently register a change of subject matter as a change to some higher or greater or more important subject matter:

3.2.3: The Methymneans regretted acting more *impetuously* () rather than *more moderately* ().

3.2.5: the Mytileneans found peace *more profitable* () than war.

3.3.1: to Daphnis and Chloe war was *less bitter* () than winter.

3.4.1: to the farmers winter was *sweeter* () than spring itself.

3.4.2: Daphnis and Chloe await spring as if resurrection from death.

3.4.5: Daphnis is *cleverer* () than a girl.

This series of comparisons seems to be a sort of pseudo-syllogistic movement that begins with an opposition of moderation¹⁴ and spontaneity, moves from war and peace, winter and spring, ending with the conclusion that Daphnis is more clever than Chloe: not a logical conclusion, but a textual conclusion. These comparisons introduce for the first time in the novel

¹² 3.4.5: μ , literally her 'apparent mother': a reference to the end which will involve finding Chloe's true parents.

¹³ Konstan (1994) 88.

¹⁴ 'Moderation' () is a key term from the proem differentiating the author from his characters, for the proem ends with the words: 'May the god Eros let me write about the passions of others but keep my own self-control (μ ...)', so this reference to is another link to the proem.

a differentiation of adult desire from that of the protagonist children, signaling the change of focus of which Konstan speaks.

Moreover, I would assert that the comparison of winter and spring to death and resurrection thematizes the issue of a second beginning for the story. And this is given some support from the fact that there is a textual problem in this very phrase. For the words translated as “they awaited spring as though a resurrection” is not in any of the manuscripts, but is an emendation. The manuscripts do not have a word for ‘spring’ but a series of variations on the noun $\mu\epsilon\iota\sigma\acute{\eta}\varsigma$, ‘peace’. Here is the text of Dalmeyda (1934) along with his apparatus (3.4.2):

\pm	μ	/	
\pm	Walckenauer;	°	A;
°	V ₁ V ₂ P ₂ [in marg. V ₁	V ₃ P ₁	; supersc. in V ₂
];		

The word for ‘peace’ ($\mu\epsilon\iota\sigma\acute{\eta}\varsigma$) and the adjectives meaning ‘spring-like’ (\pm $\mu\epsilon\iota\sigma\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ or $\mu\epsilon\iota\sigma\acute{\eta}\varsigma$) are very close, but the earliest readings are $\mu\epsilon\iota\sigma\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ and $\mu\epsilon\iota\sigma\acute{\eta}\varsigma$: both could be translated “they waited during this season of peace for a resurrection from the dead.” Marginal notes suggest various sensible corrections, but it is a little hard to explain how the word for ‘peace’ ever entered this context, since it is the *lectio difficilior*. Just as later copyists and editors have thought ‘spring’ to make better sense than ‘peace’, at an earlier stage, someone—maybe Longus, maybe someone else—thought the word ‘peace’ made better sense here.

Here is a place where it is necessary to pay closer attention to the interplay between thematic elements (bricks) and text-economic elements (mortar). My preliminary comparison of composing a discourse to building a wall of bricks and mortar is actually a little misleading. In a prose discourse, as opposed to a performed discourse, everything is just words, so when we identify something as mortar as opposed to bricks, this is over simple. Actually we should speak of an individual textual element as a locus for the play of forces, and hence something that can function either as brick or as mortar, or as both. A better analogy for a prose text might be a woven rug, in which every strand is simultaneously part of the design that is represented, but also exerts a force that holds the whole rug together. In the passage at hand, the word translated either as ‘spring’ or ‘peace’ plays such a double role. In terms of the thematics of the passage, the idea of ‘spring’ resonates well with the idea of resurrection.¹⁵ But in terms of the organizational economy of the text, a combination of the ideas of spring

¹⁵ See especially Chalk (1960).

and peace is appropriate to this second beginning in the middle. As a hinge between the two halves of the novel, this point is simultaneously an opening and closing, a new beginning, like spring, and also a relaxation of tension, a closure of sorts, like peace. It is a moment of focus on how to start over and also how to achieve an 'expected end'. To choose one of the two readings, as editors and translators must do, is to reduce this doubleness, that is to me emblematic of the ancient novel: heuristic and experimental in posing new and interesting scenarios; often conventional in giving the usual 'expected' answers. Like Chariton's *Callirhoe*, Longus' novel starts out with something ingenious and remarkable, only to redirect itself towards a rather unremarkable 'happy ending'. That shift could be the result of indolence, or it could be something intended from the start as an ideological act, or it could be the result of mixed motives. No matter which, a critical part of reading these novels is to follow these shifts in discursive mode, these revisionist moments, that signal an evolving logic that is heterogeneous both in its purposes and in its effects.