That Chariton made substantial imitative use of the Greek historians in composing *Chaireas and Callirhoe* is not news.\(^1\) From the framing of his work with conventional historiographic terms,\(^2\) to his use of historical details and devices throughout the novel, Chariton’s reliance upon the genre of history is apparent at every turn and has been well documented.\(^3\) But despite its rich historical trappings, *Chaireas and Callirhoe* is, of course, fiction, not history. In recent years, particularly now that the issue of sources and influences has been sufficiently tapped, interpretation has tended to concentrate on this reality rather than on the novel’s quasi-historical elements.\(^4\) And

1) This has long been generally recognized. See, for example, E. Rohde’s *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer* (Leipzig 1914), 517-31. G.L. Schmeling’s comments on the point are particularly apropos and deserve quotation: “Few pages go by without Chariton imitating the three great Greek historians, Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon, but he avoids carefully the hiatus... so readily admitted by Thucydides.” *Chariton* (New York 1974), 24.


3) Bartsch, in particular, has emphasized the novel’s historical *Einkleidung* [n. 2 supra] 34 et passim. E. Schwartz, *Fünf Vorträge über den griechischen Roman* (Berlin 1943), 153-5, has some insightful remarks about the quasi-historical feel of the world Chariton has created, a point also made by W.E. Blake, *Chariton’s Romance—the First European Novel*, *CJ* 29 (1933-34), 284-88. For a general discussion of the influence of the historical genre on Chariton’s work see A. Calderini, *Le Avventure di Cherea e Calliroe* (Torino 1913), 175, n. 3. This ‘quasi-historical’ aspect of the novel extends beyond the paraphernalia of the plot and into the diction and structure of the work: for examples of Chariton’s specific imitation of his historical exemplars see C.G. Cobet, *Annotationes Criticae ad Charitonem*, Mnemosyne 8 (1859), 229-303, and A.D. Papanikolaou, *Chariton-Studien. Untersuchungen zur Sprache und Chronologie der griechischen Romane* (Hypomnemata 37; Göttingen 1973), 13-24.

4) “Sein Stoff is also nicht der Stoff eines Geschichtsschreibers.” C. Ruiz-Montero,
rightly so, since, for the most part, this tale of two lovers and their adventures takes place in a world that, though decorated with historical scenery, is almost entirely divorced from the events of history itself, whether real or imagined—that is with one important exception: the Egyptian revolt.  

For a number of reasons, Chariton did eventually bring together (indeed, perhaps had to bring together) his erotic world with the world of historical activity. Moreover, in his treatment of the Egyptian revolt, he demonstrates that the historical setting and paradigm he employs throughout his novel is more than incidental scenery, but is instead of central importance to his overall design. Bringing Chaireas into the ‘real world’ of political and military action was, in a way, essential, not only to establish his heroism, but also to


T. Hägg is no doubt correct in stating that at least part of Chariton’s passion for the classical historians stemmed from a desire to legitimize his novel by incorporating historiographic forms: The Novel in Antiquity (Oxford 1983), 16.

That is not to say that Chariton’s historical framework is inaccurate or entirely anachronistic. Hägg finds much to commend in the details of that frame (as well as in its literary purpose) [n. 4 supra] 17, and Reardon’s praise for Chariton’s representation of events from the perspective of “the late Hellenistic and imperial Greek world of the Eastern Mediterranean” is germane [n. 4 supra] 28. The point is that the picture Chariton paints would have ‘seemed’ historically accurate enough for the readers of his day, despite flaws and anachronisms. The Egyptian revolt is the one event that has been most strenuously debated (a fact that in itself demonstrates the significance of this singular involvement by Chariton of his characters in historical action). R. Hunter, whose treatment of the novel’s historical frame is superb, suggests in History and Historicity in Chariton, in: W. Haase (ed.), Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (Berlin 1994) II.34.2, 1057, that Chariton has concocted the revolt out of a variety of historical incidents. In this he follows Rohde who first questioned the rebellion’s authenticity [n. 1 supra] 523. K. Plepelits, Chariton von Aphrodisias (Stuttgart 1976), 17, considers it pointless to search for any particular historical event behind the episode. Others, like Schmeling [n. 1 supra] 79 and C.P. Jones, Hellenistic History in Chariton of Aphrodisias, Chiron 22 (1992), 91-102, see the event as very possibly having a firm historical foundation. There is also the possibility of a ‘real’ event taken out of historical sequence to serve as a model here. On this point see P. Salmon, Chariton d’Aphrodisias et la révolte égyptienne de 360 avant J.-C., Chronique d’Égypte 36 (1961), 365-76, who believes that the events of 360 served as the novelist’s basis for description of the rebellion; and see also Zimmerman [n. 2 supra] 343, and A.M. Scarcella, Metastasi narratologica del dato storico nel romanzo erotico greco, in: Atti del convegno internazionale ‘Letterature classiche e narratologia’ (Perugia 1981), 349.