

THE CHION NOVEL

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The Philosophical Tyrannicide

In the huge corpus of Hellenistic letters allegedly written by famous Greeks hides a series of 17 letters written by a young man from Herakleia in Pontos to his family and friends. His name is Chion and he has left his home town in order to study philosophy with Plato at the Academy in Athens. The letters are obviously not 'real' letters but an anonymous novel in letters (the earliest example in literature), and also a historical novel: Young Chion is in fact a historical person, mentioned by several ancient authors as a member of the Academy, and for one reason: Being a keen philosopher and following the teaching of Plato, he reacted fiercely to the news that a tyrant, Klearchos, had taken over in Herakleia, and he decided to go home and kill the tyrant. In his fare well letter to Plato he explains why.

The novel is probably written in early Imperial times and may be inspired by exercises in rhetoric or philosophy in the Hellenistic schools: *Is tyrannicide legal or an act of terrorism?* – an ever important theme...

Bibliography

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