

## Heliodoros's "Sources": Intertextuality, Paternity, and the Nile River in the *Aithiopika*\*

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SUMMARY: Kharikleia, the heroine of Heliodoros's *Aithiopika*, shares with the novel a tripartite identity; she is a metaphor for the incorporation of multiple literary models into a single text. Heliodoros sets up the Nile river as a figure for the heterogeneity of both heroine and book. The implication is that the discovery of the source of the Nile will mean the discovery of a single, true identity. Ultimately, however, the figure of the Nile casts doubt on whether genealogy, as the search for a point of origin, is a useful way of understanding the nature of hybrid entities such as Kharikleia and her text.

IN A RECENT STUDY OF THE REPRESENTATION OF EGYPT IN THE GREEK NOVELS, Stephen Nimis writes: "The novels draw on a number of Greek narrative traditions—epic, drama, history—but it is their heterogeneity that is paramount, and the proper paternity of the novel has never been adequately identified: it may even be the wrong question to be asking" (2004: 44–45). Nimis's formulation of what might be called the genetic fallacy—the temptation to view connections to other genres as either traces or claims of genetic ties<sup>1</sup>—usefully serves as epigraph to the present study of Heliodoros's *Aithiopika*. Heliodoros's work, the latest and arguably the most self-conscious of the extant novels, explicitly poses the question of paternity in a way that invites reflection on the text's multiple (af)filations. The paternity in question, of course, is that of Kharikleia, the heroine of the novel, but in a tradition that

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<sup>1</sup> This fallacy can be thought of as a version of Haeckel's famous dictum that ontogeny (in this case the structure of a particular work) recapitulates phylogeny (the historical developments underlying the work's generic conventions). For a critique of this view, see Kuch 1989, *passim*.

conventionally employed heroines' names as titles it is not such a great step from Kharikleia to *Kharikleia*.<sup>2</sup> In any case, we will have occasion to observe that Heliodoros himself suggests a certain correspondence between his protagonist and her story. What I wish to demonstrate here is that Heliodoros does not pose the question of paternity in the hope of a definitive answer; on the contrary, and in the spirit of Nimis's assertion, Kharikleia's contested paternity figures the studied heterogeneity of the text. The first part of my essay will therefore seek to expose in broad terms the structural framework that organizes the three primary colors of Heliodoros's generic palette: epic, tragedy, and historiography. My argument will be that overlaid on the text's constant allusiveness is a tripartite scheme that divides the work roughly into three parts, each generically coded to a particular intertext. In part two I connect this scheme to the question of paternity through the figure of the Nile river, a figure that provides both a spatial "map" of the narrative and, in light of the long tradition of speculation about the river's sources, a model for Kharikleia's journey in search of her biological origins.

The territory I intend to explore—on the one hand, the intertextual markers of Heliodoros's engagement with earlier texts, and on the other, the controlling figure of the Nile—has been considered in general terms by Tim Whitmarsh (1998, 1999) in an important pair of articles focusing on the cultural politics of the *Aithiopika*. My ambition is not to improve on Whitmarsh's interpretation of the text as an attempt both to contest and to revitalize Hellenism. Rather, I confine myself to the elucidation of the text's internal logic in the hope that, in addition to revealing a number of details of interest to Heliodoran scholars, I may identify a closer connection between the figure of the Nile, discussed at length in Whitmarsh 1999, and the novel's self-conscious manipulation of its literary models, the focus of Whitmarsh 1998.

## 1.

Heliodoros's text reverberates with echoes of earlier authors. Citations from epic, tragedy, historiography, even philosophers and the writers of the sec-

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bowie 1995: 280, "Kharikleia . . . has sometimes been seen by scholars as emblematic of the work *Kharikleia*," and 1998: 18; also Hägg 1987: 184n1 and 195n60. Whitmarsh 2005 argues that the use of the heroine's name as title is a "Byzantine conceit." The convention is taken for granted in the *hermêneuma* of "Philip the Philosopher," which has been dated to the fifth century C.E. by Acconcia Longo 1991 (Agapitos 1998: 128n21 endorses the early date, but others put the text in the 12<sup>th</sup> c.: see Roilos 2005: 130n79). The convention may also be presupposed by the words of Kallirhoe, heroine of Khariton's novel: διήγημα καὶ τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ τῆς Εὐρώπης γέγονα (I have become a tale in both Asia and Europe, 5.5.3).

ond sophistic appear throughout the critical notes accompanying editions and translations.<sup>3</sup> Heliodoros's insistent allusiveness is, to be sure, part and parcel of the literary culture of late antiquity. Many of his intertextual gestures, however, go beyond the mere signposting of the *paideia* of author and reader and serve a properly programmatic function; they make implicit and explicit claims about the text and its models. One of my central theses is that Heliodoros's intertextual program is designed to underscore the heterogeneity of his novel, its assimilation of a wide variety of generic conventions and motifs.<sup>4</sup> This is a point worth making because Heliodoran scholarship has tended, with few exceptions,<sup>5</sup> to emphasize one debt to the exclusion of others, namely, the frequently remarked dependence on Homer, and the *Odyssey* in particular. Thus Whitmarsh's 1998 study on the way the *Aithiopika* constructs its relation to its literary heritage, while acknowledging the presence of a number of different influences (96), nevertheless focuses exclusively on the claim that "the generation of the *Aithiopika* is . . . a defiant recombination and reconfiguration of its *epic* prototypes" (95; emphasis mine).<sup>6</sup>

To be sure, Homeric and specifically Odyssean allusions occur throughout the text—but not with a consistent frequency. Adequate attention has never, to my knowledge, been paid to the fact that Homeric references, and certainly the most explicit citations, are concentrated in the novel's central books, that is, Kalasiris's inset narrative and the epilogue of his reunion with his sons, which provides the conclusion to his story.<sup>7</sup> Rather, the prominence of the *Odyssey* in the core books of the *Aithiopika*, coupled with a much more

<sup>3</sup> I have relied on the critical edition of Rattenbury and Lumb 1960. Morgan 1989a offers an excellent translation. Both of these texts include critical notes that point out, among other things, Heliodoros's engagement with earlier authors.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hunter 1998a: 57: "the *Aithiopika* distinguishes itself from other fictions, not by a complete abandonment of the tradition, but by a voracious consumption and refashioning of all traditions."

<sup>5</sup> Bowie 1995, for instance, draws attention to possible connections to New Comedy. Feuillat 1966 devotes more pages to Homer than to any of the other intertexts he discusses, but nevertheless dedicates specific sections to tragedy, New Comedy, Plato, the neo-Pythagoreans, the Second Sophistic, and historiography.

<sup>6</sup> In the collection of which Whitmarsh's article is a part (Hunter 1998b), nearly every essay mentions Heliodoros's engagement with the *Odyssey*, but one finds virtually no reference to any other intertext. Cf. Sandy 1982: 84–89.

<sup>7</sup> Nimis 2004: 53–54 approaches a proper recognition of this fact, noting that it is "via his Egyptian internal narrator Kalasiris" that Heliodoros "assimilates the Homeric tradition to his novel," and that, due to the "inconsistency" with which it is evoked, the *Odyssey* is not "a clef for decoding the meaning of the novel" as a whole. What is wanting here is a more precise examination of patterns of distribution of allusions in the text.

restricted baseline presence in the other portions of the narrative, has led to the view that Heliodoros's "most explicit intertextual relationship is with the *Odyssey*" (Whitmarsh 1998: 97; cf. Keyes 1922: 43). This over-emphasis on the Kalasiris books at the expense of others is not surprising considering the tendency of Kalasiris's tale to dominate readings of the novel, and even to become a kind of stand-in for the work as a whole.<sup>8</sup> But it obscures the way Heliodoros deploys his clearest intertextual markers in order to demarcate one segment of the text from another.

Kalasiris's story—in which I include both his own narrative and its sequel (the reunion with his sons)—provides perhaps the clearest example of this technique. By the time Kalasiris is introduced into the novel, the reader has already become accustomed to what I referred to above as the "baseline" presence of Homer, for instance in the description of the noise that motion produces in Kharikleia's Delphic quiver, which recalls Homeric lines on the arms of Apollo, or in Knemon's explicit citation of a Homeric phrase.<sup>9</sup> But the flurry of Homeric and specifically Odyssean references that marks the beginning of Kalasiris's tale (more precisely, the playful dialogue with Knemon that serves as prelude) is altogether unprecedented in the preceding text, and alerts us that a new movement, one that will be characterized as Odyssean throughout, is about to begin. When Kalasiris is first asked by Knemon to relate the story of his misfortunes, he replies with an adaptation of the very line with which Odysseus begins the tale of his journeys, following the corresponding question of Alkinoos (Ἰλιόθεν με φέρεις, 2.21.5; cf. *Od.* 9.39). He delays his narration until the two can be comfortably situated in the house of Nausikles, whom he declares to be like himself in the Odyssean character of his life (πολλὰ μὲν πόλεις πολλῶν δὲ ἀνθρώπων ἦθη τε καὶ νοῦς εἰς πείραν ἤκουσιν [he has experience of many cities and the minds and customs of many men, 2.22.3]; cf. *Od.* 1.3). A second delay is occasioned by the typically Odyssean excuse of the *gastēr*, which Kalasiris explicitly lifts from the *Odyssey* (2.22.5; cf. *Od.* 17.286–89).<sup>10</sup> Kalasiris's comparison of himself to a bird lamenting the "sacking" of its nest (2.22.4), an adaptation of the famous bird omen in *Iliad* 2, provides a fourth major Homeric allusion in the same short block of text; this apparently Iliadic reference seems at odds with its Odyssean context until we recall that the simile to which it refers is in fact

<sup>8</sup> Winkler 1982 reads Kalasiris as a figure for the Heliodoran narrator; cf. Bowie 1995: 280, "Calasiris, who often seems to play the role of the author in the first half of the work . . ." and Laplace 1992: 227, "En Calasiris se reflète Héliodore."

<sup>9</sup> Compare Hld. 1.2.5 with *Il.* 1.46–47, and Hld. 1.14.5 with *Il.* 6.202. For surveys of and comments on Homeric allusions in the *Aithiopika*, see Keyes 1922; Feuillat 1966: 105–14; Garson 1975; and Sandy 1982: 85–89.

<sup>10</sup> See as well the passages cited by Morgan 1989a: 395n51.

narrated by Odysseus (*Il.* 2.311 ff.).<sup>11</sup> It is worth taking note of the fact that three out of four of these cases relate Kalasiris to Odysseus precisely in his capacity as narrator.<sup>12</sup>

In case the reader should miss the insistent association of Kalasiris with Odysseus as both narrator and traveler, Heliodoros contrives to have the Homeric hero himself draw the comparison. Appearing to Kalasiris in a dream, the affronted Odysseus tells him that he “will know of sufferings like to my own” (τῶν ὁμοίων ἐμοὶ παθῶν αἰσθήσῃ, 5.22.3).<sup>13</sup> It comes as no surprise, then, that Kalasiris’s tale ends as it began, with strong reminiscences of Odysseus among the Phaiakians; Kalasiris’s tears (5.33.4) recall those that punctuate Odysseus’s narrative, while Nausikles’ promise that all will be resolved on the morrow and the libation for “deliverance” (τὰς λυτηρίους . . . σπονδὰς, 5.33.5) bring to mind the similar promises and libation offered by Alkinoos (*Od.* 13.4–6, 50–52). Arguably the most vividly Homeric moment in the novel, however, marks the conclusion not of Kalasiris’s narrative but of his story as a whole: this is the moment of his reunion with his sons Petosiris and Thyamis. Kalasiris and Kharikleia arrive at Memphis just as the two brothers begin their fight to the death to determine who shall hold the priesthood of Isis; the preparation for the duel recalls the bout between Odysseus and Iros, while Thyamis’s pursuit of his brother around the city walls reenacts one of the *Iliad*’s most dramatic moments, Hektor’s great “race” against Akhilleus. When Kalasiris appears at this climactic moment, he is introduced by a recognizably Odyssean tag-line (πολλὰ μὲν ἀνατλάντα καὶ πάντα μηχανησάμενον [having endured many things and having devised all kinds of contrivances, 7.6.5]). And when he casts off his beggar’s robes so that his sons may recognize him, one cannot help but think of Odysseus’s successive revelations of his identity, above all the most dramatic of them, the revelation of his identity to the Suitors.<sup>14</sup> Thus, just as the beginning of

<sup>11</sup> Morgan 1989a: 395n50 notes the Iliadic origin of the passage, but suggests that Heliodoros’s “immediate inspiration” comes from Moschus. Whether or not Heliodoros was also thinking of Moschus, he certainly meant to call Homer to mind. Heliodoros’s τετριγυῖα and περιποτᾶται look to the *Iliad*’s τετριγύτας (2.314) and ἀμφοποτᾶτο (315), while τὴν πολιορκίαν (used metaphorically of the plundered nest) reminds us that the original simile points to the destruction of Troy.

<sup>12</sup> Other Odyssean characteristics are distributed among the characters of the novel. Cf. Keyes 1922: 47; Nimis 2004: 53–54.

<sup>13</sup> For Whitmarsh, this is Heliodoros’s most explicit signal of his relationship to the *Odyssey* (1998: 97–98; 1999: 21).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. especially Heliodoros’s phrase ἐγυμνώθη μὲν τῶν ἐπιβεβλημένων ῥακῶν (7.7.2) with the first line of *Odyssey* 22, describing Odysseus’s appearance as he leaps to the threshold in order to shoot down the Suitors: αὐτὰρ ὁ γυμνώθη ῥακέων πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς.

his tale, so too is the end (Kalasiris dies almost immediately after this scene) marked by a dense succession of readily recognizable Homeric allusions. As he began his narrative with an evocation of an Odyssean beginning (Ἰλιόθεν . . .), so his story concludes by recalling the great Homeric endings, the deaths of Hektor and the Suitors.

The moment is conclusive in more ways than one. It draws to a close the story of Kalasiris, but it also provides a kind of *faux* ending to the story of Theagenes and Kharikleia, a major pause in the narrative that could well be mistaken for an ending by a naïve reader. (A similar moment occurs at the end of Book Eight [Whitmarsh 1999: 27].) The two lovers have just been reunited after the only major separation they suffer in the novel, and they return to the city in a quasi-religious procession to the Iseion that recalls the reunion of Abrokomes and Anthia in Xenophon's *Ephesiaka* (cf. 5.13.2–4). That is to say, we are dealing with a major joint in the novel's architecture. That joint, along with the less dramatic but no less important articulation marked by the beginning of Kalasiris's narrative, is highlighted by a high concentration of Homeric references. The Odyssean intertext thus demarcates the central portion of Heliodoros's text, allowing the author to create a kind of Homeric movement distinct from what precedes and follows. Indeed, the distinctiveness of this movement is evident from the fact that the Homeric presence noticeably fades in the later books, falling even below the baseline established in Book 1 (Feuillatre 1966: 113).

Just as the Kalasiris books attain a certain unity by being tagged at beginning and end as Homeric, the novel's first discrete segment—Knemon's tale of sexual intrigue in Athens—is delimited from its surroundings by intertextual markers, this time with reference to Attic tragedy. As in the case of Homeric allusion, here too we must take into account the baseline presence of theatrical metaphors throughout Heliodoros's text. As Shadi Bartsch (1989: 129–40) has shown, Heliodoros consistently uses such metaphors to mark moments of intense visual spectacle and plot twists occasioned by a character's unexpected appearance.<sup>15</sup> Given this general correlation of tragedy and spectacle, references to the theater that are not thus motivated gain in prominence to the extent that they require us to look for another explanation for their presence in the text.<sup>16</sup> In the case of Knemon, who betrays throughout an "obsession . . .

<sup>15</sup>This device appears prominently in the novel's opening tableau, as well as in the scene of Kalasiris's reunion with his sons.

<sup>16</sup>In some cases Heliodoros perhaps deploys a reference to the theater in an attempt at characterization, in order to emphasize the "Greekness" of his Greeks: cf. 3.1.1–2 and 2.29.4.

with the stage” (Garson 1975: 138),<sup>17</sup> we find that just such apparently unmotivated references mark both the beginning and the end of his story. They have the function of articulating this story as a distinct unit—a movement in a tragic key—corresponding in some sense to the novel’s central Homeric section.

Knemon’s tale, too, has its specific intertext: Euripides’ *Hippolytos* (most clearly signaled when Knemon’s stepmother Demainete greets him as ὁ νέος Ἰππόλυτος, her “young” or the “new” Hippolytos [1.10.2]).<sup>18</sup> It is, however, with a reference to another Euripidean drama that Knemon introduces his tale. He replies to Theagenes’ query about the *tukhê* that brought him to Egypt with a quotation from the *Medea* and a metaphor that represents his story as a tragic “episode” to be introduced into the ongoing tragedy of the beleaguered lovers (1.8.7; cf. *Medea* 1317):

τί ταῦτα κινεῖς κἀναμοχλεύεις; τοῦτο δὴ τὸ τῶν τραγῳδῶν. Οὐκ ἐν καιρῷ γένοιτ’ ἂν ἐπεισόδιον ὑμῖν τῶν ὑμετέρων τὰμὰ ἐπείσφerein κακά.

Why do you “batter and prize open these doors,” to quote the tragedians? It would not be appropriate to introduce my own misfortunes as an interlude in your own tragedy.<sup>19</sup>

Despite his protest, Knemon goes on to relate the first part of his story, but his narrative is interrupted by the need for sleep (1.18.1–2)<sup>20</sup> and by new developments on the island where the three Greeks are being held captive by Thyamis. When he resumes after discovering the body of Thisbe, the cause of his misfortunes and a principal character in his tale, a reference to the stage

<sup>17</sup> A superb example of the degree to which Knemon is conditioned by the Attic stage is his exclamation, in response to Kalasiris’s vivid description, οὗτοι ἐκεῖνοι Χαρίκλεια καὶ Θεαγένης (*These are they*—Kharikleia and Theagenes!, 3.4.7). Hardie 1998: 26 observes that Knemon’s vision of Kharikleia and Theagenes is indicative of his susceptibility to spectacle, but he does not note the connection between the specific wording of this exclamation and Aristotle’s famous formulation of the mechanics of *mimêsis*: συμβαίνει θεωροῦντας μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον, οἷον ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος (it happens that, in looking, they learn and infer what each thing is, for example, that *this is that*, Arist. *Poet.* 1448b16–17).

<sup>18</sup> The text is sound on this point, although the reading of the manuscripts for the following phrase, ὁ Θεσεὺς ὁ ἐμός, while not indefensible, may reflect the intrusion of a gloss.

<sup>19</sup> In this and subsequent quotations from Heliodoros, I have frequently made use of Morgan’s translation (Morgan 1989a).

<sup>20</sup> This in itself is an indication that this section of the narrative follows different generic rules from Kalasiris’s section. The epic paradigm, as determined by Odysseus among the Phaiakians, demands that narrative take precedence over sleep: cf. 4.4.2–3.

machinery of the Attic theater reminds us that we are returning to the world of tragedy (καθάπερ ἐκ μηχανῆς, 2.8.3). When Knemon reaches the end of what he is able to relate of past events, he appeals to what is transpiring in the present to supply a conclusion; as in the case of Kalasiris, Knemon's story includes both narrated flash-backs and a real-time component that concludes the story and incorporates it into the larger structure of the novel. Knemon supposes that the writing-tablet found on Thisbe's corpse will provide some answers, if it does not represent some new evil device. This, of course, is one of the text's most direct allusions to the *Hippolytos*. Thisbe has shifted roles from the Nurse to Phaidra herself, contriving by writing disaster for Knemon even after her death (so he thinks—and so we are led to suspect). Knemon draws a close to Thisbe's story (which is also his own) by voicing this suspicion. He accuses Thisbe of plotting a new "Attic tragedy" in Egypt, by implication characterizing all that has gone before as just such a drama (σὺ δὲ καὶ διαπόντιος ἦκεις ἑτέραν καθ' ἡμῶν σκηνὴν Ἀττικὴν καὶ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τραγωδήσουσα [you have even crossed the sea to implicate me in another Attic play, even here in Egypt, 2.11.2]).<sup>21</sup>

Knemon's tale, which represents the first major narrative block of the novel, is thus bookended, as is Kalasiris's, by strong markers of the genre of its primary intertext. We may note that the motivation for the particular intertextual associations of each narrative movement appears to be more than thematic. It is appropriate that Knemon, as an Athenian, speaks the language of tragedy. Likewise, given that Kalasiris's Homer is an Egyptian,<sup>22</sup> it makes sense for his story to follow a Homeric model.

Broadly speaking, then, the bulk of the text up to the death of Kalasiris can be correlated with one of two intertexts,<sup>23</sup> tragedy (especially the *Hippolytos*) or Homer (especially the *Odyssey*). What can we say about the novel's remaining third? Can we discern any similar generic tags? I myself do not find any prominent intertextual overtures that mark the beginning of a new movement in a way that could be compared to what we observed in the cases of Knemon and Kalasiris. But this may have to do with the fact that we are no longer dealing with inset narratives. In the previous instances the intertextual gestures that signaled the beginning of a new narrative segment corresponded

<sup>21</sup> The tragic overtones of this moment of closure are reinforced by Knemon's reference to an *Erinus* (2.11.1) and Theagenes' characterization of Knemon's story as a *drama* (2.11.3).

<sup>22</sup> I comment in part 2 on the significance of the *vita* Kalasiris gives for Homer.

<sup>23</sup> I hesitate to speak of "generic models," since Heliodoros does not go so far as to make any significant adjustment to his style. Nevertheless, he does draw important thematic material and structural elements from his sources.



to the introduction of a new narrative voice that took over from the novel's third-person narrator, who remained largely in the background in the first half of the novel. In fact, these internal narrators proved to be an important key to the intertextual associations marshaled in each case; the personality of the speaking voice provided some motivation for the choice of intertext. After the death of Kalasiris, a number of new characters are introduced, all of whom are bound up with the dominant theme of Books 7–9, namely, the conflicts (both erotic and political) arising from Persian despotism.<sup>24</sup> But no dominant internal narrator appears. Rather, the previously backgrounded third-person narrator comes to the fore. It is to this voice, then, that we should direct our attention. If Heliodoros's intertextual strategy is consistent, the speaker's persona will point us toward a relevant literary model.

In the view of J. R. Morgan (1982), the narrator of the *Aithiopika* has one prominent characteristic that sets this work apart from the other extant novels; this is the adoption of what Morgan terms the “historiographical pose,” that is, the pretense that the narrator, rather than standing in for an author who has invented the “facts” and can therefore be certain about them, stands in the position of a historian (broadly conceived), one who must make inferences about “facts” in the real world.<sup>25</sup> The most common manifestation of this pose consists in expressions of uncertainty, as for example at 2.22.1, where the narrator speculates that the hospitality offered to Knemon and Kalasiris is due to the arrangements of the absent host (οὕτως οἶμαι πρὸς τοῦ κεκτημένου διατεταγμένον [thus, I imagine, were the instructions of the master]) (Morgan 1982: 227). Morgan rightly observes that the “historiographical pose” inheres in the relation between the narrator and his or her subject matter, and thus in principle is common to all historical or quasi-historical writing. Interestingly, however, his primary comparandum is Herodotos, who exhibits traces of the “pose” much more frequently because “he is much preoccupied with the process of writing history” (1982: 227; cf. 231). The connection Morgan draws between the Heliodoran narrator and Herodotos provides a first indication that Herodotos lies in the background of the novel's final third, in much the same way as Euripides and Homer in the earlier sections. Indeed, the conjunction of speaker and theme supplies a motivation for such a choice in line with

<sup>24</sup> See Dewald 1997: 69 on Herodotos's representation of “the difficulty Persians have in distinguishing what is theirs from what is not” both sexually and politically (and cf. Lateiner 1985: 97). The relevance of Herodotos will become clear from the subsequent discussion.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. esp. p. 231: “The most striking thing, however, is that none of the other ancient novelists makes use of the pose.”

the previous cases: a “historiographical” narrator relating the consequences of Persian tyranny has every right to look to Herodotos.<sup>26</sup>

For Morgan, the purpose of Heliodoros’s “historiographical pose” is to establish realism, that is, a certain effect of historicity that invites the reader “to respond to his novel as if to actuality” (1982: 222). Clearly Heliodoros cultivates such a response, and does so quite effectively through modal cues such as the posture of uncertainty. However, when it comes to elements of content (many of which are documented in Morgan’s essay) or even more direct stylistic markers matters become more complicated. Morgan writes that the technique of establishing historicity “will obviously work most neatly when the references can be easily recognized by the reader, and so Heliodoros tends either to use classics like Herodotos or points of knowledge so general that it is impossible to pin his allusion to any one source” (1982: 235). On this view, Herodotos has value as a repository of easily identifiable “historical” knowledge. The effect of historicity depends on the reader’s recognizing a Herodotean reference as in the first place historiographical, and only secondarily as something specifically Herodotean. Otherwise, the reference would point us to a specific text rather than a general way of relating to the “world.” Therefore, while I accept Morgan’s understanding of Herodotean elements in many of the cases he cites, I believe his argument founders when it comes to his “most interesting example of all,” a discussion of local religious doctrine that alludes unambiguously to Herodotos (Hld. 9.9.4 – 9.10.1):

καὶ ταυτὶ μὲν δημοσιεύουσι, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς μύστας Ἴσιν τὴν γῆν καὶ Ὅσιριν  
τὸν Νεῖλον καταγγέλλουσι, τὰ πράγματα τοῖς ὀνόμασι μεταλαμβάνοντες.  
. . . τοῦτό τοι καὶ ἡμῖν εὐμένεια μὲν εἴη τῶν εἰρημένων, τὰ μυστικώτερα δὲ  
ἀρρήτω σιγῇ τετιμῆσθω . . .

This much they disclose to all and sundry, but to initiates they reveal the truth that the land is Isis and the Nile Osiris, with these titles imparting a deeper meaning to the material objects. . . Well, *may the gods pardon me* for saying this much. The greatest mysteries *may not be spoken of* . .

In a discussion of the Neiloia, the festival that celebrates the onset of the Nile flood, Heliodoros informs the reader of a mystical understanding of the ritual in terms of the myth of Isis and Osiris. But he breaks off his discussion of these mysteries in terms that explicitly recall Herodotos’s own reverent silences in the Egyptian *logos*, especially when he touches upon the cult of Osiris.<sup>27</sup> If

<sup>26</sup> For the place of Herodotos in the development of ancient fiction more generally, see Tatum 1997.

<sup>27</sup> Cf., e.g., Hdt. 2.45 (καὶ περὶ μὲν τούτων τοσαῦτα ἡμῖν εἰποῦσι καὶ παρὰ τῶν θεῶν καὶ παρὰ τῶν ἡρώων εὐμένεια εἴη) and 2.171 (περὶ μὲν νυν τούτων εἰδοῖτό μοι ἐπὶ πλέον ὥς ἕκαστα αὐτῶν ἔχει, εὖστομα κείσθω).

anything, this overt allusion disrupts the effect of historicity conjured by the excursus on cultic “realia” by turning the reader’s attention not to content of a recognizably historiographical cast but to an idiosyncratic manner of presentation peculiar to an old-fashioned practitioner of the genre. Heliodoros means his reader to think specifically of Herodotos on this occasion, and not simply of historiography as a realistic discourse.

Herodotos’s presence in Heliodoros’s text thus exceeds the demands of realism. This may not be true of all the vaguely Herodotean elements (geographic and ethnographic digressions) or even more specific allusions<sup>28</sup> that pepper the later books of the work. But at least in the case of the narrator’s comments in Book 9, we must find some other way to account for a deliberate and unmistakable appropriation of a specifically Herodotean attitude and manner of expression. As we will see in the next section, it is far from coincidental that this Herodotean moment concerns the cultic dimensions of the Nile flood.

I note another interesting case in Book 7 that is perhaps an equally deliberate evocation of Herodotos. The intrigue involving Arsake, her maid Kubele, and Theagenes—the first major episode of the new Persian phase of the novel—shows a striking set of correspondences to the first major episode of Herodotos’s narrative, the Gyges story. In both cases we are dealing with a story of sexual predation. The crucial scene in Heliodoros involves Kubele’s advice to Arsake on how she should overcome the young man’s resistance to her advances. Kubele advocates torture, and when Arsake protests that she could never endure the sight of such an act, Kubele suggests that the task be carried out by a subordinate; Arsake’s discomfort would be minimized to the extent that she would only hear about Theagenes’ pain, “for hearing carries less weight than vision when it comes to causing pain” (ἀκοὴ γὰρ ὀψεως εἰς τὸ λυπῆσαι κουφότερον, 8.5.12). Even at the level of syntax, this bit of wisdom recalls Kandaules’ famous gnomic utterance to his servant Gyges in the context of a similarly predatory (if less physically violent) assault on a vulnerable sex object (his wife): ὦτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν (for ears happen to be less believable to men than eyes, 1.8.9). Heliodoros has, however, contrived to invert all the essential elements of the Herodotean scene, from the gender of the actors (females now discuss the treatment of a male object of desire) and their power relationships (the servant cajoles the master) to the content of the message.<sup>29</sup> This set of correspondences is all the

<sup>28</sup> E.g. 8.16.4 (the Troglodytai; cf. Hdt. 4.183.4), 9.1.5 (the golden chains of the Ethiopians; cf. Hdt. 3.23.4), 9.18.5 (arrows blotting out the sun; cf. Hdt. 7.226.1).

<sup>29</sup> Other authors have detected in Arsake’s intrigue allusions again to Euripides’ *Hippolytos* (Garson 1975: 138; Dowden 1996: 278), which can happily coexist with the evocation of Herodotos I am arguing for. To the motif of ‘seeing what one should not’

more interesting because it connects the first major episode of Heliodoros's Persian narrative to the first major episode of the *Histories* so as to highlight the fact that both texts are concerned with the erotic as well as political consequences of despotism.

Nevertheless, this does not quite amount to the kind of architectural tagging we observed in the prior sections of the narrative. Some correlation of Herodotean elements with the text's structural framework is wanted. It is not the beginning of the Persian books but the end that is decisive in this regard. While there may be no obvious *incipit* after the death of Kalasiris in Book 6, Heliodoros does go to some trouble to mark with Herodotean tags the transition from Book 9 to Book 10, which brings to a close the Persian portion of his narrative. This is a major point of articulation, for it marks the textual boundary between Egypt and Ethiopia. Furthermore, Herodotos's *Histories* themselves end with the ninth Book. Thus, the conclusion of Heliodoros's own Persian war at the end of Book 9 offers a natural point of closure.

The clearest Herodotean marker of this joint in the narrative is the first sentence of Book 10: τὰ μὲν δὴ κατὰ Συήνην ἐπὶ τοσόνδε πραχθέντα εἰρήσθω (Let this be the end of the narrative of events at Syene, 10.1.1). As Morgan has noted, this sentence is a direct imitation of formulaic phraseology regularly used by Herodotos to close a digression or episode and transition to the next.<sup>30</sup> It is as though Heliodoros has marked the preceding narrative, the account of the siege of Syene, as a Herodotean *logos*. And in fact at the end of that *logos*, Heliodoros incorporates some strikingly Herodotean language in the final speech of the Ethiopian king Hydaspes to the Persian satrap Oroondates, language that makes the war over Philai and the emerald mines a kind of encapsulation in miniature of the conflict between Persia and Greece as narrated by Herodotus (Hld. 9.26.2):

ἐγὼ . . . τὰς αἰτίας τοῦ πολέμου συνηρηκώς καὶ τὰς ἐξ ἀρχῆς προφάσεις τῆς ἔχθρας, τὰς τε Φίλας καὶ τὰ σμαράγδεια μέταλλα, ὑπ' ἐμαυτῷ πεποιημένος οὐ πάσχω τὸ τῶν πολλῶν πάθος οὐδὲ ἐπεξάγω τὴν τύχην πρὸς πλεονεξίαν . . .

Now that I have eliminated *the causes of the war* and made subject to myself Philai and the emerald mines, *the original reasons for our enmity*, I am untouched by the common temptation, and I do not press my fortune further, beyond my due . . .

in the Gyges story, we might compare Akhaimenes' spying on Kharikleia through the keyhole (7.15).

<sup>30</sup> Morgan 1982: 233–34, with citations from Herodotos. Polybius uses similar phraseology, not, however, in the same transitional way, but in order to explain his reasons for certain narrative choices (cf. 1.35.10, 4.74.8, 9.10.13, etc.)

In the context of an extended conflict with Persia,<sup>31</sup> it is difficult not to hear in Hydaspes' words an echo of Herodotos's famous prologue: with the passages italicized above, compare Herodotos's *τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι* (especially *the cause* on account of which *they* warred with each other, *pr.*) and *διὰ τὴν Ἰλίου ἄλωσιν εὕρισκousi σφίσι ἐοῦσαν τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ἐχθρῆς τῆς ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας* (in the sack of Ilion they find *the original reason* for their enmity against the Hellenes, 1.5.1).<sup>32</sup> At the end of his ninth Book, Heliodoros suggests that he has been relating his own version of the Persian Wars. Books 7–9, which focus on the grand themes of classical historiography (Persian despotism and military conflict), emerge as distinctly historiographical and marked by specifically Herodotean gestures.

The figure of Hydaspes deserves a closer look. The speech quoted above continues with remarks about the justice of observing natural boundaries (9.26.2):

... οὐδὲ εἰς ἄπειρον ἐκτείνω τὴν ἀρχὴν διὰ τὴν νίκην, ἀλλ' ὅροις ἀρκοῦμαι οἷς ἔθετο ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἡ φύσις τὴν Αἴγυπτον ἀπὸ τῆς Αἰθιοπίας τοῖς καταρράκταις ἀποκρίνασα· ὥστε ἔχων δι' ἃ κατήλθον ἄνειμι σέβων τὸ δίκαιον.

... nor do I use my victory to extend my rule indefinitely, but I am content with the primordial boundary set by nature when she divided Egypt from Ethiopia with the cataracts. Thus, having accomplished the purpose I had in coming, I return respecting what is just.

The notions that geopolitical entities have natural boundaries and that the transgression of those boundaries constitutes an offence against natural justice

<sup>31</sup> The “enmity” in question goes back at least 10 years, as we can deduce from the fact that the emerald mines were already at issue when Sisimithres brought Kharikleia to Egypt, ten years before the dramatic date of the novel (2.32.2 and 10.11). Philai, however, seems to be a much older cause of dispute (cf. 8.1.2–3).

<sup>32</sup> Morgan 1982: 246 notes that the emerald mines play “an interesting role in the economy of the plot,” pointing to the fact that the Persian seizure of the mines corresponds to Kharikleia's original alienation from her homeland, and Hydaspes' reconquest to her return. Now, there are a number of indications in the text that Kharikleia is Ethiopia's most precious “jewel.” She is “more valuable” than all the jewels that accompany her when Sisimithres (who is in Egypt precisely to negotiate possession of the mines) bestows her as a “gift” on Kharikles (3.30.4), and the notion that her beauty might be “concealed beneath the earth” (ὕπὸ γῆν κρυπτόμενον, 3.31.3) emphasizes the implicit comparison; the Ethiopian captors of Theagenes and Kharikleia compare their “spoils” to gold and precious stones when presenting the couple to Hydaspes (9.24.1); cf. also Hardie 1998: 28–29 on the engraved amethyst that doubles for Kharikleia. I suggest that the seizure of the emerald mines, which seem to correspond in some sense to Kharikleia, match the abductions that open Herodotos's *Histories*.

are fundamental to Herodotos's conceptualization of the Persian-Greek conflict.<sup>33</sup> But there is more here than just a thematic connection to the *Histories*: Hydaspes in fact echoes the very words uttered by Herodotos's own Ethiopian king to the Persian spies sent by Kambyases (Hdt. 3.21.12–13)<sup>34</sup>:

... οὐτε ἐκεῖνος ἀνὴρ ἐστι δίκαιος, εἰ γὰρ ἦν δίκαιος, οὐτ' ἂν ἐπεθύμησε  
χώρης ἄλλης ἢ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ, οὐτ' ἂν ἐς δουλοσύνην ἀνθρώπους ἦγε ὑπ' ὧν  
μηδὲν ἡδίκηται. ... βασιλεὺς ὁ Αἰθιοπῶν συμβουλευεῖ τῷ Περσέων βασιλεῖ  
... θεοῖσι εἰδέναι χάριν, οἳ οὐκ ἐπὶ νόον τρέπουσι Αἰθιοπῶν παισὶ γῆν ἄλλην  
προσκτᾶσθαι τῇ ἑωυτῶν.

... nor is that man [Kambyases] just. For if he were just, he would not have conceived a desire for a land other than his own, nor would he try to reduce to slavery men by whom he had suffered no injustice. ... The king of the Ethiopians advises the king of the Persians ... to be thankful to the gods for not inspiring the sons of the Ethiopians to acquire another land in addition to their own.

The situations are very much the same, as are the sentiments: the Ethiopian king criticizes the acquisitiveness of his Persian counterpart by pointedly refusing to exceed the boundaries of what is rightfully his. Heliodoros has evidently lifted a character directly from Herodotos.

In fact, on closer examination, it appears that Heliodoros is not so much borrowing elements of a Herodotean character as offering us another, closer look at the very same figure who appears in the *Histories*. Hydaspes does not echo Herodotos's Ethiopian king—he *is* that king. The key to this identification lies in the chronological setting of the novel. Despite certain anachronisms (cf. Morgan 1982: 236n46), it is generally clear from the situation of the Persians and the absence of Alexandria that Heliodoros intends a temporal setting sometime in the late sixth or early fifth century B.C.E. Many scholars have despaired of finding a more precise date, but Morgan has pointed out one important fixed point in the chronology provided by the reason Kalasiris gives for his self-imposed exile from Egypt, namely, the arrival in Memphis of the courtesan Rhodopis (2.25; Morgan 1982: 236n46). Rhodopis figures prominently in Herodotos's Egyptian *logos*, and precisely as a point of chronological dispute: Herodotos criticizes those who would place her far too early in time by making her the builder of one of the pyramids (2.134–35).<sup>35</sup> She

<sup>33</sup> See Lateiner 1985: 87–93; Boedeker 1988: 42 ff.; and Dewald 1997: 69.

<sup>34</sup> Szepessy 1957: 248: “Die angeführten Worte des Hydaspes erinnern sehr an dieselben des äthiopischen Königs bei Herodot . . . Man kan also hier mit einer bewussten Übernahme seitens Heliodoros rechnen.”

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Strabo 17.1.33. Sandy 1982: 83–84 feels that Heliodoros's Rhodopis represents an “amalgam” of what we read in Herodotos and Strabo, but the reasons on which he bases this judgment are unclear to me. One reason to suppose that Heliodoros may have

lived, he asserts, during the time of Amasis, the Egyptian pharaoh whose reign ended with the invasion of Kambyes. Kambyes plans his Ethiopian campaign immediately after his conquest of Egypt, and it is at this point that he sends his spies to visit the Ethiopian king. Thus, if Kalasiris's visit to Delphi corresponds with Rhodopis's visit to Memphis, which is roughly contemporaneous with the arrival of Persian power in Egypt, there is every likelihood that the Ethiopian king we encounter at the end of the *Aithiopika* is identical to the king who receives Kambyes's spies.<sup>36</sup> We should not, of course, expect too much precision from Heliodoros, who doubtless delighted in taking as his sole fixed point a figure whose chronology is the subject of dispute in Herodotos.

Hydaspes' Herodotean heritage leads me at last to consideration of a passage that has played a particularly important role in the scholarship on the *Aithiopika*, since on it hinges the question of the dating of the novel. I mean the description of the siege of Syene, which bears an unmistakable resemblance to the descriptions of the siege of Nisibis (350 A.D.) offered by Julian in *Orations* 1 and 2.<sup>37</sup> Although most discussions of the connection focus on the details of the two sieges (the construction of earthworks, the diverting of a river to flood the space before the city walls, and the subsequent collapse of part of the earthworks), the similarities extend further in directions that reinforce the thematic connection between the two texts, for in Julian we find significant traces of Egypt and Herodotos. In the second part of my paper I will argue that the inundation of Syene, coinciding as it does with the festival that marks the onset of the Nile flood, in fact doubles for the flood; for now, however, I note simply that the connection between the siege device and the Nile's annual flood is made already by Julian (*Or.* 1.27b):

... ἐπετειζέτο μὲν ἡ πόλις κύκλῳ τοῖς χώμασιν, ἐπέρρει δὲ ὁ Μυγδόνιος  
πελαγίζων τὸ περὶ τῷ τείχει χωρίον, καθάπερ ὁ Νεῖλος, φασί, τὴν Αἴγυπτον.

consulted the later writer is that Strabo, but not Herodotos, makes a connection between the courtesan and Memphis. It is interesting to note that both Herodotos and Strabo record the detail that the lower courses of the pyramid attributed to Rhodopis are built of Ethiopian stone: her history, too, involves *Aithiopika*.

<sup>36</sup> Indeed, this is a virtual necessity if we accept Herodotos's testimony that the Ethiopians are *makrobiôtatoi* (3.114). The doubt of Kharikleia and Theagenes as to whether Hydaspes still reigns (9.24.2) seems to raise the issue of the Ethiopians' fabled long life in Heliodoros's text.

<sup>37</sup> For a review of the scholarship on the novel's date in relation to the passages in question, see Bowersock 1994: 149–55. For a survey of the sources for the siege of Nisibis, see Lightfoot 1988: 111–25. Lightfoot 1988: 116–19 argues that Julian's account is largely fictional, but this does not necessarily mean that he is borrowing from Heliodoros, and not vice versa.



... the city was surrounded with dykes like a second wall, and the Mygdonius flowed in, flooding the space around the wall, just as the Nile, they say, floods Egypt.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, just as Heliodoros encourages us to see the conflict between Hydaspes and Oroondates as a miniature version of the Persian Wars, so too Julian views Nisibis through the lens of the Persian invasion of Greece, presenting the Sasanian besieger, Shapur II, as a kind of modern-day Xerxes (cf. *Or.* 1.28b–d and 2.63b, with emphasis on Shapur’s Xerxean violence against nature).<sup>39</sup>

Although the matter may permit of no definitive solution, I tend to follow Bowersock (1994) in believing that Heliodoros is responding to Julian, and not the other way around.<sup>40</sup> The figurative components of Julian’s depiction of Nisibis—the comparison to the Nile flood, which relates both to Heliodoros’s setting and, as we shall see, to his thematic concerns, and the evocation of Xerxes—may well have commended it to Heliodoros as a model. But if Heliodoros was to make use of this model, he had to reckon with the fact that it aligns the besiegers with the Persians—and not, as his narrative demands, the besieged. He contrives a neat solution to this difficulty, however, through a further set of references to the *Histories*, which we can observe in those details that do *not* correspond to the extant accounts of the Nisibis siege. At Nisibis, Shapur withdrew after the dykes failed and repeated ground assaults proved unsuccessful.<sup>41</sup> At Heliodoros’s Syene, however, the city has already

<sup>38</sup> The technique of constructing earthworks in order to flood the area around a city was “by no means unknown in antiquity”; the Rosetta stone records that Ptolemy V employed it against Lycopolis in 196 B.C.E. Bowersock 1994: 154.

<sup>39</sup> It is tempting to think that the association of the besieger with Xerxes has been prompted by an anecdote Herodotos relates about Xerxes 7.128 ff.. After observing the gorge by which the Peneios river exits the plain of Thessaly into the sea, Xerxes asks whether it would be possible to divert the river so that it would enter the sea at some other point. When he is told that this would be impossible, since there is no other exit through the mountains encircling the plain, Xerxes speculates that the gorge could easily be dammed, thus flooding the entire plain; the Thessalians, he judges, are wise to submit to the Persians, considering the indefensibility of their position. Xerxes’ hypothetical reduction of Thessaly bears an obvious resemblance to the tactic employed at Nisibis and Syene.

<sup>40</sup> See above, n37. Morgan 1982: 226n15 likewise rejects the arguments presented by Szepessy 1975 and 1976. If, on the other hand, one were to follow Szepessy in supposing that Julian is drawing on Heliodoros, the argument as presented here would have to be adjusted, but the larger point—that Heliodoros’s Syene is a major point of contact with Herodotos—would still stand.

<sup>41</sup> Julian naturally attributes Shapur’s retreat to his inability to take the city, but in fact he seems to have abandoned the siege in order to repulse the invasion of a Hunnic tribe on his eastern frontier (Bivar 1983: 211).



surrendered when the dykes fail; more importantly, it is not the besiegers but the besieged who suddenly and unexpectedly depart. Here, we find two elements that call to mind Xerxes' invasion of Greece, specifically the opening and closing actions of the Persian campaign as reported by Herodotos. First, Oroondates' escape from Syene under cover of night recalls the similar escape of the Persian forces from Sestos (Hdt. 9.118). Second, the manner of Oroondates' escape—the construction of an improvised bridge (οἶον διὰ ζεύγματος, 9.11.1) across the marshy ground left behind by the receding flood waters—evokes perhaps the most famous deed of Xerxes' campaign, the improvised bridge of ships across the Hellespont (Hdt. 7.36).<sup>42</sup> We have already seen Heliodoros working with both the beginnings and endings of Herodotos's account; the conjunction of the two in this instance obviously fits in with his general technique. But in this case the association probably owes more to the Herodotean intertext: Herodotos himself brings the closing Sestos episode into relation with Xerxes' bridge by having the governor of Sestos, Artayktes, crucified at the very spot where the bridge had been (9.120.4).<sup>43</sup> Be that as it may, Heliodoros's introduction of additional Herodotean elements into the siege scene he adapted from Julian has the effect of reconfiguring the values he found in his source: it is now the (Persian) defenders of the city who are identified as Xerxean, rather than the besiegers.

The later Books of the *Aithiopika*, up to the end of Book 9, are marked as Herodotean by a wide variety of intertextual gestures, notwithstanding the difficulty of locating a distinct starting point for this final movement. (Broadly speaking we might identify Books 7–9 as the Herodotean phase of the novel.) I do not include Book 10 in this final movement because, as Whitmarsh has noted, “there is a strong sense in the *Aethiopica* that the Ethiopian episodes constitute a kind of privileged epilogue to the text, an ‘after-life’ to the Egyptian episode” (1999: 26).<sup>44</sup> Book 10 stands outside the last of the intertextual boundaries flagged in the text; with the resolution of hostilities between Ethiopia and Persia, that boundary represents a strong end-point in itself, and it bears a number of Herodotean tags that likewise connote finality.

<sup>42</sup> Julian describes the bog that the waters of the Mygdonius had created around Nisibis (2.64d ff.), but makes no mention of any contrivance for getting troops across it: the bridge is a purely Heliodoran contribution.

<sup>43</sup> For the “closural resonance” of this event, see Dewald 1997: 71. Herodotos actually mentions the execution of Artayktes twice, once at the end of the *Histories* and once at the moment Xerxes' first bridge is completed, so that “the Protesilaos-Artayktes story exactly frames the invasion of Xerxes” (Boedeker 1988: 45). Thus Heliodoros may be taking a cue from Herodotos in evoking these framing episodes.

<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to compare the eleventh book of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*.

In any case, Heliodoros appears to have structured his novel according to a generally tripartite scheme (plus the Ethiopian epilogue), correlating each of the several units with a distinct intertext and marking the boundaries between those units with particularly strong intertextual references.

The tripartite articulation of the *Aithiopika*'s intertextual framework reinforces a generally triplex scheme that manifests itself on several levels. "The *Aithiopika*," Ken Dowden (1996) writes, "is a tale of three countries"—Greece, Egypt, and Ethiopia—while its spiritual axis lies along the ascending scale formed by the three priests Kharikles, Kalasiris, and Sisimithres.<sup>45</sup> In the second part of this paper, I will explore the novel's most important triplet, Kharikleia's three father-figures. The tripartite structure we have observed resonates with all these triplets, although it does not map directly onto any.

One of the more interesting features of Heliodoros's intertextuality is that his intertexts are overdetermined: in each case his selection of a model is based not on one criterion alone, but on several. Homer stands behind Kalasiris not merely because the latter has wandered, nor because Homer might be an Egyptian, but also because the *Odyssey* provides a paradigm for first-person narration (cf. Romberg 1962: 34 and 57–58). Similarly, Herodotos's influence on the last major unit derives not just from shared thematic concerns, but also from the fact that Herodotos provides a model for extended third-person narration. The motivations for the tragic overtones of Knemon's narrative seem simple by comparison: Euripides is invoked because Knemon is an Athenian relating a story of domestic turmoil. Elsewhere, however, Heliodoros connects theater to intensely visual moments or unexpected plot twists, so that here too we can detect an interest in the modal differences between his models. Heliodoros is not merely mining earlier literature for nuggets of content; he is using it to explore and to highlight the variety of narrative modes that make up the heterogeneous fabric of novelistic discourse.

One important effect of Heliodoros's intertextual strategy is to emphasize precisely the heterogeneous character of his text. By inviting his readers to recognize the architectonic disposition of generic cues and the existence of discrete segments of the text, each correlated with a discrete intertext, Heliodoros sensitizes them to the presence of different discourses more effectively than if he had simply mixed his intertextual gestures indiscriminately. By the same token, however, the heterogeneity he so emphasizes has a peculiar, if not paradoxical, nature: it is the co-presence of discrete, unmixed elements, which remain so to speak in suspension. (The second part of this paper will

<sup>45</sup> Dowden 1996: 280–83. For the spiritual hierarchy, see Szepessy 1957: 252–53 and Létoublon 1993: 134.

justify the fluid metaphor.) There is an ambivalence here between purity and mixture: the novel is pure in its parts but mixed as a whole.

By virtue of its position “beyond” the intertextual framework of the first 9 Books, Book 10 and the Ethiopia it represents take on an interesting value vis-à-vis this paradoxical heterogeneity. It is worth emphasizing, given the intense “literariness” of Egypt in ancient literature generally and especially in the context of the novel,<sup>46</sup> that the three primary strands of Heliodoros’s intertextual web are interwoven on Egyptian soil. Egypt is the space of intertextuality. Ethiopia, standing beyond this space, has the potential to resolve the tension of a mixture in suspension. In principle, such a resolution could come in two possible forms, characterizable as *transcendence* or *synthesis*: transcendence being a movement beyond heterogeneity toward a “truer” or “higher” purity, synthesis a more perfect fusion of the discrete parts. Insofar as Ethiopia promises to reveal Kharikleia’s true identity and point of origin, there is a strong suggestion that the journey to Ethiopia leads toward the former rather than the latter. I will argue, however, that Ethiopia instead unexpectedly reaffirms heterogeneity by revealing Kharikleia’s true identity to be deeply hybrid. The heterogeneity of the *Aithiopika*, as the story of her quest for origins, appears in the final analysis as a reflection of that fact.

## 2.

I have just suggested that Kharikleia and Heliodoros’s text stand in a relation of equivalence, that one figures the other in some meaningful sense. Before moving on to consider the way the text modulates from a search for origins to a reaffirmation of heterogeneity, I must set out the internal evidence for such an equivalence. I begin by drawing attention to a verbal correspondence that has not, to my knowledge, been noticed by earlier commentators. In explaining to Theagenes that they must be careful not to reveal their identities too early, Kharikleia speaks in explicitly literary terms about their “story” (9.24.4):

ὦν γὰρ πολυπλόκους τὰς ἀρχὰς ὁ δαίμων καταβέβληται, τούτων ἀνάγκη καὶ τὰ τέλη διὰ μακροτέρων συμπεραίνεσθαι· ἄλλως τε καὶ ἃ πολὺς χρόνος συνέχεε, ταῦτα εἰς ὅξυν καιρὸν ἀνακαλύπτειν οὐ λυσιτελές, τοῦ κεφαλαίου καὶ ταῦτα τῆς ὅλης καθ’ ἡμᾶς ὑποθέσεως καὶ ἐξ ἧς ἡ σύμπασα πλοκή τε καὶ ἀνεύρεσις ἦρτηται, Περσίννης λέγω μητρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς, ἀπολειπομένης.

<sup>46</sup> The literary associations of the Egyptian landscape are suggested by the Nile Mosaic in the library at Praeneste, on which see Ferrari 1999. For the way in which, within the novels, Egypt becomes a site for reflection on the nature and power of novelistic discourse, see Plazenet 1995; cf. also Brioso Sánchez 1992: 204.

For a story whose beginnings the god has made convoluted requires time to be brought to a resolution. In particular, it is not profitable to reveal all of a sudden things that a great lapse of time has obscured, especially in this case, when the central figure of our entire story, the key to the whole tangled web of complexity and recognition—I mean Persinna, my mother—is missing.

Whitmarsh has emphasized the accumulation of “familiar literary terms” in this passage, above all *kataballeshthai*, which can refer to the authoring of a literary text (1998: 114; see also Sandy 1982: 19; Bartsch 1989: 136). Kharikleia speaks of her life story as though it were a text—which of course it is. The parallel between her life and the text is established by an earlier use of the corresponding nominal form, *katabolê*, in Persinna’s account of Kharikleia’s conception (ἡσθόμην δὲ παραχρῆμα κυφορήσασα τὴν καταβολήν [I immediately perceived that I had been impregnated by his seed. 4.8.4]).<sup>47</sup> The correspondence suggests that the composition of the plot of the *Aithiopika* and the conception of its heroine are one and the same.

In fact, the circumstances of that conception—specifically the fact that Kharikleia’s outward form is due to the influence of a painting on which her mother happened to gaze at the crucial moment<sup>48</sup>—provide the most prominent indication that Heliodoros presents Kharikleia as the embodiment of his text. Kharikleia is in essence a recreation of a painting. As other writers

<sup>47</sup> This is a standard use of *katabolê* (cf. LSJ I.1). I do not think we should sense a double meaning here; it is rather the connection between the two passages that matters. However, Heliodoros does exploit the potential for a pun on the literary meaning of *kataballeshthai* in his only other use of *katabolê*, which occurs, significantly, in Knemon’s reaction to Kalasiris’s account of Homer’s Egyptian origin: ταῦτα μὲν εὖ τε καὶ ἀληθῶς μοι λέγειν ἔδοξας, τεκμαιρομένῳ . . . τὸ τῆς φύσεως ὑπερέχον, ὥς οὐκ ἂν οὔτω τοὺς πάντας ὑπερβαλλόμενον εἰ μὴ τινος θείας καὶ δαιμονίας ὥς ἀληθῶς μετέσχε καταβολῆς (You seem to me to have spoken well and truly, judging by his natural excellence, which would not have so far surpassed everyone else if there were not a truly divine and superhuman element in his *conception*, 3.15.1). In the context of this evaluation of Homer’s literary merits in connection with his supposedly divine parentage, *katabolê* carries associations with literary inspiration alongside its literal meaning of genetic origin. See below for the significance of the parallel Heliodoros constructs between Homer and Kharikleia. The passage I have just cited suggests that, like Kharikleia, Homer can be thought of as both a person and a text.

<sup>48</sup> See Reeve 1989 for a thorough account of ancient and modern theories of “maternal impression,” what Reeve calls the “Andromeda effect.” For the early modern period in particular, see Shildrick 2000 (who seems unaware of the existence of the theory in antiquity). Shildrick notes that maternal impressions undermine the status of the father: this has significance for the relationship between Kharikleia and Hydaspes, whose claim to paternity is, as we shall see, not uncontested.

have observed (Bartsch 1989: 48; Whitmarsh 1998: 110), this detail represents Heliodoros's playful engagement with a convention we observe in Longus, and in slightly altered form in Achilles Tatius and Xenophon of Ephesus,<sup>49</sup> according to which the text of the novel is presented as an extended *ekphrasis* of a painted image. In Heliodoros, the *ekphrasis* is Kharikleia herself, to the extent that she is a *mimêsis* of a painting.

This is already a strong indication that Kharikleia stands for the text in a general sense. Marcelle Laplace makes a further connection that allows us to refine the correspondence. Laplace (1992: 216–17) notes that in the educational tradition represented by Dionysios of Halikarnassos the theory of “maternal impression” functions as a “fable” for the writer’s emulation of earlier authors.<sup>50</sup> Fragment 31 (text as in Usener and Radermacher 1929) of Dionysios’s *De imitatione* begins:

ὅτι δεῖ τοῖς τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐντυγχάνειν συγγράμμασιν, ἵν’ ἐντεῦθεν μὴ μόνον τῆς ὑποθέσεως τὴν ὕλην ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν τῶν ιδιωμάτων ζῆλον χορηγηθῶμεν.

<sup>49</sup> Xenophon observes the convention by having his protagonists dedicate in Ephesus a *graphê* . . . πάντων ὅσα τε ἐπαθον καὶ ὅσα ἔδρασαν (a *graphê* of all the things they suffered and all the things they did, 5.15.2). Anderson 1989 translates *graphê* as “inscription,” but in fact the word could just as easily indicate a painting (cf. LSJ s.v. I)—and a painting would be a more typical object of dedication than an extended inscribed narrative. Implicitly, this *graphê* is the object that will occasion the narration of the *Ephesiaka* in the future. The *graphê*, positioned at the end of the text, stands in a playful but important relation to the beginning of the novel, which is acephalic, in possible imitation of Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (Winkler 1982: 96n6; the opening of the *Anabasis* was a popular model for imitation: cf. Lucian *Hist. conscr.* 23). When we encounter this final reference to the *graphê* that would conventionally appear at the beginning of the novel (as in Longus and Achilles Tatius), we realize that the “missing” beginning has been displaced to the end.

<sup>50</sup> Laplace 1992: 216–17. Laplace’s article contains an extended discussion of the correspondence between Kharikleia and the text of the *Aithiopika*. She ingeniously discovers another indication of this parallel in the black ring on Kharikleia’s arm, which is the final proof of her legitimacy (224). The simile that describes this birthmark (10.15.2) adapts a Homeric simile (*Il.* 4.141–42), but replaces Homer’s *phoinix* with *ebenos*. The “missing” *phoinix* comes at the end of the novel in Heliodoros’s *sphragis*. Thus the marks guaranteeing the authenticity of the girl on the one hand and the novel on the other converge. I would add that Heliodoros’s use of the *phoinix* as a token of his text’s authenticity (cf. Bowie 1998) appears to be an engagement with Achilles Tatius, whose *phoinix* is not only the object of a text-based process of identification, but must also prove its identity through the revelation of secret marks on its body: ἔρχεται δὴ τις ἱερεὺς Αἰγύπτιος, βιβλίον ἐξ ἀδύτων φέρων, καὶ δοκιμάζει τὸν ὄρνιν ἐκ τῆς γραφῆς. ὁ δὲ οἶδεν ἀπιστούμενος καὶ τὰ ἀπόρρητα φαίνει τοῦ σώματος (Then an Egyptian priest comes, carrying a book from the most sacred part of the temple, and he authenticates the bird with reference to the text. [The phoenix], for his part, knows that he is under examination, and reveals the hidden signs on his body, 3.25.6–7).

ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ τοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος ὑπὸ τῆς συνεχοῦς παρατηρήσεως τὴν ὁμοιότητα τοῦ χαρακτήρος ἐφέλκεται. ὁποῖόν τι καὶ γυναῖκα ἀγροίκου παθεῖν ὁ μῦθος λέγει· ἀνδρί, φασί, γεωργῶ τὴν ὄψιν αἰσχροῦ παρέστη δέος, μὴ τέκνων ὁμοίων γένηται πατήρ· ὁ φόβος δὲ αὐτὸν οὗτος εὐπαιδίας ἐδίδαξε τέχνην. καὶ εἰκόνας παραδείξας εὐπρεπεῖς εἰς αὐτὰς βλέπειν εἵθισε τὴν γυναῖκα· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα συγγενόμενος αὐτῇ τὸ κάλλος εὐτύχησε τῶν εικόνων. οὕτω καὶ λόγων μιμήσεσιν ὁμοιότης τίκεται, ἐπὶ ζῆλῳ τις τὸ παρ' ἐκάστῳ τῶν παλαιῶν βέλτιον εἶναι δοκοῦν καὶ καθὰ περ ἐκ πολλῶν ναμάτων ἓν τι συγκομίσας ρεῦμα τοῦτ' εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν μετοχετεύσῃ.

It is necessary to read the writings of the classical writers so that we may supply ourselves from this source not only with the material for an argument but also with elements of style. For by constant study the reader's soul assimilates the style [of another]. The story goes that a rustic's wife experienced just this sort of thing: an ugly farmer, they say, was afraid that his children would take after him. This fear taught him a device for fathering good-looking children. Having set out some attractive paintings, he accustomed his wife to look at them; and, lying with her thereafter, he obtained the beauty of the paintings. In this way a likeness is engendered also by the imitation of discourses whenever someone emulates the best features of each of the ancients and, having so to speak directed the water from many sources into one stream, channels it into his soul.

Dionysios's text allows us to understand the circumstances of Kharikleia's conception not just as an indication that the girl stands in general for the work, but that she embodies the very nature of the work as a densely intertextual engagement with past writers.<sup>51</sup> For Dionysios, maternal impression provides the paradigm for the incorporation of elements of style and content from one's literary predecessors into one's own work. Notably, the paradigm does not describe single channels of influence, but is explicitly multiple (note that the fable involves several *eikones* rather than a single *eikôn*); in this respect it corresponds to Heliodoros's own intertextual practice.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the metaphor Dionysios offers for the process of internalizing a multiplicity of sources is that of a river fed by a number of different tributaries (cf. our own metaphor of "influence").<sup>53</sup> The author who assimilates heterogeneous sources collects the water of several springs into one great stream.

<sup>51</sup> Whitmarsh 2001: 85–87 discusses Heliodoros's use of Dionysios's parable as an exploration of "current theories of identity-formation and . . . of the novel as the product of 'unnatural,' post-Classical *mimêsis*."

<sup>52</sup> It is worth noting that the bedroom in which Kharikleia was conceived contains *multiple* images of the *erôtes* of Perseus and Andromeda (4.8.3; Persinna does indicate, however, that she looked at a specific image at the moment of conception: 4.8.5).

<sup>53</sup> Dionysios's metaphor may be an adaptation of the familiar Hellenistic conceit of the poetic text as a river; for references, see Whitmarsh 1999: 36n34. [Longinus] *Subl.*

In the terms of Dionysios's metaphor, to trace the relation between a text and its influences is to travel upstream, toward its sources (the sources of a literary text being comparable, in Dionysios's other figure, to the *eikones* that impressed their beauty on the farmer's child). As Whitmarsh has noted, this is precisely the movement that gives the *Aithiopika* its basic structure: the novel begins at the Heracleotic mouth of the Nile and proceeds upstream, towards the river's source; the promise of the revelation of the source of the Nile is realized in the revelation of the wondrous origin of Kharikleia as an impression of a painted image (1999: 24–29). Viewed in connection with Dionysios's text, Heliodoros's novel looks very much like a dramatization of the theoretician's account of literary *zêlôsis*. A closer examination of the figure of the Nile in the *Aithiopika* will show that Heliodoros reproduces not only the concrete terms of Dionysios's metaphors but also, and more importantly, the explicit multiplicity of his notion of influence.

The importance of the Nile and its sources is evident first of all in the way that the river repeatedly appears as an object of inquiry for the characters themselves. In fact, Nilotic inquiry plays an important structural role both in Kharikleia's life story and in the text of the *Aithiopika*. In the course of her life, Kharikleia knows three father-figures, two suppositious and one genuine (according to conventional notions of paternity): Kharikles, Kalasiris, and Hydaspes.<sup>54</sup> I draw attention to the way in which discussions or investigations of the Nile mark crucial moments of transition for Kharikleia as indexed by her coming under the protection of each of these father-figures in succession. We may begin with the event that ultimately sets in motion Kharikleia's journey from Delphi to her homeland, namely Kalasiris's encounter with his Delphic counterpart Kharikles. Kharikles uses Kalasiris's lecture on the sources of the Nile as an excuse to broach with him the subject of his daughter. The episode has a noticeably Herodotean cast, recalling the historian's visit to Memphis,

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13.3 uses a similar metaphor to describe Homer's influence on Plato, but in this case the many streams "channeled" by Plato come all from a single source.

<sup>54</sup> Both Kharikles and Kalasiris present themselves as and are taken for Kharikleia's father. In the case of Kalasiris in particular the text insistently asserts his fatherly status: cf. 4.5.6–7, 4.12.1 (immediately after Kalasiris has revealed to Kharikleia the secret of her identity and she has "recognized herself"), and especially 7.14.6, where Kharikleia reviews the whole series of fathers she has had. Although Sisimithres had care of Kharikleia until the age of seven, the text nowhere speaks of him as a father. The fact that the period of Kharikleia's Ethiopian fosterage lasted only until age seven explains her ignorance of the Ethiopian language: according to Solon, a child is *nêpios* (= Lt. *infans*), that is, outside the realm of language, in the first hebdomad of life (see Solon 27.1–2 West with Musti 1990 and Vannicelli 1997: 205).



except that the situation is now reversed: a visiting Memphite priest engages in discussion with Greek *logioi*. Alongside a number of other parallels with Herodotos, most striking is the designation of this intellectual exchange as *historia* (τῶν κατ' Αἴγυπτον ἐν οὐδὲν ἀπελίμπανον *ιστοροῦντες* [they did not omit a single matter touching on Egypt in their inquiries, 2.27.3]).<sup>55</sup>

Nilotic *historia* not only mediates between Kalasiris and Kharikleis; it is also what brought Kharikleis to Egypt—and to Kharikleia—ten years previously. Kharikleis explains that after traveling widely he came at last to Katadoupoi “to find out about the cataracts of the Nile” (καθ' *ιστορίαν* τῶν καταρρακτῶν τοῦ Νείλου, 2.29.5). These two passages, which provide the only two instances of *historein* or *historia* in the novel, establish a pattern. Nilotic inquiry articulates the story of Kharikleia's gradual return from the anonymity of an exposed infant to her rightful place in the Ethiopian succession. Each time Kharikleia acquires a new father-figure—each time she moves closer to her paternal origin—the shift is occasioned by Nilotic *historia*, an association that exploits the obvious parallel between the search for the sources of the Nile and the search for Kharikleia's true father.

This search moves into its third and final stage when Kharikleia comes into the care (at first as a sacrificial victim) of Hydaspes himself; her encounter with this ultimate father-figure is once again indexed by Nilotic inquiry. Theagenes and Kharikleia are formally presented to the king as spoils of war the day after he enters into the city of Syene. Hydaspes' first action on entering the city had been to proceed to the temples, where he inquired of the priests (again with Herodotean overtones; see below) about the origin of the Neiloia (9.22.2). Though separated by a day in “real time,” Hydaspes' inquiry and his encounter with Kharikleia stand in close proximity in the text. This is not the first time these two have met—the prisoners had been informally presented to Hydaspes at the beginning of the Book (9.1.3). Kharikleia's reunion with her biological father necessarily requires time to unfold, as she herself is aware (9.24.4). Nevertheless this particular encounter has special significance, since it marks the first awareness on both sides of the true nature of their relationship. When Kharikleia was first brought before the king, she had no way of knowing whether he was in fact Hydaspes (cf. 9.24.2), while Hydaspes for his part had only the faintest “prophetic” intimation of some kind of connection

<sup>55</sup> The most explicit echoes lie in Kalasiris's formulation of the questions and answers: cf. ἡ παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ποταμοὺς ἰδιάζουσα φύσις and δι' ἣν αἰτίαν καὶ μόνος ποταμῶν αὖρας οὐκ ἀναδίδωσι (2.28.1 and 5) with Hdt. 2.19.3 (ιστορέων αὐτοὺς ἦντινα δύναμιν ἔχει ὁ Νεῖλος τὰ ἔμπαιιν πεφυκέναι τῶν ἄλλων ποταμῶν. . . καὶ ὅ τι αὖρας ἀποπνεούσας μόνος πάντων ποταμῶν οὐ παρέχεται). Cf. Whitmarsh 1999: 25.



with the girl (9.1.3). Now, however, Kharikleia has confirmed the identity of the king, and Hydaspes moreover recollects a dream in which a daughter identical to Kharikleia was born to him (9.25.1).

Hydaspes' inquiry differs from the previous instances: it is not an investigation of the physical features of the Nile, of its course or its sources. Indeed, it is not explicitly *historia* at all. Nevertheless it is more deeply and substantively Herodotean insofar as it focuses on the cultic aspects of the Nilotic environment.<sup>56</sup> The nature of Hydaspes' inquiry and the answer he receives—a brief summary of the theology underlying the festival—places this scene in direct dialogue with the narrator's own excursus on the Neiloia earlier in Book 9, which we have already seen to be the most explicit evocation of Herodotos in the novel as a whole.<sup>57</sup> If Hydaspes is thereby assimilated to the Herodotean narrator of this section of the novel, the conclusion he draws from his inquiry is similarly Herodotean, for the answer he receives impresses on him that religious customs and beliefs are culturally relative. This is one implication of his reaction to the priests' explanation (9.22.7):

ἀλλ' οὐκ Αἰγύπτια ταῦτα . . . ἀλλ' Αἰθιοπικά τὰ σεμνολογήματα.<sup>58</sup> τὸν  
γοῦν ποταμὸν τοῦτον, εἴτε καὶ καθ' ὑμᾶς θεόν, καὶ κῆτος ἅπαν ποτάμιον  
ἢ Αἰθίοπων δεῦρο παραπέμπουσα δικαίως ἂν παρ' ὑμῶν τυγχάνοι  
σεβάσματος, μήτηρ ὑμῖν γινομένη θεῶν.

But all these things . . . of which you speak so proudly belong not to Egypt but to Ethiopia. For this river, this god as you call it, and every creature in it, comes to you from the land of Ethiopia, which thus in fairness should be the object of your worship, for it is the mother of your gods.

More importantly, however, Hydaspes' assertion is phrased as the revelation of an important truth about the Nile, namely, that the river is more originally Ethiopian than Egyptian. This revelation corresponds to the fact that Kharikleia is at last approaching her own point of origin in Ethiopia.

<sup>56</sup> For the typically Herodotean emphasis on cult over matters that are beyond the scope of historical inquiry (which include, as we shall see, the origin of the Nile), see Lloyd in Nenci and Reverdin 1990: 35; Gould 1994: 98; and cf. Mikalson 2003: 144–45. A deeper Herdoteanism is appropriate at this point in the novel, since we are now in the Herodotean movement of the narrative.

<sup>57</sup> The connection between these two passages is further emphasized by the way the theological discourse in each case breaks off with an appeal to religious propriety. The narrator concludes by asking for *eumeneia* for what he has said and by leaving *ta mustikôtera* in silence (9.10.1); Hydaspes enjoins the priests of Syene to be *euphêmoi* (9.23.1).

<sup>58</sup> See Whitmarsh 1999: 27 for the pun on the title of the novel. It is as though Hydaspes were saying to the reader: "You thought you were reading an Egyptian story, but it turns out it's *An Ethiopian Story*."

Paradoxically, although the appearance of Hydaspes represents a move toward origins, the shift to a truer Herodoteanism makes access to origins difficult or even impossible. Hydaspes does not make any positive claim about the actual source of the Nile, but merely asserts that Ethiopia “escorts” (παραέμπουσα) the Nile to Egypt, as though the river were a guest passing through her borders. By comparison with the false father Kalasiris, who provides a more or less precise location for the source of the Nile (2.28.2; the pretense of knowledge reflects the pretense of paternity), Hydaspes adopts an agnostic position. His agnosticism mirrors a fundamental principle of Herodotos’s historical methodology, a principle which is prominently on display in Book 2 of the *Histories*<sup>59</sup>: to practice Herodotean inquiry means to acknowledge the limits of knowledge. This is one way of understanding Herodotos’s characteristic focus on cult, which Heliodoros adopts in Book 9.<sup>60</sup> More importantly, however, it is a principle that Herodotos illustrates precisely with the example of Nilotic inquiry.

Herodotos’s Book 2 as a whole stands under the sign of the Egyptian king Psammetikhos, whose investigations into natural history function as a cautionary tale, an example of how not to do *historia*.<sup>61</sup> Psammetikhos’s linguistic experiment, with which the book opens, illustrates not only the distinction between historical and non-historical methods of inquiry, but also the inherent limitations of historical knowledge (Vannicelli 1997).<sup>62</sup> The programmatic contrast between historical and non-historical procedures reappears with Psammetikhos’s second foray into the field of natural history, which concerns the source of the Nile. Significantly, Psammetikhos is the only person in the *Histories* aside from Herodotos himself who engages in *historia* of the Nile.<sup>63</sup> Psammetikhos believed he had solved the problem of the Nile’s origin by discovering a bottomless spring in the region between Syene and

<sup>59</sup> For Herodotos’s emphasis on methodology in Book 2, see Marincola 1987 and Luraghi 2001b: 152.

<sup>60</sup> See the references cited above, n56. Herodotos’s focus on cult should be considered separately from his reluctance to discuss *ta theia*, which may derive from genuinely religious considerations; nevertheless, for the historical inaccessibility of the primordial period of divine kingship in Egypt, see Vannicelli 2001: 221.

<sup>61</sup> See Christ 1994 for Herodotos’s use of the figure of the “kingly inquirer,” as represented especially by Psammetikhos, to reflect on the historian’s proper aims and methods.

<sup>62</sup> At 212–13, Vannicelli notes the programmatic nature of this opening as a mirror–image of the opening of the *Histories* as a whole: in both cases the text begins with a false start that highlights by contrast the choice of a methodologically sound starting point by the historian himself.

<sup>63</sup> There is thus an analogy between Psammetikhos and the narrator of the *Histories*, on the one hand, and Hydaspes and the narrator of the *Aithiopika* on the other, which is perhaps the conscious result of Heliodoros’s engagement with Herodotos.

Elephantine (2.28.4; note that this is roughly the place where Hydaspes “reveals” the true nature of the river).<sup>64</sup> Herodotos himself, however, counters this childish story (cf. *παίζειν ἐδόκεε*, 2.28.2) by asserting that the source of the Nile lies outside the realm of verifiable knowledge, its course being subject to investigation only up to a certain point (2.34.1):

περὶ δὲ τῶν τοῦ Νείλου πηγέων οὐδείς ἔχει λέγειν· ἀοίκητός τε γὰρ καὶ ἔρημός ἐστι ἡ Λιβύη δι’ ἧς ῥέει. περὶ δὲ τοῦ ῥεύματος αὐτοῦ, ἐπ’ ὅσον μακρότατον ἱστορόοντα ἦν ἐξικέσθαι, εἴρηται.

No one can give an account of the sources of the Nile, for the land of Libya, through which it flows, is uninhabitable and desert; regarding its course, I have given the account so far as inquiry can take it.

In strict accordance with Herodotos’s methodology, Hydaspes likewise has nothing to say (or at least says nothing) about the sources of the Nile. Strangely, given the expectations we form on the basis of the two earlier instances of Nilotic inquiry in the *Aithiopika*, the sources of the Nile recede into the distance even as Kharikleia approaches her supposed point of origin.

As though to emphasize that Kharikleia’s journey home will not in fact disclose the river’s sources, the narrative leaves the Nile for the first time at the beginning of Book 10 and at the border between Egypt and Ethiopia (10.1.2; cf. 9.26.2). After offering sacrifice to the river, Hydaspes leaves its banks and heads across the interior. This sudden turning aside (*ἐκτραπείς*, 10.1.2) is striking, since the river has been taken for granted as the setting for events from the very first sentence of the novel up to the present point.<sup>65</sup> It is understood that Hydaspes encounters the river again when he arrives at Philai (cf. 8.1.2), but the Nile does not reappear in the narrative until chapter five, when Hydaspes’ party at last arrives at Meroe, the Ethiopian capital and the birthplace of Kharikleia.

If Nilotic inquiry, as an index of Kharikleia’s return to her point of origin, were to reveal the source of the Nile, we would expect that source to be here.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Although Herodotos doubts the authenticity of the story, it appears to be an accurate representation of Egyptian tradition, Postl 1970: 13.

<sup>65</sup> The Nile is named as the setting in the first sentence of the novel (1.1.1), and again in the first chapter of the second half of the novel (6.1.2), which marks a major structural boundary, since it begins an entirely new phase of the narrative after Kalasiris’s inset narration. The Nile is also the setting for that narration itself, since Khemmis is on the banks of the Nile (2.18.5). Kharikleia and Theagenes are captured by the Ethiopians on the Nile’s banks (8.16.1).

<sup>66</sup> For the expectation that the journey up the Nile will end with the discovery of the river’s source, see Whitmarsh 1999: 25.

Instead we discover that, while Meroe does indeed stand at an originary point in the Nile's course (in the sense that the river here undergoes an important transformation), this is nevertheless not a point of origin pure and simple but a point of *fusion* (10.5.1):

ἡ γὰρ δὴ Μερὸν μητρόπολις οὖσα τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν τὰ μὲν ἄλλα ἐστὶ νῆσος  
 τριγωνίζουσα ποταμοῖς ναυσιπόροις τῷ τε Νείλῳ καὶ τῷ Ἀσταβόρρῃ καὶ τῷ  
 Ἀσασόβῃ περιεομένη, τοῦ μὲν κατὰ κορυφὴν ἐμπίπτοντος, τοῦ Νείλου,  
 καὶ πρὸς ἐκότερα σχιζομένου, τῶν ἐτέρων δὲ δυοῖν κατὰ πλευρὰν ἐκατέραν  
 θατέρου παραμειβόντων καὶ αὐθις ἀλλήλοις συμπιπτόντων καὶ εἰς ἓνα τὸν  
 Νεῖλον τό τε ῥεῦμα τό τ' ὄνομα ἐκνικωμένων.

Meroe, the Ethiopians' metropolis, is in form a triangular island bounded by navigable rivers: the Nile, the Astaborrhas, and the Asasobas. The first of these, the Nile, breaks on the apex of the triangle, where it splits into two; the other two rivers run along either side of the island until they rejoin to form one river, the Nile, which subsumes their names as well as their waters.

The Nile below Meroe is fundamentally different from the Nile above the city: before its confluence with the Astaborrhas and the Asasobas, the Nile is presumably "just" the Nile, but afterwards it is a hybrid, composite entity.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, it is a hybrid composed of three parts. The intersection of three rivers forms the capstone of the series of triplets we have observed on the level both of structure (the three generically distinct components of Books 1–9) and of theme (Kharikleia's three father-figures). These two levels are interrelated insofar as Heliodoros presents Kharikleia as the embodiment of his text. The hybrid nature of the Nile corresponds both to the novel's heterogeneous literary heritage and to Kharikleia's multiplex patrimony.

In terms of Dionysios's conceptualization of literary *zēlōsis*, Meroe corresponds to the originary moment of influence: it is the place where multiple streams converge into one, and where images impress their beauty on a textual corpus. By the same token, the Nile itself, in its course from Meroe to the sea, figures the portion of the text (Books 1–9) that covers the same geographical expanse, that is, Egypt: both are composites of three parts.<sup>68</sup> Ethiopia, which

<sup>67</sup> Considering Heliodoros's evident debt to Strabo 17.2.2 in this passage (see Maillon's note ad loc. in Rattenbury and Lumb 1960), it is surprising that he does not reproduce the latter's geography, which would seem better to express the nature of Meroe as a point of true fusion: Strabo has the three rivers Astaborhas, Astapous, and Astasobas come together at the southern end of the island to form the Nile, which proceeds from the northern end. Perhaps Heliodoros wanted his geography to reflect more precisely the hierarchical configuration of Kharikleia's patrimony, with the Nile corresponding to her biological father and the two tributaries to her two foster-fathers.

<sup>68</sup> For other ways in which the Nile figures the *Aithiopika*, see Whitmarsh 1999: 28–29.

stands beyond the marked heterogeneity of the narrative as it unfolds on Egyptian soil, represents the very moment of fusion. It synthesizes the text's heterogeneity by naturalizing it, by making it literally a part of the novel's landscape.

Events at Meroe likewise reaffirm the essentially multiple nature of Kharikleia's patrimony even as she is reconnected with her biological parents. In an unexpected twist of the plot, just when all questions of identity seem at last to have been put to rest, Heliodoros brings Kharikles back on the scene. The appearance of Kharikleia's Greek foster-father gives rise to an interesting legal conflict. Hydaspes commands Theagenes to give back Kharikles' daughter, judging that justice requires him to "return what belongs to another" (ἀπόδος . . . τὴν ἀλλοτρίαν, 10.37.2); to which Theagenes responds by asserting that it is Hydaspes himself who is subject to the law thus formulated. The legitimacy of Kharikles' claim to a father's rights is confirmed by Kharikleia herself with the words ὦ πάτερ . . . ὦ τῶν φύντων οὐδὲν ἔλαττον ἐμοὶ σεβάσμιε, τιμώρησαι ὡς βούλει τὴν ἀθέμιτον ἐμὲ καὶ πατραλοῖαν (Father . . . no less worthy of reverence than those who gave me birth, punish me, a wicked parricide, as you wish, 10.38.1). Heliodoros thus sets up a conflict between competing claims of paternity. Furthermore, the conflict is never explicitly resolved, as though he does not want the issue to be formally decided. Instead, the conflict leads directly to the realization that Kharikleia must wed Theagenes (rather than the Ethiopian chosen by Hydaspes): the union of Greek and Ethiopian in marriage reproduces (and presumably will reproduce as offspring) the fusion that defines Kharikleia's identity.

Raising the question of paternity at Meroe's confluence of rivers emphasizes the connection between the Nile and Kharikleia's parentage. And in a certain sense Kharikleia is in fact the child of a river. It cannot be a coincidence that Heliodoros chooses to give to the Ethiopian king, who is anonymous in Herodotos, a name that would be instantly recognizable to ancient readers as belonging to an Indian river, the *fabulosus Hydaspes*, to borrow a phrase from Horace (*Carm.* 1.22).<sup>69</sup> But why this river in particular? Doubtless because certain traditions associated the Hydaspes with the origin of the Nile, thus casting it as a kind of father-figure for Egypt's river. Alexander the Great believed for a time to have discovered in the Hydaspes and the Akeshines the sources of the Nile.<sup>70</sup> And though the explorations of Nearkhos seem to have

<sup>69</sup> Morgan 1982: 247n119 notes that Hydaspes bears the name of a river, but evidently prefers to think that the name was chosen because it recalls the Persian name Hystaspes. Herodotos identifies two Persians named Hystaspes, one the father of Darius, the other a son (3.71, 7.64).

<sup>70</sup> Str. 15.1.25; cf. Arr. *Anab.* 6.1, with Rommel 1923: 5, 23 and Postl 1970: 17. See as well Verg. *G.* 4.293 with the comment of Mynors 1990 ad loc. (but cf. Nadeau 1970: 345).

demonstrated that the Hydaspes was not exactly a source, nevertheless Hellenistic geographers continued to imply a connection between the two rivers by observing that both experience a summer flood (the problem of the Nile's flood being coextensive with that of its source: Sen. *Q Nat.* 4A.2.3). Thus Agatharchides notes that heavy summer rains begin in Egypt shortly after they flood the Hydaspes (*FGrH* 86 F19 = Diod. Sic. 1.41.7).<sup>71</sup> This connection between the Hydaspes and the Nile flood lends significance to the flood we actually observe in the *Aithiopia*: the flooding of Syene. Just after describing how the waters retreating through the breach in the Ethiopian earthworks leave behind a thick layer of mud, the narrator notes that the inhabitants of Syene happen at that very moment to be celebrating the Neiloia, the festival that marks the onset of the Nile flood. There is a strong suggestion that the flooding of Syene is a kind of micro-version of the river's annual flood.<sup>72</sup> And this micro-flood is caused by Hydaspes, just as the cause of the Nile flood is linked by the geographers to the river Hydaspes.

It must be stressed, however, that although the Indian Hydaspes can be conceived as the source of the Nile, Heliodoros's Hydaspes does not for that reason lead us back to a "pure" point of origin. On the contrary, the figure of Hydaspes points to the deeply hybrid nature of the Ethiopians in a literary tradition extending all the way back to Homer, who spoke of (*Od.* 1.23–24)

Αἰθίοπας, τοὶ διχθὰ δεδαίεται, ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν,  
οἱ μὲν δυσομένου Ὑπερίονος, οἱ δ' ἀνιόντος . . .

Ethiopians, most remote of men, who are divided in two groups,  
one where Hyperion sets and the other at his rising.

This notion of the Ethiopian people as divided between the far east and far west led naturally to the idea of a connection between Indian "Ethiopians" and those in the western part of the ancient world.<sup>73</sup> Herodotos, for instance,

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For the whole question of the eastern origins of the Nile, see Schneider 2004: 35–40. I am grateful to Paul Kosmin for drawing my attention to this tradition.

<sup>71</sup> Str. 15.1.25 attributes a similar observation to Nearkhos himself.

<sup>72</sup> Note especially that Hydaspes constructs καταράκτας in the channel (9.8.5), and that the same word that describes the retreating of the waters (ὑπονοστήσαντος, 9.8.4) is used twice of the subsiding of the annual flood in the episode of Hydaspes' Nilotic inquiries (9.22.3 and 5). The etymology of the name *Neilos* given by the priests of Syene (9.22.5) emphasizes that mud (*ilús*; cf. 9.8.6) belongs to the essence of the Nile.

<sup>73</sup> See Nadeau 1970 for a survey of the ancient tradition with particular emphasis on Latin literature, and an account of how ancient geographers reconciled the notion of "eastern" and "western" Ethiopians with the fact that Ethiopia itself was in the south. Schneider 2004 provides an exhaustive survey and analysis of the associations between India and Ethiopia; see pp. 353–57 for Heliodoros.

identifies two kinds of Ethiopians (7.70),<sup>74</sup> and closer to Heliodoros's own time Dictys Cretensis writes that Memnon's army was composed of Ethiopians and Indians (4.4). Heliodoros himself includes many signposts of this tradition in his text (cf. Brioso Sánchez 1992: 209), the most explicit being an address to the besieged inhabitants of Syene in the name of "Hydaspes, King of the Eastern and Western Ethiopians" (Υδάσπης ὁ τῶν πρὸς ἀνατολαῖς καὶ δυσμαῖς Αἰθιοπῶν . . . βασιλεὺς, 9.6.2). There are many more subtle indications as well, several of which cluster around jewels, which, as I noted above (n32), figure the identity of Kharikleia. Thus the amethyst that Kalasiris exchanges for the girl exhibits, like her, a special Ethiopian beauty—but not *exclusively* Ethiopian: τοιαύτη μὲν καὶ πᾶσα ἐξ Ἰνδῶν τε καὶ Αἰθιοπῶν ἀμέθυσος (such is every amethyst from India or Ethiopia, 5.14.1).<sup>75</sup> Similarly, the *pantarbê* jewel that not only saves Kharikleia's life but also functions as a special (ἴδιον, 10.14.3) recognition token just for Hydaspes is elsewhere attested as a specifically Indian stone.<sup>76</sup>

One of the more recognizably Indian features of Heliodoros's Ethiopia is the presence there of gymnosophists (cf. Marengo 1988: 113). Heliodoros's model for this detail appears to be the Ethiopian *Gumnoi* in Philostratos's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (note that Philostratos too makes Ethiopia the end-point of a "sophic journey," in Whitmarsh's phrase [1999: 25]).<sup>77</sup> Philostratos

<sup>74</sup> Note as well that Mardonios juxtaposes Indians and Ethiopians in a short catalogue he gives of tribes conquered by the Persians, Hdt. 7.9.2.

<sup>75</sup> Morgan 1989a: 454n133 notes that Pliny (*HN* 37.121) claims the finest amethysts to be from India, while Ethiopian amethysts are not attested elsewhere. The recognition tokens that were exposed with Kharikleia consist of precious stones from both India and Ethiopia (8.11.8).

<sup>76</sup> Philostr. *VA* 3.46, *FGrH* 688 F45 (from Ktesias's *Indika*); cf. Rommel 1923: 63. The notion of a precious stone that is *idios* to the river-figure Hydaspes brings to mind the close association we find between rivers and stones in Hellenistic and later literature, e.g. the "river topos" we observe in Poseidippos's epigrams on gems (Bastianini and Galazzi 2001 *ad* II.9; Hunter 2004: 97; Petrain 2005: 333). In fact, the first epigram of the new Poseidippos papyrus, which initiates a sequence of poems on stones that "probably stood at the beginning of the collection and perhaps bore the title λιθικά" (Petrain 2005: 329) begins with the tantalizing words Ἰνδὸς Ὑδάσπης (Indian Hydaspes, or perhaps, Indus [and] Hydaspes, 1.1 in the edition of Austin and Bastianini 2002). Does the initial position of the Hydaspes in this collection evoke geographical theories about the river's connection with the Nile? The association between rivers and stones is not limited to poetic tradition: cf. [Plut.] *Fluv.* 1.2 (on the Hydaspes, with which this work also begins), 6.3, 7.3, 7.6.

<sup>77</sup> The connection between Heliodoros and the *Life of Apollonius* was noted already by Rohde 1974: 438–42; cf. also Rommel 1923: 59. Sandy 1982: 2 argues unconvincingly against Heliodoros's dependence on Philostratos.



is one of two sources known to us from which Heliodoros might have learned about the *pantarbê* (see above, n76). More importantly, Heliodoros appears to have derived from Philostratos the very idea of making the Ethiopians ruled by a “river.” In the *Life of Apollonius*, we read of how the Ethiopians migrated from their homeland in India to their present country in Africa (3.20.1–2). The Ethiopians lived prosperously in India as subjects of King Ganges, son of the river Ganges.<sup>78</sup> When they murdered this king, however, they were compelled to wander until they sacrificed the murderers<sup>79</sup> and were permitted to settle. Heliodoros perhaps suggests that after their migrations the Ethiopians accepted the sovereignty of a new river-related ruler, one with a similar connection to their new homeland (by virtue of the connection between the Hydaspes and the Nile flood) as Ganges had to their old. In any case, as a result of all these connections between Ethiopia and India, Ethiopia emerges as a deeply hybrid place; its hybridity is reflected in turn in the character of Kharikleia.

By virtue of her connection to the Nile, and especially through her father Hydaspes, Kharikleia is in some sense the child of a river. Antiquity knew another famous child of a river, whose importance in other respects to the *Aithiopika* has already been sketched: Homer. The poet’s birthplace and parents constituted one of the great unsolved mysteries of the ancient world—on a par, perhaps, with the sources of the Nile. Undaunted, however, by the intransigence of the problem, Kalasiris, who confidently pronounces on the Nile’s source (cf. above), likewise professes secure knowledge of Homer’s origin (3.14.2 ff.). His assertion that the poet was Egyptian is not as strange as it has seemed to some.<sup>80</sup> In fact, this view is widely reported in the *vitae*.<sup>81</sup> However, the details given by Kalasiris do not correspond to anything we find in the ancient sources: Homer, he claims, was the illegitimate son of Hermes by the wife of a priest of Hermes, who was visited by the god in his temple. His father banished him from Thebes because of his illegitimacy, revealed by the hairy birthmark on his thigh, from which he took his name. Several characters

<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, Philostratos tells us that the father flooded India, while the son diverted the river and “reconciled it with the land,” which is why the earth exhibited a special fertility: one thinks again of the relationship between Hydaspes and the Nile.

<sup>79</sup> One of the journal’s anonymous referees suggests to me that this detail may have some connection with the fact that Heliodoros’s Ethiopians practice human sacrifice.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Dowden 1996: 281: “the apparently preposterous view . . . that Homer was really an Egyptian.”

<sup>81</sup> *Vita* V 9–10, *Vita* VI 23–5, *Vita* VII 1–2. All citations from the *vitae* refer to the edition of Allen 1912.



in the *Aithiopika* have life stories that parallel Kharikleia's,<sup>82</sup> but Kalasiris's account makes Homer the most perfect of these doubles: like Kharikleia he is exiled because of the fear of illegitimacy, and a birthmark reveals the nature of his birth (the difference being that Kharikleia's birthmark is a sign of her legitimacy). The fact that Homer's life parallels Kharikleia's in so many respects lends significance to a detail that is self-consciously overwritten by Heliodoros, namely, the connection between Homer's birth and the Meles river near Smyrna. This connection is the most consistent shared feature among the extant *vitae*, which report the view that Homer was originally called Melesigenes either because he was actually the son of the Meles or else metaphorically so, being born on the banks of the river.<sup>83</sup> According to *Vita* VI (ll. 28–29) the most common view was that the Meles was Homer's true father. An attentive reader realizes that both by the details of his own account and by the details he erases Heliodoros is signaling his intention to make a connection between Kharikleia and the Life of Homer tradition. The reason for this connection should be sought in the view put forward by Kalasiris,<sup>84</sup> that the mystery of Homer's birth persists precisely so that Homer may belong to every city (3.14.4). That is to say, Homer's origin, like the sources of the Nile, is a problem that leads ultimately to the acknowledgement of a fundamentally complex rather than simplex identity.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Both Knemon and Kalasiris go into exile because of father-son difficulties. In Kalasiris's case, the theme of erotic attraction is added to the theme of conflict with the father: Kalasiris's attraction to Rhodopis is the inverse of Kharikleia's attraction to Theagenes.

<sup>83</sup> Born on the river bank: *Vita Herod.* 27–31, *Plut. Vita* 18–20; son of the Meles: *Plut. Vita* II 14–15, *Vita* IV 2–3, *Vita* VI 28–29.

<sup>84</sup> Expressed also by Philostratos, *Her.* 44.2–3. Bowie 1998: 7 argues that Heliodoros models the hymn sung by the Thessalians at Delphi on the Thessalian hymn reported in the *Hērōikos*, which would show that Heliodoros knew the work.

<sup>85</sup> Note Tzetzes, *Chil.* 13.626–29: ὁ Ὅμηρος ὁ πάνσοφος, ἡ θάλασσα τῶν λόγων, / πλὴν γέμουσα τοῦ νέκτορος, οὐχ ἀλμυρῶν ὕδατων, / ἐπτα πατρίδων λέγεται τυγχάνειν ἀμφιβόλων. / ἐπτα πατέρων γέννημα καὶ τούτων ἀμφιβόλων (all-wise Homer, the sea of *logoi*, / full of nectar, not briny waters, / is said to have seven disputed fatherlands, [to be] the child of seven fathers, these too disputed). Tzetzes' emphasis on the number seven raises the tantalizing possibility of an Alexandrian tradition correlating Homer's *vita* with the seven mouths of the Nile. The image of the "sea of *logoi*" belongs to a long tradition that figures Homer as the "source" for other poets by comparing him to Okeanos (the source of all rivers according to Homeric cosmology): see Brink 1972: 553–56; Asper 1997: 120–25. There is evidence for an iconographic version of this tradition: Aelian (*VH* 13.22) describes an evidently parodic painting by Galaton depicting "Homer vomiting, and the other poets drawing up the vomited waters." Aelian appends this description to a discussion of the Homereion erected in Alexandria by Ptolemy IV Philopater, which included a statue of Homer surrounded by figures representing each of the cities that

The particular form of the Homeric biography we find in Heliodoros corroborates this view. While Kalasiris's *vita* may not correspond to ancient accounts of Homer's birth, it does recall the details of another *vita* tradition, namely that of Alexander as represented in the *Alexander Romance* (Whitmarsh 1998: 106n57). There too the child is ambiguously the son of either a god or the priest who serves him. The similarity is not incidental, because it sets up yet another parallel between Kalasiris's *vita* and Kharikleia's story: like Kharikleia, Alexander travels to Egypt in order to discover the truth of his birth. And as in the case of Kharikleia, Alexander's story never fully resolves the ambiguity, but instead reaffirms the multiplicity of the king's nature (Jouanno 1998).

From a variety of perspectives, which are coordinated by the controlling figure of the Nile river, Kharikleia emerges as a deeply hybrid figure. The waters of the Nile are the concrete symbolization of her composite identity (and of the composite nature of her text). I would like to conclude by examining briefly one further respect in which those waters symbolize her identity. The emphasis now, however, will be not (or not primarily) on her cultural identity, but on her sexual identity. Kharikleia's relations with Theagenes can be seen to reflect the peculiar intertextual strategy of Books 1–9, which I earlier described in terms of the “co-presence of unmixed elements.”

For Kharikleia, who travels to Ethiopia in the company of her lover, the imperative to remain sexually *kathara* (“pure”) is operative from the outset both of the journey and of the narrative. Kharikleia formulates at the earliest moment of the narrative this guiding principle of her relationship with Theagenes (εις δεῦρο διετέλεσα καθαρὰν ἑμαυτὴν [I have kept myself pure up to this point, 1.25.4]). Her declaration repeats at the level of the *récit* the initial oath of chastity that begins the *histoire* of their journey (4.18.4 ff.). In terms of the semantic field of *katharos*, the opposite of the “pure” is the “mixed.”<sup>86</sup> And it is precisely in terms of “mixing” that the text expresses the possibility of sexual contact between Kharikleia and Theagenes (5.4.5):

εἶχοντο ἐπὶ πλείστον ἀλλήλων οἴονεῖ συμπεφυκότες . . . δάκρυσι δὲ ὕγροῖς  
καὶ θερμοῖς εἰς ἀλλήλους κεραννύμενοι καὶ καθαροῖς μόνον μινγνύμενοι τοῖς  
φιλήμασιν.

laid claim to him (Aelian does not specify the number). The arrangement of the statues suggests the iconography travestied by Galaton.

<sup>86</sup> This thematic opposition is stated in the very first chapter of the novel, although with reference to a very different object, namely, the vestiges of the shipside battle: ἦν δὲ οὐ πολέμου καθαρῶς τὰ φαινόμενα σύμβολα, ἀλλ' ἀναμείμικτο . . . ἐλεεινὰ λείψανα (the visible traces signified no *clean* fight; rather, the pitiable remains were *mixed together*, 1.1.4).

They held each other in a long embrace as if they had merged into one . . . by the mixture of their wet and warm tears they mingled with each other; their union consisted in pure kisses only.

The verb *kerannumi* usually refers to the mixing of water and wine (LSJ A.1). The text sets up an opposition between being *katharos* and the kind of mixing that happens in the symposium in order to emphasize the chastity of the central characters. The sexual valence of sympotic mixing is explicitly activated in a toast offered by the Greek merchant Nausikles to Kalasiris (5.16.1):

ὦ γὰρ ἑὸν Καλάσιρι . . . καθαρὰς σοι τὰς νύμφας ὥς σοι φίλον καὶ  
ἀκοινωνήτους τοῦ Διονύσου καὶ ἀληθῶς ἔτι νύμφας προπίνομεν.

My dear Kalasiris . . . we drink to you with pure water, as is pleasing to you, water which has had no intercourse with Dionysos and remains truly virgin.

The erotic overtones here are largely motivated by the fact that Nausikles has just restored Kharikleia to Kalasiris.<sup>87</sup> A similar connection between the unmixed water preferred by Kalasiris and the virgin purity of Kharikleia and Theagenes emerges from the libation Kalasiris pours before beginning his narration, a libation that he offers not only to the gods but also to the lovers (2.23.1).

Kalasiris drinks only pure water out of religious scruple and regard for Egyptian tradition. The supposedly Egyptian custom of drinking pure water—the pure water of the Nile—comes to the fore in Achilles Tatius's novel as well: Kleitophon praises the sweetness of the customary Egyptian drink, and the practice of drinking from the Nile directly, without the intermediary of a cup (4.18.3–6). This is significant because, like Heliodoros, Achilles Tatius uses sympotic imagery to figure the erotic relationship between his novel's protagonists. Specifically, the “loving cup” (*philotêsia*) exchanged in toasts becomes a repeated index or symbol of erotic interaction.<sup>88</sup> Kleitophon's

<sup>87</sup> Like every dominant male in the novel, Nausikles is a potential threat to Kharikleia's chastity, and his eroticized speech may emphasize that threat. On the other hand, his toast highlights not only the fact that Kharikleia has remained *kathara*, but also that she remains a *numphê*, a bride. Thus the toast may look forward to her reunion with Theagenes, which is joyfully foreseen by the symposiasts. The use of the term *numphê* is a metonymy based on the connection between *numphai* and springs of water.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. 2.9, where, as Albert Henrichs reminds me, the mixing of wine and water is also very prominent (personal communication). Note that the festival of Dionysos *Protrugaios* commemorates Dionysos's invention of the *philotêsia* (2.2.4). Elsewhere, in a context contrasting a tragic homosexual affair with the lost hope of heterosexual marriage, Kleinias laments that he gave his lover a horse instead of the more auspicious gift of a *phialê* to be used at symposia (1.14.1–2).

approval for Egyptian custom must therefore be viewed in connection with the fact that he has just sworn to respect Leukippe's virginity (4.1.2 ff.). (In fact Kleitophon, traveling along the Nile in the company of his beloved, is in precisely the same position as Theagenes.) In Achilles Tatius it is the exchange of cups, in Heliodoros the mixing of water and wine that figures erotic interaction, but in both cases we are dealing with a feature of sympotic culture that, in the fictional worlds of Achilles Tatius and Heliodoros, is presented as foreign to Egypt.

In Heliodoros's world, Dionysos finds his proper place at Meroe, for he is one of the ancestral gods of the Meroitic court (10.2.2; cf. 4.8.3). Dionysos's prominence in Ethiopia is partly to be explained by the Indian connections noted above—the divine conqueror of India is naturally at home among the Ethiopians—but its full significance within the text cannot be understood except in connection with the Egyptian imperative to be *katharos*. If the Egyptian books of the *Aithiopika* can be characterized in terms of their intertextual associations as a mixture in suspension, as the co-presence of discrete elements, the same description applies to the protagonists during the same portion of the narrative: they travel together but must remain separate and pure. Their union is reserved for Ethiopia. As she journeys to Meroe, Kharikleia moves not only so to speak backward in time, toward the secret of her own hybrid identity as figured by the confluence of rivers, but also forward toward the fusion of marriage, represented by the cult of Dionysos and the mixing of wine with those same Nilotic waters.<sup>89</sup> Erotic and sympotic mixing are illicit in Egypt but can be legitimately practiced in Ethiopia. The link between the two is expressed by the *hieros nomos* governing sacrifices to the Meroitic divinities (10.7.7):

ἐν μόνον ἂν βοηθήσειεν, εἰ τῆς ἐσχάρας ἦν οἶσθα ἐπιβᾶσα μὴ  
ἀγνεύουσα πως ὁμιλίας τῆς πρὸς ἄνδρας ἐλεγχθεῖν, καθαρὰν εἶναι τὴν  
προσκομιζομένην τῇ θεῷ, καθάπερ οὖν καὶ τὸν <τῷ> Ἥλιῳ, τοῦ νόμου  
κελεύοντος, ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς τοῦ Διονύσου θυσίας ἀδιαφοροῦντος.

One thing only would aid her: if her ascent on the gridiron of which you know should prove that she is not altogether undefiled by intercourse with men; for the law commands that the offering to the goddess—as indeed the offering to Helios—be pure, but makes no distinction in the case of the sacrifice to Dionysos.

According to the letter of the law, sexual purity is required only of sacrifices to the Sun and Moon, while Dionysos accepts all victims. In practice, however,

<sup>89</sup> A reader with knowledge of Latin might be titillated by the suggestion of a pun between Meroe and *merus*.

since *all* sexually pure victims are set aside for the Sun and Moon (10.8), this means that Dionysos receives only those victims who are not *katharos*. He has an evident preference for “mixed” offerings, in keeping with his nature as god of wine.<sup>90</sup>

In this way the waters of the Nile are able to figure the various kinds of fusion exhibited on the one hand by Heliodoros’s text and on the other by the character of its heroine. At Meroe, those waters are mixed in two senses, one of which, the confluence of tributaries, figures the novel’s intertextual strategy and Kharikleia’s complex patrimony, while the other, represented by the cult of Dionysos, corresponds to the impending marriage. Kharikleia’s marriage to Theagenes will repeat and bring social recognition to the fusion of Greek and Ethiopian that defines her identity. It is the synchronic, social reality of union in marriage that ultimately puts a point on Heliodoros’s elaborate reflections on hybridity, including the hybridity of his own text. Identity is formulated first of all in diachronic, genetic terms, but the question of Kharikleia’s paternity is never fully resolved; it is rather sublimated in the imperative to marry, which is a social rather than a genetic reality. By the same logic, when it comes to the “paternity” of the novel, Heliodoros would seem, like Stephen Nimis, to warn us away from genetic questions. Such questions are ultimately less meaningful than the immediate reality of the reader’s experience of a text.

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<sup>90</sup> In actual cult practice, however, Dionysos could receive wineless libations (*nêphalia*): see Henrichs 1983: 97 and Plut. *Tuend. san. praec.* 132e. I am grateful to Albert Henrichs for this reference.

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