Charikleia in Context.

Maguire, Sarah Louise

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by

Sarah Louise Maguire

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ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

Summary of *Charikleia in Context*

This is a full-length study of Charikleia, the heroine of Heliodoros' *Aithiopika.* I set Charikleia in both her literary and cultural/ historical context. The thesis is divided into three chapters.

In the first chapter, I discuss Charikleia within the genre of the Greek novel.

The second chapter focuses on the issue of virginity and looks at the relationship between the *Aithiopika* and early Christian literature, in particular, the *Acts of Paul and Thekla.*

The final chapter focuses on the issue of women and education and considers the literary evidence regarding women philosophers.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in canditature for any degree.

Sarah Maguire

29.09.05

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Sarah Maguire 29.09.05

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Sarah Maguire 29.09.05

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Preface

This thesis had its germination in my MA dissertation, which looked at representations of gender in Longus and Achilleus Tatios. During that period of research, works such as Goldhill's *Foucault's Virginity,* Konstan's *Sexual Symmetry* and of course Foucault's seminal studies; *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self* stimulated my interest in concepts of the individual in the first four centuries CE. In particular, I wanted to explore whether and to what extent the increased focus on the individual and the interior life, which these works traced, were applied to women. The Greek romantic novel with its assertive heroines who always end the novel with the prospect of a happy marriage with the man they love, seemed an obvious focal point for my research into the presentation of women as individual human beings. As arguably, the most individualised and independently minded of the novelistic heroines, Charikleia, the heroine of the *Aithiopika* who first refused marriage altogether and finally in the face of the wishes of two fathers, adoptive and natural, marries the man of her choice, seemed the ideal focus of my study.

In particular, I was intrigued by the presentation of a virtuous young girl who educated and equipped with rhetorical skills by her doting stepfather, then used this training to argue unanswerably that she knew better than he how she should live her life. Did such wilfulness on the part of a positively portrayed female protagonist have any precedent in pagan literature? What if any relation did Charikleia's choice of lifelong virginity have to similar choices being made by Christian women in life and literature around the time of the novel's first appearance? Would Heliodoros' readers (presumably Pagan?) have made the connection between Charikleia's virginity and that of contemporary Christian women?

I have assumed a fourth century dating for the *Aithiopika*,[1] thus I see it as being read within a context in which the pagan elite felt themselves increasingly under threat in the post Julian years when Christianity became increasingly the dominant, state sanctioned ideology. It was also a time in which many pagans and Christians alike responded with shock and dismay to what were perceived as the excessive asceticism of young aristocratic Christians who were seemingly rejecting all the values of family, property and state long held dear in Greco-Roman society.

Behind my focus on Charikleia lies a central question; in what kind of ways were women accorded or acknowledged intrinsic value as individuals whether within or outside their long-prescribed roles as daughters, wives and mothers?

In framing this question within the context of a literary study, it became clear that of course the people who were to have done the according and acknowledging were the elite men who produced literary texts, aimed mostly at other elite men and shared also by a handful of privileged women[2]. Thus this study takes place necessarily within narrow perimeters. It does not claim to bring to light the real lives and choices of real women, rather it aims at exploring male literary representations of women. Heliodoros' fictional heroine Charikleia and the Makrina invoked by Gregory of Nyssa in his laudation of his own sister are both in a sense, male literary constructs. Their notable qualities and characteristics are those that the author chose to acknowledge and emphasise for his particular purposes and audience. By deconstructing the female protagonist we may achieve some progress in discerning what the author's purposes might be and what sort of readership he envisaged. In this way, we may indeed find our way to drawing some inferences about the kind of choices and opportunities that actually were available to a few women and how

[1] Morgan 1996 417-421 for dating of Hld.

literary discourse may have shaped their self perception as women, in particular, with regard to their role in society and the family and the extent to which this harmonised or came into conflict with their perceived needs as an individual. This brings us to the second important limitation of this study. Writers of the first four centuries CE who were almost exclusively male and upper class pursued certain questions about how women's lives were best conducted; did education make a woman a better wife and mother? Conversely, was it not better for a woman to reject marriage and motherhood altogether for the sake of her immortal soul? Insofar as upper class men considered these questions, it was with regard to upper class women, their wives and daughters. Some elite women would have had access to these texts themselves and others may well have had their digested contents relayed to them by their pedagogically inclined menfolk. The likelihood of any woman outside the privileged classes having any access to Plutarch, Heliodoros or Gregory of Nyssa is negligible. Thus the area our study covers is the literary representation of elite women by elite men.

Within these perimeters, I hope to have provided some new insights into the characterisation of Charikleia, both through a detailed examination of what we are told about her and through setting our findings within the context of some of the discourses about women with which Heliodoros' initial audience would have been familiar. More broadly, I hope to have illustrated some of the themes and continuities that informed writing about women across the pagan – Christian divide of Greek literature.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to express my gratitude to some of the many people who have supported, helped and inspired me throughout the elephantine gestation of this thesis.

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[2] Bowie 1994 435-59

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr John Morgan for his support and encouragement and many illuminating and enjoyable discussions in tutorials throughout the years. I would also like to thank fellow research students in the Classics Department at Swansea University for many interesting conversations and sharing of ideas around the subjects of gender and the Greek novel.

I would like to acknowledge all my family and friends for their encouragement and for simply bearing with me throughout these years of study. In particular I would like to acknowledge the support and generosity of my mother without whom (in more ways than the obvious) this work could not have been completed. Similarly, I would like to thank my boyfriend Gwilym and also his parents David and Marguerite for their unfailing hospitality and kindness whenever I have needed a place to stay in Swansea.

Note on Translations

For all ancient authors, unless otherwise stated, I have used the translations cited in my bibliography under 'Primary Sources'. Where more than one translation is referred to, I have asterisked the translation actually quoted.

Introduction

This full-length study of Charikleia is divided into three chapters, in which I explore different aspects of her characterisation and then attempt to set her within her cultural and literary context. The literary context is wide ranging, covering not only texts roughly contemporaneous with Heliodoros and his readers but also the Hellenic literary canon on which they would have been brought up and which would have been an almost unconscious frame of reference for them. Thus the *Odyssey* and Euripides' *Hippolytos* are at least as relevant as for example, Porphyrios or Philostratos.

In Chapter One, I place Charikleia within her generic context with the idea of perceiving more clearly which aspects of her characterisation were attributable to generic convention with regard to the heroines of romantic novels. Aspects of her story and characterisation which were shown up to be not specific to novelistic heroines would thus become apparent and invite us to look for her generic forbears further afield.

It transpired that Charikleia had indeed much in common with the other generic heroines, in particular with Leukippe and Anthia. With courage, ingenuity and eloquence she successfully defended her chastity from a series of sexual predators. Like Leukippe, she rebuffed her chosen lover's attempts at anticipating the marriage bed. Her travels across the Mediterranean ended with her safely reaching the land of her birth and then embarking on marriage with her beloved, with her parents' blessing. In outline then, Charikleia's character and story were generically typical, more so in fact than for example Kallirhoe who took a second husband or Chloe who never consciously extricated herself from the attentions of an unwanted suitor but was always saved either through luck or the agency of others.

There were however two central aspects to Charikleia which I deemed worthy of

further investigation. They are addressed in turn in the second and third chapters. These two special aspects of Charikleia are encapsulated in one passage to which we will be returning throughout this study.

> "Yet, for all her qualities, she is, for me the source of a pain that will not heal. You see, she has renounced marriage and is resolved to stay a virgin all her life; she has dedicated herself to the sacred service of Artemis and spends most of her time hunting and practising archery. Life is a torment to me: I had hoped to marry her to my sister's son, a pleasant young man with nice manners and a civil tongue, but his hopes have been thwarted by her cruel decision. I have tried soft words, promises, and reasoned arguments to persuade her, but all to no avail. But the worst part is that I am, as the saying goes, hoist with my own petard: she makes great play with that subtlety in argument whose various forms I taught her as a basis for choosing the best way of life. Virginity is her god, and she has elevated it to the level of the immortals, pronouncing it without stain, without impurity, without corruption. But Eros and Aphrodite and all nuptial revelry she curses to damnation."
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> "Ἀλλ' αὕτη τοιαύτη τις οὖσα λυπεῖ με λύπην ἀνίατον· ἀπηγόρευται γὰρ αὐτῇ γάμος καὶ παρθενεύειν τὸν πάντα βίον διατείνεται καὶ τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι ζάκορον ἑαυτὴν ἐπιδοῦσα θήραις τὰ πολλὰ σχολάζει καὶ ἀσκεῖ τοξείαν. Ἐμοὶ δέ ἐστιν ὁ βίος ἀφόρητος ἐλπίσαντι μὲν ἀδελφῆς ἐμαυτοῦ παιδὶ ταύτην ἐκδώσειν καὶ μάλα γε ἀστείῳ καὶ χαρίεντι λόγον τε καὶ ἦθος νεανίσκῳ, ἀποτυγχάνοντι δὲ διὰ τὴν ταύτης ἀπηνῆ κρίσιν. Οὔτε γὰρ θεραπεύων οὔτε ἐπαγγελλόμενος οὔτε λογισμοὺς ἀνακινῶν πεῖσαι δεδύνημαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ χαλεπώτατον τοῖς ἐμοῖς, τὸ τοῦ λόγου, κατ' ἐμοῦ κέχρηται πτεροῖς καὶ τὴν ἐκ λόγων πολυπειρίαν, ἣν ποικίλην ἐδιδαξάμην πρὸς κατασκευὴν τοῦ τὸν ἄριστον ᾑρῆσθαι βίον, ἐπανατείνεται ἐκθειάζουσα μὲν παρθενίαν καὶ ἐγγὺς ἀθανάτων ἀποφαίνουσα, ἄχραντον καὶ ἀκήρατον καὶ ἀδιάφθορον ὀνομάζουσα, Ἔρωτα δὲ καὶ Ἀφροδίτην καὶ πάντα γαμήλιον θίασον ἀποσκορακίζουσα.[3]"

As we discover from the anguished appeal of Charikles to Kalasiris, Charikleia does not initially merely display the concern for her chastity proper to a novelistic heroine, in other words a determination to remain a virgin until joined in lawful matrimony to her beloved. Charikleia is determined to remain a virgin forever. This seems to be motivated by more than culturally appropriate girlish reticence. It does not appear to

be in any way essential to the plot. In Greco-Roman pagan culture, for a young girl not to marry and bear children was simply a tragedy, not a lifestyle choice. What meaning then could a girl who firmly believed that marriage was not the best choice for her have for Heliodoros and his readers?

Our second of the three sections then, is focused upon virginity and is divided roughly into two parts. In the first part, we look at some pagan treatments of the idea of lifelong celibacy. It begins by following the trail left by Charikles' mention of Charikleia's dedication to Artemis and his description of her days spent hunting and practising archery. Charikleia is of course formally dedicated to Artemis in that she serves as acolyte at her shrine. Is this why she will not marry? Pausanias provides us with various examples and anecdotes of virginal priestesses. Cases in which those priestesses are, like Charikleia, abducted from their shrines turn out to be intriguingly frequent.

The description of Charikleia's sylvan activities also evokes the nymphs of mythology who follow Artemis in a virginal woodland existence. It also leads us to Euripides' *Hippolytos,* the more so as the central narrative pattern of the *Hippolytos* (a woman tormented by love for an unobtainable man attempts to harm him, her wickedness is uncovered and she commits suicide.) forms a leitmotif throughout the *Aithiopika*. For both woodland nymphs and for Hippolytos, life without marriage turns out to be an unhappy experiment. The nymphs are generally seduced or more often raped, then metamorphosed or killed. Ocasionally they escape rape with permanent metamorphosis as the price. Hippolytos' chastity and contempt for love arouses the ire of Aphrodite and results in his meeting a messy end. The classical Greek response to the idea of permanent virginity seems to be summed up with the conclusion that it is

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[3] Hld 2.33

neither desirable nor practicable. Aphrodite must be acknowledged. Charikleia learns this through a rather kinder lesson when she falls passionately in love and her love is reciprocated.

Charikleia's correspondences with Artemis' ill fated followers of mythology assimilates her story to that of the traditional pagan tale which illustrated the inevitability of marriage in the face of the fear and regret that might accompany such a decisive rite of passage. Her exclusive devotion to Artemis is shown to be misguided and impossible and she happily embraces Eros and marriage.

This however still leaves certain questions unanswered. Whence come these mysterious and unanswerable justifications for lifelong virginity? Why has Heliodoros given us a heroine who does not shrink from Eros because she is merely timid or proud but because she has deeply thought out reasons for doing so, in the face of which her foster father is driven to desperation?

In the second half of Chapter Two, we make something of a conceptual leap from pagan mythology to the Christian asceticism of the second to the fourth centuries CE. I presume that whether or not Heliodoros ever became a bishop, he would not have been entirely ignorant of the thought world or literature of his Christian contemporaries. Within the Christian literature and ideology of that time the scenario of a woman driving her parents or husband to despair by their rejection of marriage was both a powerful propaganda tool and also a source of anxiety.

As is now well established, the genre of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles employs many of the standard tropes of Greek romantic fiction such as travel, shipwreck, dangerous men in positions of power and strong and assertive heroines. It does so only to invert the values implicit in these fictions. Marriage and social status are triumphantly thrown away: death is embraced. The most prominent of these ascetic

Christian heroines is Thekla who in the Apocryphal Acts of Paul usurps the narrative focus from its eponymous hero for a large section of the text. That this narrative contains an episode in which Thekla is sentenced to burn only for the flames to miraculously fail to harm her at once alerted me to the parallel scene in the *Aithiopika* and prompted me to explore the relationship between the two narratives further. I found that the stories shared elements to a degree that had not hitherto been traced and that this raised the possibility that there existed a direct relationship between the texts. If the second century *Acts of Paul and Thekla* could not be based on the fourth (or even third) century *Aithiopika*, then it would seem that Heliodoros must have in part based a pagan romantic novel on a Christian text in praise of virginity! Could Heliodoros be attempting to re-reverse romance[4]?

In our final chapter, we return to the pagan world and once again to the passage quoted above. Whatever Charikleia's arguments in favour of virginity were, they were such that Charikles could not answer them. This was not as we have seen, neccesarily because Charikleia was right but because she was so good at arguing. She was so good at arguing because her stepfather had given her a through education, which seems to have given her the skills of a sophist. This, apparently, was intended to equip her to lead a good life.

Why had Heliodoros chosen to give his heroine such an advanced education? Even if there were perceived benefits to educating a girl, surely she was not expected to employ her learning as a weapon against parental authority? In this third chapter I look at ideas about women and education from Plato onwards. I also look at surviving mentions of distinguished, educated pagan women with which Heliodoros and his contemporaries might be expected to be familiar; from Pythagoras' wife Theano to

[4] See Aubin 1998

the near contemporary Sosipatra.

I thus hope that our careful examination of the portrait of Charikleia will allow us to uncover other, differing portraits of women, historical and entirely fictional, from Homer to Eunapios who all lent a little of their likeness to make up our heroine.

Chapter One

Charikleia as Novelistic Heroine

Introduction:

Charikleia is the heroine of a novel, which, with its sheer bulk, its complex narrative structure and its moral and religious preoccupations, transcends the other surviving members of the genre of romantic Greek fiction in terms of literary ambition and breadth of vision. At the same time however, the *Aithiopika* and its heroine are clearly rooted in the conventions of the ancient novel. This is made apparent by its basic plot outline, which centres on the love of a young man and woman of noble birth. The beautiful young couple endure many trials and challenges to their relationship and they emerge triumphantly at the novel's end with a happy marriage implicitly ahead of them. Like the other four novels, the *Aithiopika* also includes the plot elements of shipwreck, marauding pirates and brigands, and the potential threat of rivals for the affections of the heroine and hero.

In this chapter, I will compare Heliodoros' treatment of some common elements which the *Aithiopika* shares with the other novels, and draw out significant similarities and differences which emerge. My focus throughout will be on the *Ephesiaka* and *Leukippe and Kleitophon* much more than on *Kallirhoe* or *Daphnis and Chloe* for reasons which I will make clear.

The next stage will involve a more detailed comparison of Charikleia with both Leukippe and Anthia, the two heroines with whom she appears to have most in common, in terms of shared elements and themes in their stories and in terms of characterisation and behaviour. I will be contrasting how each author presents his heroine in the context of parallel situations, discussing, for example, the very different

impressions one gains of the characterisation of Leukippe and Charikleia when reading their respective scenes of elopement followed by each heroine's extraction of an agreement from their lovers to respect their chastity. This will lead on to the question of whether strong resonance between the three texts can lead one reasonably to conclude that the *Aithiopika* may have been directly influenced by either or both of the other novels and drawing out the implications of such a conclusion.

Finally I will make some indications of those aspects of Charikleia and her story which emerge as differing significantly from or transcending the norms of plot, characterisation and general scope of the other novels. I will then suggest alternative non-novelistic texts which seem to have influenced the *Aithiopika* and indicate where an intertextual relationship can be seen to exist between them. An example of this would be the way in which the *Aithiopika* recalls the *Odyssey* both in terms of narrative structure and direct allusion. These comparisons will prepare the ground for the consideration of influences on Heliodoros from outside the novelistic genre, which will be a central element of the two succeeding chapters.

1.1 Why the Closest Comparisons can be made between the Heroines Leukippe, Anthia and Charikleia

I will begin by explaining why I have decided to concentrate on only two of the other novels for my comparison with the *Aithiopika.*

Of the five extant Greek "romances"; the heroines of the *Ephesiaka*, the *Aithiopika* and *Leukippe and Kleitophon* can be classified as conforming to a basic pattern. All three girls set off on a journey with their lovers, in the course of which, they face many perils and hardships with courage and ingenuity. These always involve the unwanted attentions of men whom they encounter along the way and

whom they evade or rebuff by various strategies but invariably with success. By the end of their respective novels, Charikleia and Leukippe are both demonstrated to have retained their virginity and Anthia can proudly inform her husband that she returns to him after their enforced separation, untouched by any other man. *Leukippe and Kleitophon* and the *Aithiopika*, share the additional issue of the heroine having eloped with the hero and travelling with him unmarried. In both cases the heroine must impose the damage limitation of ensuring that their relationship with their lovers remains unconsummated until it can be acknowledged and solemnised in reconciliation with their parents.

Both *Kallirhoe* and *Daphnis and Chloe* are highly individualised deviations from this trend. The courage and ingenuity of the heroines in preserving their virginity throughout a series of potentially compromising situations is not a central theme of these narratives. In the case of *Kallirhoe,* this is because the heroine takes the unparalleled step of accepting a second partner for the sake of her unborn child and although she undertakes extensive travels and encounters further unwanted suitors, her power lies in the reactions her beauty provokes in others rather than cleverness and self-assertion[5]. At the beginning of the story, Kallirhoe is thrown upon her own resources as she is separated from her beloved husband Chaireas. In so far as the hero and heroine each have separate starting points for their travels and only catch up with each other towards the end of their respective adventures, *Kallirhoe* differs significantly from *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, the *Ephesiaka* and the *Aithiopika*. In each of these the hero and heroine set out on their adventures together and to a degree share them, although they become separated at various stages later.

Kallirhoe like the *Ephesiaka* begins with the first meeting quickly followed by

the marriage of the hero and heroine[6]. Following this however, the two are separated with one in pursuit of the other until they are finally reunited at the end of the book. In an episode startlingly at variance with the usual portrayal of the relationships of hero and heroine in the other surviving novels, this separation is brought about through Chaireas having seemingly killed Kallirhoe by kicking her in the stomach on the mere suspicion of adultery. Chaireas, having discovered that he killed his wife in error, addresses the court with eloquent self reproaches and demands that the ultimate penalty be inflicted upon him[7]. The court, however, realising that Chaireas acted as he did because he was tricked into believing in Kallirhoe's infidelity, decides to acquit him. One wonders whether Chariton or his first readers saw any irony in the swiftness with which at the sight of Chaireas' display of remorse;

"...everyone forgot the dead woman and mourned the living man.[8]"

"...πάντες ἀφέντες τὴν νεκρὰν τὸν ζῶντα ἐπένθουν."

Chaireas' ready acquittal once it is understood that he kicked Kallirhoe while under the misapprehension that she was unfaithful suggests that, had she been found to have indeed been guilty of adultery, little blame would have attached to him for his apparently fatal assault upon her. This adds an ironic piquancy to the fact of Kallirhoe's later acceptance of a bigamous marriage as her only recourse as a direct result of Chaireas' assault on her and of Chaireas being obliged to absolve his wife from blame for making this choice. Having been abducted alive from her tomb by grave robbers, Kallirhoe finds herself pregnant, enslaved and far from home. In her

[5] Haynes 2003 46-51, Johne 1996179-181, Egger 1994 31-48. See however Kaimo 1995 119-132 for a reading which emphasises the survival skills of Kallirhoe.
[6] First meeting and marriage both occur at Char.1.1
[7] Char.1.5
[8] Char.1.5

desperate situation, she consents to live as the wife of the rich gentleman Dionysios and passes off her child by Chaireas as his. Her agonised and unprecedented decision to deviate from the conventional moral code is the central focus for her story. At the end of the novel, she and Chaireas are joyfully reunited.

As the only example of sexual infidelity on the part of the heroine, Kallirhoe constitutes a major exception to the generic norms in which the woman's chastity is treated as sacrosanct. This episode is used to support Konstan's theory that the ideology implicit in the novelistic genre privileges emotional loyalty to a partner over sexual fidelity[9]. He draws parallels between Kallirhoe's marriage to Dionysios, Habrokomes' readiness to yield to Kyno, Kleitophon's infidelity with Melite and Daphnis' encounter with Lykainion. The sole female parallel for Kallirhoe's infidelity is the secret kiss bestowed by the guileless Chloe upon the dying Dorkon. While it can be argued that this amounts to a degree of infidelity, it is hardly equivalent to an act of sexual intercourse let alone the taking of a second husband. In none of these cases, Konstan argues, can the actual or projected physical infidelity of the protagonist be understood as a rejection or betrayal of the primary relationship, and thus sexual fidelity as such is not a primary concern of the novelistic genre. It is surely significant, however, that the other two concrete examples of sexual infidelity within the primary couple both involve the male partner, while the equivalent behaviour on the part of the heroine is elsewhere always presented as unthinkable. Daphnis can receive practical instruction in sexual matters[10]; Chloe must be carefully preserved in purity and ignorance until her wedding night at the end of the novel. Kleitophon gives way to Melite's blandishments while Leukippe holds out desperately against brutality and

[9] Konstan 1994 48-55
[10] Long. 3.18

threats of torture[11]. On the other hand, Anthia attempts suicide at the last minute, rather than go through with marriage to Perilaos, who is not presented in a particularly bad light, because she feels that to marry another would be an unforgivable betrayal of Habrokomes[12]. At this point, she believes Habrokomes to be dead, having left him perforce confined in a dungeon and subjected to torture. It is true, as Konstan points out,[13] that Anthia was initially prepared to go through with the wedding as she feared that she was otherwise liable to be forced and therefore had no other option. Nonetheless her final decision, which she carried out to the best of her ability, was to commit suicide. This decision was based solely on the perceived wrongness of accepting a second marriage. By contrast, Habrokomes flees from the monstrous Kyno, whom he had consented to marry however unwillingly, only when she murders her husband. It was the pollution of murder he finally found unendurable, not the prospect of a second marriage[14].

These examples indicate that, while it may well be that the story of Kallirhoe is intended to illustrate the point of *amor vincit omnia,* it does so with a deliberately extreme example. In general, the morality of the novelistic genre echoes the morality of its contemporary, upper-class readers. This dictated that sex outside marriage was entirely unacceptable for respectable women and would result in disgrace and an irreparable loss of status and respect. While it might be desirable for men to remain faithful to their wives, it was acknowledged that men might stray from time to time and that wives should accept this or better still never know.

An illustration of this code of double standards can be found in Plutarch's *Advice On Marriage,* a text which we will be discussing in detail later on. In his

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[11] Ach.Tat. 6.18-22 and 5.27
[12] Xen. Eph. 3.5
[13] Konstan 1994 50
[14] Xen. Eph. 3.12.4-5, see also Konstan 1994: 49, Haynes 2003 55

advice to a newly wedded couple he exhorts the groom to avoid upsetting his wife with extramarital affairs[15] while at the same time the bride is counselled to tolerate such regrettable behaviour on the part of her husband if it should occur[16]. There is no suggestion that the husband should show similar forbearance towards his straying wife and indeed the possibility of infidelity on the part of the wife is scarcely directly alluded to. The double standard was also enshrined in Roman law. In accordance with Augustan marriage legislation, a man could actually be prosecuted if he failed to divorce his wife when he could be shown to have been aware of her infidelity. While a wife could divorce her husband for infidelity or any other reason if she had the support of her family, she was under no obligation to do so[17].

Kallirhoe, after some agonising, comes to the conclusion that accepting marriage to Dionysios is the right thing to do in order to ensure the survival of the son she will bear to Chaireas. In that sense her action could be seen as a means of actually preserving her bond with Chaireas and indeed her dream convinces her that she is acting as Chaireas would have wished.

> "μαρτύρομαί σε, Χαιρέα, σύ με Διονυσίῳ νυμφαγωγεῖς."
> "I call you to witness Chaireas; it is you who give me in marriage to Dionysios."[18].

The fact, however, that she does not successfully resist pressures to accept a second sexual partner means that the novel is animated by a quite different dynamic from that of the *Ephesiaka*, *Leukippe and Kleitophon* or the *Aithiopika,* in which the ability and determination of the heroine to preserve her chastity under threat provides a driving motif.

In *Daphnis and Chloe* the protection of the heroine's chastity is also a central

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[15] e.g. *Advice On Marriage*, 43,
[16] e.g. *Advice On Marriage* 16, 41
[17] See e.g. Pomeroy 1975: 159

theme but with the difference that it is not Chloe herself who takes responsibility for this. It is to the consideration of the characterisation of Chloe that we shall now turn.

The presentation of Chloe is exceptional for two reasons. Firstly, the narrative is concerned with her internal development towards maturity rather than her actions in the face of the kind of adventures encountered by the other heroines. Secondly, Chloe's lack of awareness in sexual matters means that she is never faced with the kind of choices or challenges which are central to consideration of the characterisation of Charikleia or any of the other heroines. Chloe differs from the generic norm in that she is never presented as consciously confronting a sexual predator. She is always saved either by luck or through the agency of others, never through her own initiative. This is due in part to the basic premise of the novel, which is that Daphnis and Chloe begin their relationship with no received knowledge of sexuality. In the course of the novel however, Daphnis acquires better understanding of such matters through practical demonstration[19] while Chloe remains innocent until the novel closes with their wedding night[20]. A typical example of Chloe's lack of awareness of the possibility of sexual threat is the episode in which the cowherd Dorkon disguises himself in a wolf skin with the intention of raping Chloe (although the disguise seems more effective on a psychological level than to serve any practical purpose). The sheepdogs mistake him for a real wolf and set about him, ripping off his wolf skin and revealing his disguise. Neither Daphnis nor Chloe understands the malevolence of his intentions and, believing him to have been attempting some harmless practical joke, sympathetically tend his wounds[21]. However, when Chloe is carried off by Lampis and his band towards the novel's close, the anguished Daphnis is all too aware of what

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[18] Char. 2.11.3
[19] Long. 3.18
[20] Long. 4.40
[21] Long. 1.21

is likely to happen to her;

"...at night he will sleep with her"[22]

"νυκτὸς δὲ γενομένης συγκοιμήσεται."

But we are not made privy to Chloe's response to her abduction or awareness of its implications, nor does she play any part in her own rescue[23]. In an earlier episode, Chloe is captured and taken to out to sea by marauders from Methymna[24]. After an initial attempt to run away and a vain appeal to her pursuers to respect the sanctity of the Nymphs' grotto where they have run her to ground[25], Chloe is throughout this episode an entirely passive figure. We are not even told what her feelings are. She is scarcely differentiated from the flocks and herds taken with her. Daphnis, in the course of his lamenting seems to regard the abduction of his girlfriend and the loss of his livestock as almost equivalent afflictions[26]. It is Pan himself who comes to her rescue, in answer to Daphnis' prayers. He causes her captors to be terrified by strange phenomena and threatens them with shipwreck and death unless they restore her[27]. While the other novelistic heroines are sometimes saved by the intervention of others, human or divine (though not directly by the hero) Chloe is the only one who never actively saves herself. This of course could be counterbalanced by the fact that in the first book of the novel she comes to the rescue of Daphnis on two occasions.

On the first occasion she employs her breast band to haul Daphnis out of a wolf-pit (with Dorkon's help)[28]. On the second occasion when Daphnis is being carried off by cattle raiding pirates, Chloe plays the magic pipes given to her by Dorkon, causing the cows on the ship to leap overboard, thus capsizing the vessel and

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[22] Long. 4.28
[23] Long. 4.29
[24] Long. 2.20-30
[25] Long. 2.20
[26] Long. 2.22
[27] Long. 2.27-8

allowing Daphnis to swim to freedom[29]. In effecting even these small scale and rustic rescues, Chloe relies on outside male help. Although she displays quick thinking and resourcefulness in coming to Daphnis' aid, these incidents do not obviously require a display of heroism such as is required of Anthia, Leukippe or Charikleia. Thus neither in saving herself nor in coming to the help of Daphnis does Chloe ever manifest qualities which are key to the characterisation of the above heroines.

In addition to the challenge of repelling the unwanted advances of strangers, the three heroines who are unmarried throughout the novel - Chloe, Leukippe and Charikleia - must also succeed in preserving their virginity from the ardour of their lovers, until they are joined in matrimony at the novel's end. Chloe again constitutes an exception. It is essential that Chloe, despite her ignorance of sexuality and social convention, manages to remain a virgin until her marriage, as is indicated when Daphnis' new found father discreetly takes his son aside to question him as to the probity of his chosen bride[30]. As she is unconscious of the importance of preserving her chastity, being unaware of the nature of or conventions surrounding penetrative sex, it is the more aware Daphnis who unilaterally makes the decision to restrain himself from taking Chloe's virginity until they are married[31]. It is true of course that Daphnis himself is not aware of the social implications of Chloe's loss of virginity. He refrains from intercourse with her after Lykainion's warning that Chloe would be hurt by penetration[32]. Nonetheless, it is Daphnis who becomes equipped with knowledge (of the mechanics of sex) which he chooses to withhold from Chloe "for her own good". In great contrast to Charikleia's highly self-aware commitment to chastity or to Leukippe's more ambiguously shifting attitudes (both of which will be

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[28] Long. 1.11
[29] Long. 1.28-30
[30] Long. 4.31
[31] Long. 3.24

explored below), Chloe; a Victorian maiden before her time, is freed from the temptation of pre-marital sex with her partner by being kept in ignorance of what sex is. For the reasons outlined above, I will be drawing primarily on the *Ephesiaka* and *Leukippe and Kleitophon* for the more detailed comparisons with the presentation of Charikleia which follow.

1.2 Similarities between the *Ephesiaka* and the *Aithiopika*

The *Ephesiaka* is notorious as the representative of the genre at its weakest: even its most recent translator, in the era of the rehabilitation of the novel as literature, does not feel able to make exalted claims for this specimen;

> "...scholars have readily succumbed to the temptation of bombarding it with uncomplimentary adjectives: crude, clumsy, simplistic, cliché-ridden. It is undoubtedly all of these."[33]

It seems paradoxical, therefore, that the *Ephesiaka* is the novel which in terms of plot, characterisation and various elements and details of description seems to have lent much to the *Aithiopika*, which is generally acknowledged as the Greek novel at its most sophisticated. It is of course possible that Heliodoros knew an amplified and perhaps thus less crude and clumsy a version of the *Ephesiaka* than we have today.[34]

As a starting point, close comparisons can be drawn between the respective scenes in which Anthia and Charikleia first set eyes on their beloveds. In both cases, the couple meets during a religious festival involving processions of maidens and youths. The hero and heroine are in each instance universally acknowledged as surpassing all others in beauty.

"Anthia led the line of girls. . .Anthia's beauty was an object of wonder, far

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[32] Winkler 1990
[33] Anderson, 1989 126
[34] It has often been suggested that what we have is merely an epitome e.g. Anderson 1989126

surpassing the other girls. . .But when Habrokomes came in turn with the Ephebes, then although the spectacle of the women had been a lovely sight, everyone forgot about them and transferred their gaze to him and were smitten at the sight. ""Handsome Habrokomes!"" they exclaimed. ""Incomparable image of a handsome god!"" Already some added, ""What a match Habrokomes and Anthia would make! ""
ἦρχε δὲ τῆς τῶν παρθένων τάξεως Ἀνθία...Ἦν δὲ τὸ κάλλος τῆς Ἀνθίας οἷον θαυμάσαι καὶ πολὺ τὰς ἄλλας ὑπερβάλλετο παρθένους...ὡς δὲ Ἀβροκόμης μετὰ τῶν ἐφήβων ἐπέστη, τοὐνθένδε, καίτοι καλοῦ ὄντος τοῦ κατὰ τὰς παρθένους θεάματος, πάντες ἰδόντες Ἀβροκόμην ἐκείνων ἐπελάθοντο, ἔτρεψαν δὲ τὰς ὄψεις ἐπ' αὐτόν βοῶντες ὑπὸ τῆς θέας ἐκπεπληγμένοι, "καλὸς Ἀβροκόμης" λέγοντες, "και οἷος οὐδὲ εἷς καλοῦ μίμημα θεοῦ." Ἤδη δέ τινες καὶ τοῦτο προσέθεσαν "οἷος ἄν γάμος γένοιτο Ἀβροκόμου καὶ Ἀνθίας". [35]

Xenophon's suggestion that the attention of the crowd might be attracted more strongly by male beauty than female is interestingly juxtaposed with the words of Heliodoros in the scene that corresponds with this one. This is perhaps an indication of a change in perspective over the intervening centuries of their respective composition.

"The sight [of Theagenes] took everyone's breath away, and they all awarded the young man the prize for youth and beauty... when from the Temple of Artemis rode forth my wise and beautiful Charikleia, then we realised that even Theagenes could be eclipsed, but eclipsed only in such measure as perfect female beauty is lovelier than the fairest of men[36]" .
"ἐξέπληττε μὲν δὴ καὶ πάντας τὰ ὁρώμενα, καὶ τὴν νικητήριον ἀνδρείας τε καὶ κάλλους ψῆφον τῷ νεανίᾳ πάντες ἀπένεμον. ...ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῦ νεὼ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἐξήλασεν ἡ καλὴ καὶ σοφὴ Χαρίκλεια, τότε ὅτι καὶ Θεαγένην ἡττηθῆναί ποτε δυνατὸν ἔγνωμεν, ἀλλ' ἡττηθῆναι τοσοῦτον ὅσον ἀκραιφνὲς γυναικεῖον κάλλος τοῦ πρώτου παρ' ἀνδράσιν ἐπαγνωγότερον.

The resemblances between the descriptions of Charikleia and Anthia as they appear in the following parallel scenes seem as strong as to suggest that Heliodoros is using Xenophon's description as the basis for the portrayal of his own heroine.

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[35] Xen. Eph.1.2.
[36] Hld.3.3.8 ff.

"Her hair was golden-a little of it plaited, but most hanging loose and blowing in the wind. Her eyes were quick; she had the bright glance of a young girl, and yet the austere look of a virgin. She wore a purple tunic hanging down to the knee, fastened with a girdle and falling loose over her arms, with a fawn skin over it, a quiver attached and arrows for weapons; she carried javelins and was followed by dogs. Often as they saw her in the sacred enclosure the Ephesians would worship her as Artemis."

κόμη ξανθή, ἡ πολλὴ καθειμένη, ὀλίγη πεπλεγμένη, πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀνέμων φορὰν κινουμένη· ὀφθαλμοὶ γοργοί, φαιδροὶ μὲν ὡς κόρης, φοβεροὶ δὲ ὡς
σώφρονος· ἐσθὴς χιτὼν ἁλουργής, ζωστὸς εἰς γόνυ, μέχρι βραχιόνων καθειμένος, νεβρὶς περικειμένη, γωρυτὸς ἀνημμένος, τόξα, ἄκοντες φερόμενοι, κύνες ἑπόμενοι. Πολλάκις αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ τεμένους ἰδόντες Ἐφέσιοι προσεκύνησαν ὡς Ἄρτεμιν.[37]

""...she was apparelled in a long purple gown embroidered with golden rays . . .Her hair was neither tightly plaited nor yet altogether loose: where it hung long down her neck, it cascaded over her back and shoulders, but on her crown and temples, where it grew in rosebud curls, golden as the sun, it was wreathed with soft shoots of bay that held it in place and prevented any unseemly blowing in the breeze. In her left hand she carried a bow of gold, the quiver was slung over her right shoulder, and in her right hand she held a lighted torch. But as she was that day the light in her eyes shone brighter than any torch.""

..χιτῶνα δὲ ἁλουργὸν ποδήρη χρυσαῖς ἀκτίσι κατάπαστον ἠμφίεστο. ...ἡ κόμη δὲ οὔτε πάντῃ διάπλοκος οὔτε ἀσύνδετος, ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν πολλὴ καὶ ὑπαυχένιος ὤμοις τε καὶ νώτοις ἐπεκύμαινε, τὴν δὲ ἀπὸ κορυφῆς καὶ ἀπὸ μετώπου δάφνης ἁπαλοὶ κλῶνες ἔστεφον, ῥοδοειδῆ τε καὶ ἡλιῶσαν διαδέοντες καὶ σοβεῖν ταῖς αὔραις ἔξω τοῦ πρέποντος οὐκ ἐφιέντες. ἔφερε δὲ τῇ λαιᾷ μὲν τόξον ἐπίχρυσον, ὑπὲρ ὠμον τὸν δεξιὸν τῆς φαρέτρας ἀπηρτημένης τῇ θατέρᾳ δὲ λαμπάδιον ἡμμένον καὶ οὕτως ἔχουσα πλέον ἀπὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν σέλας ἢ τῶν δᾴδων ἀπήυγαζεν. [38]

Much of the coincidence of detail occurring here can be attributed to their common subject matter. The quiver and bow for example, are obvious accoutrements for a representative of Artemis. This does not however explain why in both cases the description includes how the young girls had their golden hair partially plaited yet flowing loose at the back with the subtle difference that Anthia's locks are permitted

[37] Xen. Eph.1.2.6
[38] Hld.3.4.2-6

to blow in the breeze, while Charikleia's seem more constrained. The brightness of the girls' eyes is also mentioned in both texts. The actual phrasing of the two descriptions is so close that it is hard to avoid one of two conclusions; either that Xenophon and Heliodoros were both influenced by a third author or by a pictorial representation, or that the second novelist was imitating the first. Further resonances between the two texts make the latter possibility seem a not unlikely one.

In terms of correspondences in plot and incidental detail, it is notable, for example, that in both the *Ephesiaka* and the *Aithiopika* the protagonists, in the course of their adventures, take refuge with a kindly old fisherman, and spend some time living in his cottage. The episode of the fisherman of the *Ephesiaka* with whom Habrokomes takes refuge for a time involves the macabrely romantic anecdote of his mummified wife[39]. Heliodoros' fisherman has given way to no such excesses but perhaps significantly it is mentioned in passing that he too is a widower[40]. Like Habrokomes, Kalasiris and his protégés are described as accompanying the fisherman on his expeditions[41].

There are also similarities in the presentation of the ambivalent figures of Hippothoos and Thyamis. They are both bandit chieftains who have come to this way of life after falling by misfortune from an exalted background. Both Hippothoos and Thyamis end the novel having retired from banditry and having attained wealth and respectability. In the case of Hippothoos, the fall from fortune was caused by an ill-fated passion for a youth[42]. In Thyamis' case, the change in circumstance was due to his being usurped of his rightful position of high priest by his younger brother. There is perhaps something a little incongruous in the son of the virtuous sage Kalasiris,

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[39] Xen. Eph. 5.1
[40] Hld. 5.18
[41] Hld. 5.18
[42] Xen.Eph. 3.2

who has presumably been groomed for his priestly office since childhood, deciding that embarking upon a life of brigandage;

"...in the hope of gaining revenge and regaining my position"[43]
"...ᾧ τε τιμωρίαν μὲν λαβεῖν τὴν τιμὴν δὲ ἀπολαβεῖν"

is the obvious solution to his problems. He could have imitated his father in dignified exile. This mismatch in roles becomes further apparent when Thyamis carefully explains to his robber band that he certainly does not want to be awarded Charikleia as his share of the spoils, merely so that he can enjoy sex with her. He is above such common lusts and his intention is to father legitimate children on a woman who is clearly of good family and character[44].

The role of Hippothoos and Thyamis is alternately to menace and befriend the young couple. The primary heroes of both novels spend some time as close confederates of these leaders of outlaws. Theagenes plays a prominent role in Thyamis' march on Memphis to challenge Petosiris' usurpation of his priesthood. He appears at Thyamis' side and helps to arm him for single combat[45]. While we do not see Theagenes directly involved in brigandage as such, Thyamis conjures him to take over as brigand leader in the event of his own death citing his popularity among the brigands[46]. Again, there is a sense of incongruity at the thought of the pious and moralistic Theagenes in such a role. Part of the reason might be that Theagenes who, as we have discussed, has a somewhat less prominent role in the novel than Charikleia, must be allowed some elements of glory and heroism other than enduring the tortures of Arsake if he is not to appear an anodyne figure. This could also provide some explanation for his wrestling and bull-leaping feats at the novel's close. There is

[43] Hld. 1.19
[44] Hld. 1.19-20
[45] Hld. 7.3,7.5
[46] Hld. 7.5

also an indication here that the theme of brigandage as a novelistic staple has been imposed on a narrative which, although firmly based within the genre, is moving in a direction which, with its greater preoccupation with morality and religion, makes such traditional items of plot furniture seem slightly misplaced. This can be compared to the way in which *Daphnis and Chloe* includes miniaturised scenes of piracy as if to parody the generic convention, although the novel's focus on its protagonists' interior development makes such scenes somewhat superfluous[47].

The characterisation of, and stories surrounding, Habrokomes and Theagenes share further resemblances. They are both initially represented as outstandingly attractive young men who have never been interested in any woman before meeting the heroine because they have not yet met one that seemed worthy of them[48]. Once they have committed themselves to their beloveds, they both find themselves in situations along the lines of the "Potiphar's wife" theme and both indignantly refuse to bow to pressure. As a result, Habrokomes like Theagenes defiantly endures torture and imprisonment in a dark cell[49]. It is interesting that while Anthia and Charikleia expend much ingenuity in evading unwanted sexual attentions, both Habrokomes and Theagenes simply refuse to accede to the women's demands and then endure the consequences with passive courage. This difference in approach is of course partly attributable to the nature of the respective threats with which the male and female protagonists are confronted. A mere refusal offered on the part of Anthia or Charikleia to an aggressive male predator could be answered simply with rape. Not all villains could be relied upon to obligingly run away in vexation as Thersandros does when

[47] See Reardon 1976 124 for brief discussion of the tension implicit throughout the genre between the mandatory travel and adventure theme and the mandatory love interest. He sees the *Aithiopika* as essentially a "religious pilgrimage" from Delphi to Ethiopia in which romance and adventure has a lesser role.

[48] Xen. Eph. 1.1, Hld. 3.17

[49] Xen. Eph. 2.4-7 Hld. 8.6

Leukippe refuses to be cowed by his threats of torture[50]. A female sexual predator, however, requires a degree of co-operation on the part of her male victim, however much he is at her mercy. She can only make him suffer for his stubbornness. Trickery or violence on the part of Theagenes or Habrokomes against a female aggressor might also be seen as somewhat lacking in glory, so it seems they can best distinguish themselves in this situation by simply enduring the punishment inflicted upon them by the scorned women. The character of Theagenes can thus be seen as very much the descendant of Habrokomes with their shared qualities of steadfastness and a serious commitment to chastity in contrast to the glib Kleitophon or the educable Daphnis.

The *Ephesiaka* and the *Aithiopika* share a similarly austere approach to sexual morality, in particular with regard to women. The tendency in both novels is for the outstanding virtue of the heroine to be contrasted with portrayals of remarkable wickedness on the part of female rivals for the hero's affections. Thus in juxtaposition to Charikleia, we have the portrayals of Demainete, Thisbe, Arsake and Kybele[51]. These women are not only lustful and dissolute; they are cunning, cruel and murderous. In contrast to these wicked and lustful women, we may note the relatively sympathetic portrait of the flawed Knemon. As a luster after slave women and one who falls by the wayside on Charikleia's quest to Ethiopia, Knemon is clearly a lesser being than our protagonists. He is not however depicted as "evil" or deserving of death. Is this the remnant of a double standard in Heliodoros that sexual incontinence is less demonised in a man than a woman?

Anthia's heroic fidelity to Habrokomes is in contrast to the evil Manto, the

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[50] Ach.Tat. 7.1

[51] In addition to these women who play a role in the novel, a further "anti-Charikleia" can be discerned in the "off stage" character of Rhodopis (Hld. 2.25), the courtesan whose beauty is explicitly compared with that of Charikleia but whose licentiousness converts it into a destructive force, driving Kalasiris from his home. Morgan 1989 273 –285 in Swain 1999 discusses how these negative parallel images of

pirate's daughter who in her jealous fury, first because she cannot usurp Habrokomes' affections from Anthia and later because her own husband shows signs of being attracted to Anthia, goes out of her way to humiliate and then to destroy her[52]. There is also the murderous (and hideous) Kyno whose murder of her husband in order to marry Habrokomes causes the latter to flee from her in horror[53].

All these evil women of both novels suffer violent ends which are accepted as well deserved. While it is true that none of these women loses her life solely for the crime of adultery, it becomes apparent that in the worlds of the *Ephesiaka* and the *Aithiopika* sexual misconduct on the part of women is closely associated with murder and other crimes and thus the adulterous woman is deserving ultimately of death. We have also noted above how Chaireas easily won pardon from the people of Syracuse once they understood that he kicked Kallirhoe to death under the impression that she had been unfaithful. This harsh viewpoint seems a little unexpected in the context of a genre and an era which has been regarded as in a sense more pro-female than, for example, classical Athens where women are understood to have lead more secluded and anonymous existences. In classical Athens, however, women could not be killed for adultery. Their lovers could be killed if caught in the act and the woman would be divorced and sent home, a disgraced outcast. If she attempted to enter a temple or to appear in public wearing jewellery, women of unblemished reputation were allowed to beat her up though not so as to endanger her life[54]. Why then do these seemingly more liberal post-Hellenistic writers, concerned with women's choices and feelings and keen to extol their potential nobility of character show such relish in sending

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women in love set off the virtue of Charikleia and the pure and disinterested nature of the love she and Theagenes share.

[52] Xen. Eph. 2.9, 2.11

[53] Xen. Eph. 3.12

[54] See Pomeroy 1975 86. See also van Bremen 1995 for account of women's participation in civic life in Asia Minor in the first three centuries CE.

"bad" women to horrible deaths[55]?

Part of the reason for the contrast must be that a higher opinion of women's capacity to make personal choices and take responsibility for their conduct would lead to greater opprobrium being attached to those women who did not reach the required standards. The legal status of women in classical Athens presumed them to lack the capacity to make important decisions for themselves[56]. They could not, for example, engage in any monetary transaction above a certain sum without consent from their guardians. An adulterous woman's life was spared in classical Athens partly at least because she was regarded as a person of childlike capacity who had been lead astray. Perhaps her husband or father was at fault for not watching over her sufficiently. In the context of the novelistic genre, by contrast, in which the heroine is frequently thrown upon her own resources in the world, often without a male protector and who defends her virtue through her own wit and determination, such inherent womanly weakness would not work as a defence.

The world of the novel, despite often being set in the classical period, in fact reflects a contemporary milieu in which women had become much more socially visible in mixed settings and often lived more independent lives. Epigraphic evidence suggests that Hellenistic and Imperial women were increasingly able to manage their finances, conduct business and make choices with regard to marriage with less intervention from legal guardians. In some cases (presumably when there was no appropriate male member of a prominent family), women held important civic positions such as archon.

Women's chastity was thus no longer necessarily being guaranteed simply by confinement to the women's quarters. In this altered situation, polarised models of

[55] Egger 1999 128-9

virtuous and strong young women who are proof against the temptations of the outside world and wicked, adulterous women who are found out and punished might well reflect the anxieties of and become attractive literary fare for husbands and fathers of the wealthier classes of the Greek cities.[57] It might also encourage them to put such edifying literary fare within the reach of their wives and daughters.

Out of the surviving Greek novels, it is, however, in the *Ephesiaka* and the *Aithiopika* that this juxtaposition between the brave and virtuous heroine who receives her reward and the evil, unchaste woman who dies is especially prominent. In the other novels the polarisation is not so strong. Lykainion seduces Daphnis but she shows no malice to Chloe, no harm comes from the encounter and she does not suffer for her transgression[58]. Likewise, Melite fails to wreak jealous revenge upon Leukippe over Kleitophon although Kleitophon is temporarily deceived into believing that Melite had in fact murdered Leukippe. Melite too, ends the novel unscathed and vindicated. Kallirhoe of course commits her own species of adultery and is justified.

The *Aithiopika* and the *Ephesiaka* thus share a particular moral universe in which infidelity is not tolerated on the part of either of the partners so that both heroes suffer much in order to remain faithful to the heroine. Unchastity on the part of a woman is represented as linked to wicked and murderous behaviour to be rewarded with death. They are the only two novels out of the extant five in which neither protagonist is ever actually unfaithful to the other.

1.3 The Theme of the Unwanted Suitor in the *Ephesiaka*, *Leukippe and*

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[56] Pomeroy 1975 73.

[57] Plutarch provides many such exempla. There are the virtuous women of his *Virtues in Women* and the strong and faithful women who appear in particular in his Roman *Lives* such as Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi or Portia the wife of Brutus. On the other hand we have his portrait of the dissolute Cleopatra whose wit and determination were employed to further her own ends as queen as an example of a "bad" woman.

Kleitophon and the *Aithiopika*

The theme of the threat of the unwanted suitor, a staple of all the novels, is developed in the *Aithiopika* in ways that have the closest resonances with the *Ephesiaka* and *Leukippe and Kleitophon*. In all three of these novels, the heroine, when confronted by men who attempt to impose themselves upon her, is usually able to get herself out of the situation either by cunning, persuasion, self assertion or as a last resort, violence. Sometimes she is saved by luck or by the help of others but never by the hero.

Anthia is pursued throughout the *Ephesiaka* by an endless series of admirers whom she evades and repulses through a variety of stratagems. In this she has strong parallels with the representation of Charikleia and her adventures. Both Anthia and Charikleia have recourse to persuasion, procrastination, trickery and on one occasion violence when dealing with unwanted suitors.

Anthia's adventures are more numerous and melodramatic than Charikleia's, which is attributable to the less tightly constructed plot structure of the *Ephesiaka* allowing for a rapid succession of dramatic episodes. Examples of Anthia's ordeals include the occasion on which she finds herself the slave of Psammis, an Indian prince. Anthia claims to be dedicated to Isis and insists that she must therefore be allowed to remain chaste for another year in order to fulfil her obligations to the goddess[59]. This parallels the excuse made by Charikleia to Thyamis[60] and, less directly, Leukippe's taking refuge in the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus and her claim that, as a virgin, she is under the goddess' protection[61]. It is worth bearing in mind that the concept of the heroine's chastity being sanctioned by divine power is already well

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[58] See Morgan 2004 208-210 for discussion of the ambiguities of Lykainon's presentation.
[59] Xen. Eph..3.11
[60] Hld 1.22
[61] Ach Tat 6.21

established within the genre before the *Aithiopika.* Anthia also shares Charikleia's gift of persuasion, although, in accordance with the truncated style of the *Ephesiaka* as we have it, her eloquence is not relayed for our benefit in the way that we are treated to the rhetoric of Charikleia. This verbal facility proves vital for the heroine's self-preservation when she is confronted by men who are in a position of power over her[62]. It enables Anthia to obtain oaths from both the goatherd Lampon[63] and the robber Amphinomos[64] not to molest her although she is entirely at their mercy. Through her ingenuity, Anthia is even able to preserve her chastity at the very door of the brothel, by means of a feigned attack of epilepsy[65]. On an occasion when matters have gone beyond resolution through persuasion or trickery, Anthia resorts to violence and slays a would-be rapist with a convenient sword[66].

Charikleia has several unpleasant and generically typical encounters with persistent suitors for whom a simple refusal would not be an effective deterrent. Shortly after we are introduced to her, the brigand chief Thyamis makes Charikleia an offer of marriage which does not admit the possibility of refusal. Her response is to graciously accept while politely and eloquently requesting a delay to the proceedings for religious considerations, phrased in such a way that it is very hard for Thyamis to refuse[67]. When she has procured this delay, events of course conspire to ensure that Thyamis is successfully evaded.

Despite her ingenuity and courage, Charikleia is not always left to contrive her own escape from the persistent and potentially threatening suitors with whom she is confronted. The threat posed by the amorous pirate Trachinos is combated by a

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[62] Haynes 2003 56
[63] Xen. Eph. 2.9.
[64] Xen. Eph. 5.2.
[65] Xen. Eph. 5.7
[66] Xen. Eph. 5.2
[67] Hld. 1.21-23

combination of Kalasiris' ingenuity and Charikleia's powers of deception and persuasion and ultimately her skill with the bow. Trachinos, having captured the ship in which Kalasiris, Theagenes and Charikleia were travelling, orders all the passengers and crew to evacuate into a dinghy. Seeing Charikleia amongst the throng, however, he pulls her aside and confides that it was with the aim of winning Charikleia for himself that he had attacked the ship in the first place. Charikleia, having been previously coached by Kalasiris, who had prior warning that they were at risk from Trachinos, skilfully manipulates the pirate into saving Theagenes and Kalasiris as well. She not only uses deceptive speech pretending to be flattered and grateful for Trachinos' favour, she also, despite her modesty, directly uses her physical charms to bend him to her will[68]. This passage shows the combined cunning of Kalasiris and Charikleia being successfully deployed to ensure that their party of three is initially at least kept safe and together. By contrast, Charikleia and Kalasiris have just previously had to join forces to restrain Theagenes from his impulse to fight the pirates, a course of action that would probably have resulted in his death. Thus, although Charikleia is depicted as in need of assistance from Kalasiris, she is also shown to be more like Kalasiris in her ability to use her cunning to safely evade a dangerous situation than Theagenes. Traditional heroic values on the part of the strong young man are here depreciated in favour of the cunning of the physically weak- the old man and the young girl.

Charikleia continues to require Kalasiris' assistance as Trachinos is determined to force marriage upon her. Charikleia, in despairing mood, sees suicide as the as the only way of evading this unwanted marriage. Kalasiris' assurance that he has a plan to prevent the marriage from happening thus provides her with support and

[68] Hld. 5.26

comfort at a point when she would seemingly have been at a loss if left to herself. The plan results in the pirates fighting amongst themselves but we are specifically told that in the wholesale massacre which ensues, most of the deaths are at the hands of Charikleia, who from a concealed vantage point picks off the assailants indiscriminately with her bow. This gives a nice twist to Kalasiris having enticingly informed the pirate Peloros that if he peeps into the part of the ship allocated as Charikleia's prenuptial quarters, he will see Artemis herself[69]. Artemis is not merely the epitome of a beautiful young girl, but a goddess whose skill in archery and capacity for wreaking ruthless and lethal vengeance in response to any slight to her dignity is well documented by mythology. Charikleia is not acting alone here; it is the gallant Theagenes whose Achilles-like skills in combat now come into their own so that the balance between Charikleia, Theagenes and Kalasiris has shifted somewhat. The wily old man and the smooth talking young girl were best equipped to address a situation in which they were in a position of weakness, while Theagenes' bravado was a dangerous hindrance. Now however, when the potential for violence is called for, it is the huntress and the young warrior who work together to defeat the enemy while the aged priest can only stand aside. Interestingly, Charikleia is never throughout this episode depicted as entirely helpless, despite her need for assistance either from Kalasiris or Theagenes. She never stands by while Kalasiris and Theagenes resolve the problem for her, although Kalasiris and Theagenes both find their respective abilities redundant at different parts of the story.

As the narrative draws to its climax, a further threat to Charikleia's virtue is posed by Achaimenes, a servant and the son of Arsake's confidant Kybele. On behalf of her son, who has become besotted by Charikleia, Kybele extracts a promise from

[69] Hld. 5.31

Arsake of her hand in marriage.[70] Charikleia proposes the solution that Theagenes should sacrifice his own virtue by consenting to a union with Arsake and using this as a bargaining tool to prevent Charikleia's marriage[71]. She thus makes explicit the unspoken premise which runs through Greek fiction that, while sexual fidelity on behalf of both partners is seen as important; the vital thing is that the chastity of the woman be preserved.

This premise, however, does not go unchallenged in the *Aithiopika*. Theagenes' outraged disavowal of Charikleia's assumption that his physical integrity is of less importance than her own, with his emotive use of the language of pollution[72] suggests that we are in a different moral universe from that of Kleitophon or Daphnis. Instead, Theagenes demonstrates that he has learnt at least a little from Charikleia's own tactics as, by softening Arsake with promises, he persuades her to cancel Charikleia's betrothal to Achaimenes and thus rescues Charikleia's chastity without sacrificing his own[73]. Once he has achieved this, he drops all pretence of yielding to Arsake and consequently endures torture[74].

At both the beginning and the end of her flight with Theagenes, Charikleia also has to contend with parallel situations in which first her adopted father, Charikles, and then her real father, Hydaspes, attempt to arrange a marriage for Charikleia with their respective nephews. There seems a certain irony in the fact that, when Charikleia is finally reunited with her real, Ethiopian parents after wandering across the known world, it is only to be again faced with the prospect of having an arranged marriage with a relative foisted upon her, thus replicating the circumstances which precipitated her flight from her adoptive Greek father. Her situation is

[70] Hld. 7.24
[71] Hld. 7.25
[72] Hld..7.25 See also Konstan 1994. 55.
[73] Hld. 7.26

reminiscent of that faced by Kleitophon, who has been betrothed to his half-sister without his own feelings being consulted.

Tension between the romantic longings of the hero and heroine and the wishes of parents with regard to their offspring's marriage is present throughout all the novels to a greater or lesser extent. In the cases of the young couples of the *Ephesiaka* and *Kallirhoe,* the issue is quickly resolved at the outset of the novel as their parents assent to their marriage but the protagonists are depicted as languishing helplessly until their love is validated by parental consent. Likewise in *Daphnis and Chloe,* the bond which had grown between the children as they grew up in their peasant guise requires parental evaluation and assent before it can be legitimised through marriage. *Leukippe and Kleitophon* provides the strongest parallel to the *Aithiopika* in that in both novels parental authority is directly defied and the couples elope. Both novels however end with a degree of reconciliation and acceptance between the defied parent or stepparent and their child[75].

Leukippe, who like Charikleia combines defiance to parental authority with heroic defence of her chastity, forms an interesting contrast to our heroine. Leukippe, despite her initial, seemingly cavalier, attitude towards the sexual proprieties, is by the end of the novel, a staunch and heroic defender of her virtue. Stubbornness rather than artifice form the basis of her defence. On being enslaved, (as tends to befall the novelistic heroine) she endures beatings and degradation rather than submit to the sexual demands of the bailiff Sosthenes[76]. Later, she responds to her master Thersandros' threats of torture with withering scorn, challenging him to do his worst.

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[74] Hld. 8.6

[75] See Egger 1999 for discussion of the importance of paternal authority for the validation of the weddings of novelistic couples.

[76] Ach.Tat. 5.17.3-8

The fact that Thersandros reacts to this by running from the room in distress[77] rather than taking her at her word produces however an almost comic sense of anti-climax which can be compared to the grimly drawn picture of the sufferings endured by Charikleia and Theagenes as a result of their defiance.

The full extent of Leukippe's experiences is, however, concealed from the reader by the nature of Kleitophon's first person narration, which leaves many questions unanswered. Was Leukippe's vision of Artemis instructing her to remain a virgin genuine or was it a ruse to keep Kleitophon at bay? Thersandros' sneering, rhetorical enquiry as to how Leukippe managed to remain a virgin when in the hands of pirates is left to the conjecture of the reader.

1.4 Differences in Character between Leukippe, Anthia and Charikleia

As we have seen, Leukippe, Anthia and Charikleia share certain key characteristics but they also have strong differences in character. Charikleia and Anthia's shared qualities of bravery and resourcefulness in defending their chastity have already been compared. Beyond this their respective attitudes to sexuality are very different. Although she is zealous in defending her chastity from interlopers, Anthia is passionately and unashamedly sexual in her love for Habrokomes. As previously discussed, the moment when she and Habrokomes fall in love has strong parallels with the equivalent scene in the *Aithiopika* but when we look at Anthia's behaviour once she has been smitten, it is evident that here the resemblance ends. We are introduced to Anthia as a solemn young worshipper of Artemis with

"...the austere look of a virgin."

"...φοβεροὶ δὲ ὡς σώφρονος."

[77] Ach.Tat. 6,21-7.1

As soon as Anthia catches sight of Habrokomes, however, all maidenly decorum is forgotten.

> "...she paid no attention to modesty: what she said was for Habrokomes to hear, and she revealed what she could of her body for Habrokomes to see"
>
> "...ἤδη δὲ καὶ τῶν παρθένοις πρεπόντων καταφρνοῦσα. καὶ γὰρ ἐλάλησεν ἄν τι, ἵνα Ἀβροκόμης ἀκούσῃ, καὶ μέρη τοῦ σώματος ἐγύμνωσεν ἄν τά δυνατά, ἵνα Ἀβροκόμης ἴδῃ." [78]

The parallels between Anthia and Charikleia continue after this point in terms of the course of their narratives while the same differences in characterisation also remain apparent. Like Charikleia, Anthia begins to waste away for her unfulfilled love[79]. In Anthia's case, however, her distress is caused solely by her fear that the object of her love is unobtainable[80]. She does not share Charikleia's shame for her infatuation. As in the case of Charikleia, holy men are employed in an attempt to cure Anthia. These are represented as being quacks who assert that Anthia's sickness is caused by demonic possession. As a holy man, Kalasiris is called upon by Charikles to attempt to cure his adopted daughter. Although Kalasiris is actually able to help Charikleia, he first puts on a theatrical display designed to impress the gullible, and also gives Charikles an intricate and deliberately misleading diagnosis, attributing Charikleia's wasting away to the evil eye[81], as if he himself were just such a quack.

The consummation of Anthia's marriage to Habrokomes is alluded to unabashedly as having brought both parties release and satisfaction[82]. Charikleia's virginity on the other hand is such a central aspect of her characterisation and of the atmosphere of the novel itself that even the final, legitimate, consummation of her

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[78] Xen. Eph. 1.3
[79] Xen. Eph. 1.4-5
[80] Xen. Eph. 1.4
[81] Hld. 3.7-8 (Kalasiris' disquisition on the Evil Eye) and Hld. 4.4 (Kalasiris' performance round Charikleia's sickbed,)
[82] Xen.Eph. 1.9-10

love for Theagenes is deliberately banished beyond the temporal scope of the narrative. The *Aithiopika* ends with a procession into the city

> "...where the more mystic parts of the wedding ritual were to be performed with greater magnificence." [83]
>
> "τῶν ἐπὶ τῷ γάμῳ μυστικωτέρων κατὰ τὸ ἄστυ φαιδρότερον τελεσθησομένων.

Leukippe and Charikleia also display very different attitudes towards sexuality, even though they can both be characterised as brave defenders of chastity. Both girls elope with their lovers and then extract an agreement from them to respect their virginity until marriage[84]. At the end of each of the novels the respective heroines prove that they have retained their virginity by means of a public chastity test. However, although the two girls' behaviour share strong similarities when thus outlined, a very different impression is gained of their respective conduct when their stories are read in full. Leukippe elopes in order to avoid her mother's anger when she is all but caught *in flagrante delicto* with her cousin Kleitophon. She had agreed to a tryst with him without the precise nature or depth of her feelings for him being expressly stated in the text. Charikleia elopes in order to marry Theagenes, with whom she has fallen in love despite her best efforts to repress the emotion. She is also desperate to avoid the marriage which is being arranged for her by her adoptive father, Charikles. Additionally she hopes to find her real parents, the rulers of Ethiopia[85]. It is entirely in keeping with her characterisation so far that, immediately after the elopement, Charikleia demands that Theagenes take an oath not to attempt sexual relations with her until they are married[86]. Leukippe only raises the issue with Kleitophon quite some time after their flight, when he attempts to renew intimacy

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[83] Hld. 10.41
[84] Hld 4.18, Achilles Tat. 4.1

with her during a brief lull in their adventures[87]. Unexpectedly, Leukippe explains that she cannot have sex with Kleitophon, as she has been told not to by Artemis, who has appeared to her in a dream. There is no feeling of personal conviction or religious fervour in this announcement. Indeed, Leukippe expresses regret that this bar to their intimacy has arisen: she must unfortunately remain a virgin due to a divine decree; it is not her choice. It is ironic that the more frivolous Leukippe should be accorded a personal epiphany of Artemis when the pious priestess, Charikleia is honoured by no such contact.

Kleitophon accepts the validity of the dream as it seems to correspond with a dream of his own in which Aphrodite forbids him immediate entry to her temple. If we accept that this report of a complementary vision need not be taken as absolute proof that Leukippe's report of her dream must be assumed to be truthful, then a more pragmatic explanation suggests itself. Leukippe has now had time to consider her situation and has realised that losing her virginity with its concomitant loss of social status and regard as well as the risk of pregnancy would be an unwise move in her vulnerable position. Without the venerable influence of a Kalasiris, a claim of direct divine intervention may well have seemed the quickest and easiest way for Leukippe to convince Kleitophon to accede to her wishes.

Later in the novel, Leukippe does indeed defend her chastity with heroism and conviction but then it is against the bullies, Thersandros and Sosthenes, compliance to whom would confirm their perception of her as a mere chattel, with no authority over her own body or claim to respect. By resisting them, Leukippe is asserting her freeborn, aristocratic status. The depth of her commitment to chastity for its own sake

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[85] Hld..4.10-13
[86] Hld. 4.18
[87] Ach.Tat. 4.1

is revealed by her defiant remark to Thersandros;

"You will never get what you want, *unless you become Kleitophon*" [88]

...μηδὲ ἐλπίσῃς τυχεῖν, πλὴν εἰ μὴ γένῃ Κλειτοφῶν.

For Leukippe, chastity is important in that she comes to recognise it as essential to retaining her personal dignity and social status and to achieving a legitimate marriage with Kleitophon. She cannot be described as valuing chastity in the abstract way that Charikleia does, as;

"...next to the immortal....unspotted, untainted, incorruptible[89]"

ἐκθειάζουσα μὲν παρθενίαν καὶ ἐγγὺς ἀθανάτων ἀποφαίνουσα, ἄχραντον καὶ ἀκήρατον καὶ ἀδιάφθορον ὀνομάζουσα...

At the end of both the *Aithiopika* and *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, the virginity of the heroines is publicly verified by means of a test, relying on supernatural forces. The atmosphere and circumstances of the two tests are however very different. Although Leukippe's vindication is of genuine importance and is a proud moment for her, it takes place alongside the misleading exoneration of the adulterous Melite and by extension, of the erring Kleitophon. Because of this, the scene cannot be read as a straightforward and serious celebration of chastity in the way that the parallel scene in the *Aithiopika* can[90]. There is also the fact that Leukippe's test takes place in the context of a court case. Her passing of the test is taken as proof that she is a freeborn woman and not Thersandros' slave. We are invited to share with Kleitophon the double satisfaction of seeing his enemy worsted, not only by the revelation of the truth that Leukippe is a virgin but also by being kept in ignorance of the other truth that he has been cuckolded by the hero. These worldly motivations are far from the illogical

[88] Ach. Tat. 6.18
[89] Hld. 2.33

pride with which Charikleia and Theagenes race to stand on the griddle to prove that they are both virgins, even though this will confirm their suitability as sacrificial victims. Charikleia decks herself in her priestly robes for the occasion and her appearance is compared to the figure of a goddess.

It could be argued that there is a degree of logic to their actions that has generic precedent. As in the cases of *Daphnis and Chloe* and *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, before marriage can be solemnised, parents have to be convinced that the young couple have not anticipated the marriage bed; on the other hand, as things stood at that moment, by proving their virginity, Charikleia and Theagenes were merely demonstrating their fitness for ritual slaughter. As Goldhill points out, their pride in their purity for its own sake even in the face of death seems closer to that of a Christian martyr in the arena, as described in a contemporary martyrology, than the subversive irony of the parallel scene in *Leukippe and Kleitophon*[91]. It is understandable that in the past, *Leukippe and Kleitophon* has been read as a parody of the morally serious *Aithiopika.* This theory is now however ruled out by the discovery of papyrus fragments of *Leukippe and Keitophon,* which predate the earliest projected date for the *Aithiopika*[92].

Anthia and Leukippe see the preservation of their chastity, in particular from aggressive interlopers, as essential for broadly two reasons. One of these is the link between a woman's sexual behaviour and her maintaining her social status and respect. To consent to sex with a pirate who has captured them or with a master to whom they have become enslaved, would signify for these well born ladies an irreversible acceptance of their change in status. This is perhaps best illustrated with

[90] See Goldhill 1995 118-121 for a discussion of the chastity tests occurring at the climax of Ach.Tat. and Hld. and what they tell us about the very different attitudes to sexuality in the two novels.
[91] Goldhill 1995 120
[92] Konstan 1994. 68, note 20.

the case of Leukippe, who refuses to yield to the sexual demands of Thersandros although she is in the position of being his slave. Later she flees for refuge to the temple of Artemis, entry to which, we are told, is permitted only to women who are virgins or to women who are slaves, with the penalty of death for any woman who enters the sanctuary who does not fall into either of these categories[93]. When Thersandros claims ownership of Leukippe in court, he can thus insist that Leukippe must either be his slave or else that she must prove herself to be a virgin[94]. Virginity and free birth are thus explicitly linked. Had Leukippe given in to Thersandros's sexual demands, she would have been effectively reduced to his property and lost her claim to her high social status.

The other reason is the nature of the bond between the heroine and the hero. From the point of view of the heroine, sex with another partner, even under duress would be on her part an unforgivable betrayal and violation of her loyalty to her lover. Anthia exemplifies this perspective when she chooses suicide over an honourable marriage to a seemingly decent man because she feels that it would be wrong to take a second partner after Habrokomes even though she thinks that he may well be dead[95]. The two factors outlined above are also applicable to Charikleia - she too must end the novel with proof of her virginity proudly offered to her new found parents and she is also absolute in her loyalty to Theagenes. Her commitment to chastity is however, taken a stage further than that of the other heroines.

While this is recognised by Haynes, she does not consider the nature of this commitment worth exploring further, for example, by tracing a possible Christian influence in this. Instead, Haynes sees Charikleia's initial commitment to virginity as "somewhat empty of meaning" and interprets Charikleia's extreme modesty as a

[93] Ach. Tat. 7.13

counterbalance to keep her unwomanly abilities in check by keeping her segregated from male company. Haynes also claims that while Charikleia is gifted in eloquence this shows itself most in the private sphere such as in argument with Charikles. This seems however to ignore several situations in the novel in which Charikleia speaks out before mixed company. Examples include; her association with the priests at Delphi, her speech before Thyamis in which as Haynes acknowledges, Charikleia skilfully manipulates male expectations about female speakers, and also Charikleia's legalistic and public harangue of her father King Hydaspes in which she sets out the reasons why he cannot legally put her to death[96].

1.5 The Unique Nature of Charikleia's Commitment to Chastity

For Charikleia, chastity is revered as an abstract, personal virtue, the importance of which for her goes beyond fidelity to her fiancé or concern for her good name; indeed it initially went beyond what was thought of as natural or desirable in mainstream pagan ideology. Prior to her elopement with Theagenes, Charikleia was living at Delphi as an acolyte to the goddess Artemis in whose rites she played a prominent role. She had rejected marriage and consecrated herself to lifelong virginity in honour of Artemis, living secluded within the temple precincts and spending her time in hunting or in theological discussion with the wise men who frequented the Delphic Oracle. We are told that her stepfather Charikles, who was priest of Apollo, was deeply distressed by her decision. Charikleia's refusal to consider a marriage he had planned for her with his nephew and thus to provide him with grandchildren seemed to him heartless, unreasonable and a denial of her own nature. He admits however that her powers of argument have made it impossible for him to prove to her

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[94] Ach.Tat. 8.11

that her choice is not the best one[97]. Charikles' reaction establishes that Charikleia's lifestyle was self-chosen rather than a function of a hereditary office. It also indicates that it was regarded as transgressive even by someone who can be assumed to have the highest respect for an action motivated by religious devotion. Charikles attempts to plead reason and cajole his foster-daughter into accepting marriage and even goes as far as to ask Kalasiris to use his supposed magical arts to bring her to compliance[98]. Significantly, however, it seems that both love and perhaps awe for his remarkable adoptee has, at least up to now, caused him to hesitate simply to force Charikleia to comply with his wishes.

Elsewhere within the genre, even male offspring are unable to consider refusing outright to act in accordance with parental dictates. Kleitophon cannot simply tell his father that he does not want to marry his sister Kalligone. Hippothoos' young lover Hyperanthes is more or less sold by his father to be the sexual plaything of the wealthy Aristomachos,[99] while Kleinias' beloved Charikles is affianced against his will to a rich and unattractive woman[100]. This degree of deference shown to Charikleia by her stepfather suggests that unlike the unformed young people who are the protagonists of the other novels, Charikleia is, by the beginning of the novel, a respected individual in her own right. For the sake of narrative convenience, however, we must take Kalasiris at his word that Charikles' indulgence would not have extended to giving his consent to her marriage with Theagenes.

Once she has reconciled herself to the prospect of matrimony as a respectable and necessary compromise in the face of her inability to resist her love for Theagenes,

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[95] Xen. Eph. 3.5
[96] Haynes 2003 70-72
[97] Hld. 2.33
[98] Hld. 2.33
[99] Xen. Eph. 3.2
[100] Ach.Tat. 1.7.4-5

Charikleia is still passionately concerned with her chastity. Now, however, her ideal of chastity has been modified from the extremist position of lifelong celibacy to the more socially acceptable standard of a sexuality limited to the marriage bed. She expresses this position most clearly in her reply to Theagenes' expression of his fear that she is serious in her apparent acceptance of Thyamis' proposal of marriage.

> "I admit that we are in a sorry plight, but no peril could ever be so dire as to induce me to compromise my virtue. Only once to my knowledge have I been less than virtuous - in my original passion for you. But even that was honourable, for from the start I gave myself to you not like a woman yielding to her lover, but like a wife pledging herself to her husband. To this day I have kept myself unstained from carnal contact, even with you. Many times have I repelled your advances, looking to the day when the union we pledged at the outset - a vow that has bound us through all adversity - will be legally solemnised. It would be quite absurd if you really thought that I preferred a savage to a Greek, a robber to my beloved.[101]"

> "ἐγὼ γὰρ δυστυχεῖν μὲν οὐκ ἀρνοῦμαι, μὴ σωφρονεῖν δὲ οὐδὲν οὕτω βίαιον ὥστε με μεταπεισθῆναι. ἓν μόνον οἶδα μὴ σωφρονοῦσα, τὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐπὶ σοὶ πόθον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτον ἔννομον. οὐ γὰρ ὡς ἐραστῇ πειθομένη ἀλλ' ὡς ἀνδρὶ συνθεμένη τό τε πρῶτον ἐμαυτὴν ἐπέδωκα, καὶ εἰς δεῦρο διετέλεσα καθαρὰν ἐμαυτὴν καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς σῆς ὁμιλίας φυλάττουσα πολλάκις μὲν ἐπιχειροῦντα διωσαμένη, τὸν δὲ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἡμῖν συγκείμενόν τε καὶ ἐνώμοτον ἐπὶ πᾶσι γάμον ἔνθεσμον εἴ πῃ γένοιτο περισκοποῦσα. πῶς οὖν οὐκ ἂν εἴης ἄτοπος, εἰ τὸν βάρβαρόν με τοῦ Ἕλληνος, τὸν λῃστὴν τοῦ ἐρωμένου πιστεύοις ἐπίπροσθεν ἄγειν;

While her speech contains the implicit reassurance that sexual fidelity to Theagenes is important to Charikleia, the emphasis is on the importance of her virtue as something which transcends her bond with Theagenes. Charikleia's passion for Theagenes, far from constituting the *raison d'être* for her devotion to chastity, is mentioned as the only serious threat to it that she has encountered, and as one which she has successfully contained[102]. As *Daphnis and Chloe* is, in a sense, the story of how Chloe and Daphnis pass from innocence to experience, protected from illicit sex by

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[101] Hld. 1.25

[102] See also Charikleia's lament at 1.8 in which she declares herself content to die as long as she dies chaste. Theagenes is here also portrayed as a potential but surmounted obstacle to this rather than a primary motivation.

their ignorance, until it is sanctioned by lawful marriage, so in the *Aithiopika,* we see Charikleia progress from an extreme position of total celibacy to the more socially acceptable position of rejecting sexuality outside marriage.

1.6 Charikleia's Uniquely Drawn Personality and History

The depiction of Charikleia's way of life before her meeting with Theagenes which has been outlined above[103] comes from Kalasiris' account of her to Knemon. It renders Charikleia unique among novelistic heroines and rare in descriptions of women of the pagan ancient world in that she is presented as a developed, thinking individual who has made a rational and independent decision about how she wants to live her life.

Although Anthia and Leukippe could both well be described as brave, clever, loyal and committed, neither of them particularly suit the epithet "wise"[104]. This is the word that paired with "beautiful", Kalasiris proudly applies to Charikleia when he describes her grand entrance to the procession at the Pythian Games[105]. The other young girls have only their physical beauty to mark them as outstanding individuals at the beginning of their stories. An example is the opening paragraphs of the *Ephesiaka* in which we are told in some detail not only about Habrokomes' physical attractions but also his intellectual, sporting and social successes. [106] By contrast, in our corresponding introduction to Anthia we are told only of her physical beauty[107]. These exceptionally beautiful women are frequently compared to goddesses, and can be associated with their temples and worship: for example, as we have seen, Anthia dresses and equips herself as Artemis to lead a procession in the goddess's honour and

[103] See above 46
[104] Reardon 1976 121 comments on the *ordinariness* of Anthia and Habrokomes.
[105] Hld. 3.4
[106] Xen. Eph. 1.1

is acclaimed as Artemis[108], while Kallirhoe on arriving at Miletos as a slave is mistaken for Aphrodite[109]. The heroines can also see themselves as being under the patronage of a particular deity, as Kallirhoe, like Helen, sees her fate bound up with the will of Aphrodite[110], while Leukippe as a virgin, claims special protection from Artemis[111]. None of them, despite their sometimes close relationship with the divine, is depicted as having the moral seriousness, learning or self-possession equivalent to that of the priestess, Charikleia. We know nothing of their feelings, personalities or opinions until they are shaped by the events set in motion by their meeting with the beloved. There is no real sense of their having had an individual existence up to that point. We are given an account of Chloe's exposure and adoption prior to her relationship with Daphnis[112] but aside from these unusual circumstances which mirror those of her beloved, we are told nothing that lends her any distinguishing characteristics as an individual. This is in marked contrast to the wealth of detail that is provided about Charikleia both in terms of her character as we have seen, but also in terms of her detailed biography which is essential to the novel's structure.

Charikleia is a heroine with a complex personal history. She is the daughter of the king and queen of Ethiopia but is secretly exposed at birth by her mother, who fears that an injurious construction might be placed on the fact that she has white skin. Having been rescued along with her tokens of identification by the gymnosophist Sisimithres and taken to Egypt, she is then transferred to the care of the priest, Charikles. He takes her back to Delphi where she is brought up. At the point where the novel begins, she has been serving at Delphi as priestess of Artemis. None of the

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[107] Xen. Eph. 1.2
[108] Xen. Eph. 1.2
[109] Char. 2.3
[110] Char. 2.2
[111] Ach.Tat. 6.21
[112] Long. 1.4-6

other heroines is provided with a comparably detailed and remarkable background, nor does it elsewhere become a primary focus of the plot. All of the other heroines of the extant novels are of high birth in that their parents are wealthy and prominent citizens of their respective states, but Charikleia is the only one to occupy such an exalted position as the only heir of the monarchs of a great Kingdom[113].

Heliodoros has taken the plot staple of the other novels; the tension implicit in the question of how the heroine is to remain within the conventions governing the sexuality of young upper-class women when her adventures take her outside the traditional protection of home and family, and made it an essential and consistent element of his pious heroine's characterisation. This combines with the complexities of her tale to shape Charikleia as the most coherently constructed and individualised of the novelistic heroines. Leukippe and Anthia become heroic defenders of their chastity through force of circumstances. Chloe's chastity is protected more or less through luck or the benevolent powers that watch over her. For Charikleia, chastity was an issue of principle and religion before she had even set eyes on her beloved or set out upon her travels.

The *Aithiopika* appears to have a close relationship with other surviving members of the novelistic genre, as we have seen from the close analogies with the *Ephesiaka* in terms of both incident and description as well as strong similarities in plot elements with *Leukippe and Kleitophon*[114]. Its close relation to the *Ephesiaka*, the novel at its least sophisticated, can be read as a reaffirmation of the values of chastity and fidelity which are presented in the *Ephesiaka,* as in the *Aithiopika,* without

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[113] Although the fragmentary *Chione* romance appears to have had a royal heroine and the heroine of *Metiochus and Parthenope* is the daughter of Polykrates the Tyrant of Samos.

[114] See Bremmer 1998 for suggested pattern of interdependence between the ancient novelists. He sees Heliodoros intertexting directly only with Longus and Ach.Tat. although he considers Ach.Tat. to have been au fait with Xen.. This however would seem to leave open the possibility that Heliodoros *could* have had knowledge of Xen..

detectable irony or equivocation. From these basic plot elements, and simple morality, Heliodoros has created a sophisticated work in keeping with the religious and philosophical interests of his own age. Like Anthia, Charikleia is fiercely loyal and protective of her chastity but this is now in the context of the piety of a priestess and theology student. Her modification of her desire for perpetual virginity to a commitment to chaste marriage takes on a new level of interest in the context of the very differing ideas about the merit of virginity as a lifestyle choice for women between pagans and Christians in the first centuries C.E.

While it is hard to assign an individual personality to any of the other heroines, Charikleia emerges as an individual with a past, who has developed her own definite characteristics and opinions. Although this tale of a chaste maiden dedicated to Artemis, whose relationship with her beloved is tested by ordeals on land and sea, is clearly based on the likes of Anthia or Leukippe, to understand her provenance more fully we must start to look in more detail at ways in which the *Aithiopika* departs from the novelistic tradition.

A typical feature closely identifying the *Aithiopika* as a member of the genre of Greek romance is the place in the narrative of the extensive travelling around the Mediterranean basin undertaken by the hero and heroine in the course of their adventures. This is an element which the *Aithiopika* shares with all the other extant novels with the partial exception of *Daphnis and Chloe*. Kallirhoe, for example, journeys from Syracuse to Babylon via Miletos. Leukippe and Kleitophon flee from Tyre, are shipwrecked off Pelousion, reach Alexandria, are separated from each other and each arrive in Ephesos and from there they return to Tyre via Byzantium. Anthia and Habrokomes leave Ephesos, and find themselves in, among other places, Tyre, Tarsos, Alexandria and for no apparent reason, Italy, before returning home. *Daphnis*

and Chloe constitutes something of a deviation from this pattern. The focus of the novel is primarily the internal development of the relationship between the two protagonists, rather than their struggles against outside forces. Although the protagonists' adventures do involve voyaging from Lesbos, out into the Mediterranean, they are scarcely taken out of sight of their native coastline. Rather than the physical journeys to be made between distant cities, Longus presents the more conceptual distance between the world of the big city and the surrounding countryside[115]. When dramatic incidents do occur, they seem to be humorous diminutions of the adventures common to the other tales. Daphnis' abduction by pirates[116] exemplifies this tendency, in that the episode encapsulates many of the standard elements of the novelistic adventure; sea travel, capture by pirates and shipwreck. These events are, however, presented in such a way as to constitute a comic parody of the generic convention and so signal that this is a text with ambitions to provide something other than the more usual travel and adventure story.

At first sight, Heliodoros' novel appears to follow the narrative convention established by the other novels. Charikleia and Theagenes elope from Delphi and embark on a long and hazardous journey in which they spend time in Crete and Egypt, before they finally reach their destination. This journey involves the usual perils of pirates, bandits and shipwreck. Upon a more detailed comparison, however, it can be seen that, in its own way, the *Aithiopika* also deviates significantly from the standard pattern.

In *Kallirhoe* and in the *Ephesiaka*, the hero and heroine are both citizens of the same town, whence they set out on their adventures shortly after the beginning of the novel and to where they both return triumphantly at the end. The protagonists of

[115] See Morgan 2004 16-17 and S. Said 97-107 1999 for discussion of juxtaposition between town and

Daphnis and Chloe are both the children of prominent citizens of Mytilene. At the beginning of the novel they are found in the countryside outside the town and the protection of their families but are reunited with both sets of parents at the story's close. Leukippe and Kleitophon, although they are cousins, are citizens of different states, the one being from Byzantium and the other from Tyre. They meet at the opening of the narrative proper, when Leukippe comes to Tyre as a wartime evacuee and elope from there shortly after. When the pair are reconciled with their families at the end of the novel, the problem of the lovers' different home towns is explicitly addressed in the last line of the novel when we are informed that the plan is for the newly married couple to spend the winter in Tyre and then proceed to Byzantium[117].

The *Aithiopika* abandons the basically linear narrative adhered to by the other novels, introducing us to the young couple in the middle of their adventures. A little later, we learn, through the many layered account of Kalasiris, that, although Charikleia and Theagenes met in Delphi and set off together from there, Delphi is not in fact the true home of either of them. It also becomes clear that Delphi will not be the scene of their final homecoming. All the other novels restore their protagonists to the "normality" of a Greek polis, even if, as in the case of *Daphnis and Chloe,* this is only briefly, before they choose to return to their beloved countryside. That the *Aithiopika* culminates with the protagonists settling in Ethiopia, which, although it turns out to be the true home of the heroine, is represented as a land of mythic strangeness and cultural difference, suggests that Heliodoros is taking his narrative both literally and figuratively in a new direction.

In most of the novels, the removal of the young couple from the moral and material certainties and securities attendant upon being a substantial citizen of a

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country in Longus.

Hellenic state is effected by sending the protagonists to distant lands. There, they encounter people whose ways are emphasised as being very different from those taken for granted by the author and his intended audience[118]. In *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, for example, the couple find themselves, shortly after their elopement, in the power of Egyptian bandits who intend Leukippe to be the victim of a cannibalistic human sacrifice[119]. Separated from the community of family and native polis where their status and identity are recognised, the aristocratic young men and women also find themselves in situations which threaten to take them far from the way of life they could take for granted as honoured citizens of their native state. Although Leukippe and Kleitophon face no such barbaric extremes in Hellenic Ephesos as confronted them in Egypt, the norms of respectable, citizen marriage are reversed. Kleitophon lives as the (albeit chaste) husband of a married woman and Leukippe, in the guise of a slave girl, is forced to defend her chastity from the assaults of the married woman's real husband. Once the young couple are reconciled with their parents and prepare to return home, the social conventions are firmly re-established and there is a general sense of things being set to rights. Parents and children are reconciled and marriages take place as though they had been arranged conventionally rather than pre-empted by elopement and abduction. This return to conventional values is exemplified by the account given by Leukippe's father of the reform of Kallisthenes. Kallisthenes was initially presented as a young reprobate who at the beginning of the novel abducted

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[116] Long. 1.28

[117] Ach.Tat. 8.11.3

[118] See Perkins 1995 for discussion of the function of travel and danger within the Greek romantic novel. She contrasts the novel in which the beautiful and well born young protagonists are exposed to the dangers of the outside world then brought home unscathed to marry and thus to affirm the virtues of Greek civic life with the Apocryphal Acts in which suffering marks a victorious break from the conventions of pagan civic morality. Significantly, Perkins excludes the Hld. from her exempla, seemingly recognising that the dynamics of reinforcement of existing civic virtues are not replicated in the Hld. in the same way as other novels. She also excludes Longus. In Perkins 1999 she interprets Charikleia's non-Greek origins as comment on the mask of Hellenism which was worn by those living in Near Eastern cities in order to "pass" in educated Greek society.

Kleitophon's half sister Kalligone. Under Kalligone's good influence, he has now entirely changed his ways, becoming particularly respectful to his elders and has formally applied for and been granted, parental consent for his marriage to Kalligone[120].

In *Daphnis and Chloe* there is a complex juxtaposition between town and country so that the two can be equated with the adult world and that of childhood innocence[121]. On the one hand, the rural idyll is a place of beauty and one which protects and nurtures Daphnis and Chloe when their sophisticated, urban parents had considered it expedient to dispose of them[122]. On the other hand, the physical beauty of the pair is taken as evidence that they could not possibly be merely peasants[123] and marks them out as city aristocracy. Accordingly, it is the world of the city that reclaims them as they are recognised by and recognise their true parents and their marriage is formalised under their auspices although they continue to maintain close contact with the countryside, this time in the role of landowners.

To the tired stranger Kalasiris, Delphi appeared as a centre of learning and religion, a welcome and suitable refuge for a wandering sage[124]. Charikleia serves as acolyte in the Delphic cult of Artemis and bears the name of the Delphic priest Charikles, her adopted parent. It is a striking departure from the generic norm then, that Delphi is not the place she returns home to at the end of her adventures in foreign lands. Instead she is restored to her natural parents, monarchs of Ethiopia, a land of Herodotean fable and Philostratean hagiography to the contemporary Greek-speaking world. The *Aithiopika* ends with its heroes making their home in a land which is

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[119] Ach.Tat 3.15
[120] Ach.Tat. 6.17-18
[121] Morgan 2004 12-15
[122] Effe 197-203 1999 offers contrary perspective to Said seeing Longus' countryside as positive counterpart to town.
[123] Said 98-102 1999 details portrayal of Longus' peasantry as stupid, ugly and devious.

deliberately represented as beyond the "norm" of the Greek polis and which, while it is the native land of Charikleia, is entirely foreign to Theagenes[125]. Heliodoros thus reverses the structural and conceptual norm of the Greek novel. According to this pattern, the protagonist's journey takes them from their home, which is always a well known Hellenic city, to places and among people identified as being in different ways alien and barbarous, before bringing them safely back to the Hellenic world of the polis where "normality" can be resumed.

The *Aithiopika* therefore, is not a novel which celebrates the triumphant return to the social and cultural values of its intended readership (in so far as they are identified as the educated, Greek speaking elite). Instead it seems to suggest that for a satisfactory conclusion we need to look beyond the familiar moral social and religious universe of the Greek polis. One clue as to where we can start looking is provided by the choice of Ethiopia as Charikleia's birthplace.

The Ethiopia of the novel bears very little relation to the historical place. The Ethiopian characters have Persian names such as Persinna and Sisimithres. Hydaspes was the name of an Indian river. In their campaign against Persia, the Ethiopians have "Seres" as their allies [126] (legendary people based upon second or third hand knowledge of China "the land of silk"). During the victory celebrations, mythical griffins are presented to the Ethiopian court[127]. Heliodoros' "Ethiopia" then, is based on contemporary Hellenic conceptions of a place beyond the boundaries of the known world, and as such a fertile ground for allegory and paradox. The conception of Ethiopia as a place of paradox is also enhanced by the fact that the inhabitants have black skin, which to the Greeks, was a characteristic of inhabitants of the Underworld.

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[124] Hld.2.26
[125] Konstan 1994: 91
[126] Hld. 9.17, 10.25
[127] Hld. 10.25

It seems significant, that when Charikleia first sights black people at the beginning of the novel, she believes herself to be confronted with ghosts[128]. Later on, this link between Ethiopia and the land of the dead is expressed more explicitly when Theagenes dreams an oracular utterance in which he is told that he will arrive in Ethiopia and pessimistically interprets this to mean that he will soon be in Hades[129]. The true home of Charikleia, then, can be viewed, in a sense, as a photographic negative of the Hellenic world, an otherworldly kingdom, the inhabitants of which, far from being dismissed as mere barbarians and outsiders, as is usual in Hellenic writing about non-Hellenes, are presented as civilised, powerful, magnanimous in victory and virtuous. This is despite their also being attributed with the custom of human sacrifice, which is treated as regrettable and in need of reform but somehow not particularly "barbaric" or blameworthy. While Hydaspes feels obliged to carry the ritual out and to steel himself against any feelings of pity for the victims, he certainly shows no bloodthirsty relish for what is to come. The horrific mock-sacrifice of Leukippe presided over by Egyptian brigands and presented as the epitome of what "the other" is capable of, at its worst, is a useful point of comparison[130].

Greek characters, by contrast, are often presented in the *Aithiopika* in a comparatively negative light. This emerges particularly in the inset narrative of Knemon which intrudes itself at the beginning of the novel, just when the reader is impatient to learn the story of the real protagonists. The Athenian Knemon and his world represent an average, unelevated standard of Hellenic moral and sexual conventions, rather than that of the philosopher or mystic[131]. Knemon is by no means an amoral character. He is horrified at the idea of having an affair with his father's

[128] Hld. 1.3
[129] Hld. 8.11
[130] Ach. Tat. 3.15

wife. This represents something beyond the boundaries of his received code of acceptable behaviour. He sees nothing wrong, however, with having sex with an attractive slave girl, purely, of course, for the sake of pleasure. Through this slave girl, Thisbe, and the intrigues that surround her, we are offered a cameo of a milieu familiar to us from the settings of New Comedy or the dialogues of Lucian.

This is a world in which courtesans and flute girls scheme and compete for rich clients, in which love is seen purely in terms of lust and in which sex is about money, power and influence, in a series of negotiations between socio-economic non-equals. It is exemplified for us again in the figure of the venal bourgeois Nausikles, who expects to be paid a ransom for restoring Charikleia to Kalasiris and Theagenes. It seems particularly fitting when Nausikles arranges a marriage for his daughter with Knemon[132]. Unlike the union between Charikleia and Theagenes, this is a traditional upper-class Greek liaison with the advantages of an alliance between the wealthy families of Nausikles and Knemon, rather than any romantic feelings between Knemon and Nausikleia, being the important factor.

The materialistic and fleshly world of Knemon and Nausikles is presented in direct opposition to the world of Charikleia and Theagenes. For our idealistic young protagonists, sexual desire is sublimated for a love that is conceived of on a spiritual plane and virtue is valued above money, power and life itself. By the end of her stay with Nausikles, Charikleia has decided that Knemon is unworthy to accompany her on her quest[133]. The magnanimity of Charikleia and Theagenes finds its mirror when they

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[131] See Morgan in Swain 1999 for discussion of the different moral worlds inhabited by Knemon and by the protagonists.
[132] Hld.6.8
[133] Hld. 6.7

are united with the Ethiopian royal family[134]. Persinna like Charikleia prizes chastity above all. Hydaspes shows himself to be full of kingly virtue, as, with Alexander as an obvious parallel, he defeats Persians through brilliant stratagems and then shows himself to be a forbearing and merciful conqueror. Aside from the Royal family, a powerful presence at the Ethiopian court is the Gymnosophists. These sages, whose existence in Greek literature seems to have been originally based on knowledge of the Indian Saddhus, are also placed in Ethiopia by Philostratos in his *Life of Apollonios of Tyana*[135]. They constitute another level of moral refinement in Heliodoros' Ethiopia. They show the respect for life more typical of a Pythagorean or a Hindu mystic than the kind of attitudes prevalent in mainstream Greek thought. Their opposition is not only to the Ethiopian tradition of human sacrifice, which their intervention finally brings to an end, but also, more controversially, of the sacrifice of any animal, although they accept that this cannot be prevented from taking place[136]. It had transpired earlier in the text that it was the gymnosophist Sisimithres who initially rescued Charikleia from exposure[137].

The rescue of an exposed infant had been a common trope in ancient story since at least *Oidipous Tyrannos* but what is unusual in this case is the reason given for rescuing the child. Generally, in such stories of rescued babies the motivation tends to be either that the finder of the child felt compassion or else that they lacked a child of their own and saw the abandoned baby as a replacement[138]. The decision is

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[134] See Whitmarsh 16-40 in Miles 1999 for the idealisation of the Ethiopian court in the *Aithiopika* and his discussion of the implications of redrawing the conceptual map by making Ethiopia at the edge of the known world "home" so that Greece conversely is marginalised.
[135] Philostratos *Life of Apollonios* 6.6
[136] Hld. 10.9
[137] Hld 2.31
[138] See for example the complex of pragmatic reasons why Harpalos declines to slay the infant Kyros but rather hand him over to a shepherd to do the deed and the direct link between the death of the shepherd's own child and the decision made by him and his wife to rear Kyros as their own. Herodotos 1.109-111. See also *Oidipous Tyrannos* 1175-1180 for the pity which prompted a servant to hand Oidipus to an old man in the hope that he would take him abroad rather than kill him.

presented as a personal one, specific to the time and circumstances. As we would expect in the context of a society in which exposure of infants was accepted in reality, as well as in fiction, it is not standard in such a story for the rescuer to save the child because he believes he has an absolute moral duty to do so[139]. *Daphnis and Chloe* provides an example from within the novelistic genre; the initial instinct of Lamon upon finding Daphnis is to remove the tokens exposed with him whilst leaving the child to his fate. It is only the nurturing behaviour of the goat which shames him into caring for the infant[140]. Sisimithres on the other hand makes a point of stating that he saved the infant Charikleia in obedience to an absolute moral principle;

> "I chanced upon her and took her up, for once a soul had taken human form it would have been a sin for me to pass it by in its hour of peril-this is the sole precept of the naked sages of my country, to whose teaching I had recently been admitted."[141]"
> ἐγὼ δὲ προστυχὼν ἀνειλόμην. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἦν μοι θέμιτον ἐν κινδύνῳ ψυχὴν ἅπαξ ἐνανθρωπήσασαν παριδεῖν. ἔν γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο παράγγελμα τῶν γυμνῶν παρ' ἡμῖν σοφῶν, ὧν ἀκουστὴς εἶναι χρόνοις ὀλίγοις πρόσθεν ἠξίωμαι.

The *Aithiopika* is not then a story about two young people who, like Leukippe and Kleitophon return to their Greek polis with their appreciation for its values and conventions renewed by their encounters with the outside world. Rather than circling back to their starting point, they progress to a somewhat otherworldly place, in which the values of the Greek polis are transcended and partially replaced by religious and moral convictions very similar to those described as being held by the Neo-Pythagorean Apollonios of Tyana in Philostratos' biography[142]. They also bear a close resemblance to the beliefs and practices of the Neoplatonists, a philosophical sect

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[139] See for example Patterson 1985 for a discussion of exposure and brief comments on the range of motivations behind the rescue of foundlings.
[140] Long 1.3
[141] Hld. 2.31
[142] See Whitmarsh 24 in Miles 1999 on the importance of Philostratos' biography of Apollonios as an intertext

much influenced by the Pythagoreans who flourished in the late pagan era, around the time of the novel's genesis. Philostratos' *Life of Apollonios* includes many elements which have resonances within the *Aithiopika.* The presence of the Ethiopian Gymnosophists in both texts has already been remarked upon. There are also the similarities between the depictions of Apollonios himself and the sage Kalasiris. Both are notable for their abstinence from meat and alcohol, their disapprobation of animal sacrifice and their avoidance of unchastity. In this respect, they differ in so far as Apollonios rejects sexuality for himself altogether, whilst Kalasiris, although he flees corruption by a notorious courtesan, has previously been married and borne two sons. Further cross references includes mention in Philostratos of the *Pantarbe,* a precious stone possessing mystic properties. Charikleia is in possession of a specimen of this stone and it is responsible for protecting her from the flames when Arsake sentences her to burn. This is not however one of the properties ascribed to it by Philostratos.

The literary status of Philostratos' biography of the sage is a matter of debate. Is it to be read as a piece of fictionalised entertainment, a serious pagan hagiography or something between the two? The same questions may be usefully applied to the *Aithiopika.* The fact that Heliodoros has included elements of Pythagorean/Neoplatonic lore in his novel should not tempt us to assume that it is therefore to be read straightforwardly as a Neoplatonic text. There has been much debate in recent years concerning the *Aithiopika*'s self-positioning as a religious or Neoplatonic text. There has been considerable reaction against Geffcken's reductive assessment of the *Aithiopika* as "Neoplatonist propaganda" [143] and Merkelbach's interpretation of the *Aithiopika* as an initiatory text. Since Winkler's seminal essay

[143]Geffcken 1978 84-5

"The Mendacity of Kalasiris"[144], there has been much greater emphasis on the *Aithiopika* as sophisticated literary fiction. Sandy[145] has well illustrated that the Neoplatonic paraphernalia which prompted Geffcken's judgement is actually employed in a manner which is far from a straightforward exhortation to celebrate and adopt the lifestyle of the Neoplatonic sage. Morgan[146] has suggested that references throughout the novel to the workings of the divine providence are often to be understood as representative of Heliodoros' narratological virtuosity. Dowden[147] on the other hand has moved against this trend and argued that the *Aithiopika* contains a genuine religious and specifically Platonist message.

My own view is that it seems established that the *Aithiopika* is a novel of humour and sophistication in which aspects of Neoplatonic thought are handled playfully and perhaps most importantly Charikleia and Theagenes do not ascend the throne as committed ascetics and rejecters of blood sacrifice. Thus the degree of abstinence embraced by Plotinos or Porphyrios is not put forward as the only valid lifestyle for otherwise virtuous and reverend persons. On the other hand, while the novel is obviously not a handbook for aspiring Neoplatonic ascetics, the presence of Neoplatonic "décor" within it surely argues for a readership who were familiar with and appreciative of such material. Although, particularly in the portrayal of Kalasiris, esoteric areas of Neoplatonic belief such as allegorical interpretations of Homer and the nature of divine epiphanies are treated with irreverent humour, the presentation of Neoplatonism is in no way hostile. Kalasiris is a charlatan and trickster but his aims are undoubtedly benevolent and he maintains a species of integrity in the fulfilment of his purpose. There is nothing in Heliodoros of the bitter satire which Lucian, for

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[144] Winkler 1982
[145] Sandy 1982
[146] Morgan 1989b
[147] Dowden 1996

example, could direct against those he perceived as religious frauds. Although the way of the gymnosophist is not for everyone and the old rituals of animal sacrifice must continue in spite of their disapproval, it was the non-violent scruples of the gymnosophist Sisimithres which meant that he could not simply let Charikleia die when he discovered her exposed as a baby. While the workings of the divine within the novel often function as self conscious references to the workings of the author, this does not seem to me to, of necessity, cancel out any religious or moral message conveyed by the said divine workings.

To take for example, the case of the strange substitution of the body of Thisbe for that of Charikleia, I think the response solicited on the part of the reader is twofold. We are intended, I think, to be amused and impressed by how Heliodoros manages to substitute Charikleia for the corpse of Thisbe in the Egyptian cave (and still more entertained by the fact that she has a letter under her arm telling us how she got there). I do not think we are being expected to nod our heads sagely at this example of the ineluctable workings of fate. Nonetheless, the message that Charikleia lived and Thisbe died because that represented the two characters' respectively deserved fates does not seem to be intended at all ironically. The emphasis on virtue and chastity in particular, in conjunction with a right relation with the divine, is consistent and goes beyond the generic requirements. It is true that such values are not restricted to a specifically Neoplatonic moral or religious outlook. In conjunction, however, with the positively presented Neoplatonic elements, they suggest that the novel was aimed at a readership which, without necessarily being committed to the rigours of the philosophical life or deeply versed in philosophical intricacies, was concerned with matters religious, moral and philosophical and with a positive interest in Neoplatonism and its values. In other words, they were readers who enjoyed the

narrative, esoteric detail and "improving content" of Philostratos' *Life of Apollonios of Tyana* or Porphyrios's *Life of Pythagoras* but had not necessarily read deeply into Plotinos.

The nature of the *Aithiopika*'s self-positioning may be clarified if we look at it within the context of a mid to late fourth-century dating. Increasingly, at least since the time of Constantine, the well educated, upper-class pagans who were clearly the intended readers of the *Aithiopika* would have come to define themselves self-consciously as pagan in the face of increasing Christianisation. Neoplatonism was the dominant pagan ideology from the third century onward and had a crucial role in the construction of a conscious pagan identity in the Julian reaction. Narratives concerning semi-legendary figures such as Pythagoras or the Neopythagorean Apollonios of Tyana, as well as biographical material of later Neoplatonic philosophers, offered alternatives and rivals to the stories of Jesus and the saints with which Christians were able to powerfully enshrine their beliefs and values. In a similar vein, works such as Salloustios' *On the Gods and the Universe* or the *Chaldaean Oracles* provided pagans with designated "holy texts" to set against the Christian Gospels[148]. On the other hand, by the fourth century, certain Neoplatonic values of previous generations simultaneously threatened to dilute educated pagan self-identity and draw followers uncomfortably close to the Christian camp. The Neoplatonic rejection of blood sacrifice and its diminishment of the traditional Olympian deities in favour of the ineffable One did not accord with Julian and post-Julian responses to Christian attacks upon traditional pagan rituals and beliefs. Asceticism was a central Neoplatonic virtue and certain celibate philosophers such as Apollonios of Tyana or Plotinos were praised within the Neoplatonic tradition. The

[148] Wallis 1972 105

celibacy of a handful of dedicated male philosophers was clearly distinguished from the Christian practise of permitting and encouraging young girls to forego marriage and childrearing, condemned by Porphyrios in clear terms[149].

We can perhaps then think of a fourth century Heliodoros as a self–consciously *pagan* writer and thus influenced by the dominant Neoplatonic trends, yet also very much aware of the growing influence and power of Christianity through which pagan sanctuaries were being shut down and traditional rites curtailed. This could lead us to a different insight into why on the one hand; the gymnosophists who condemn animal sacrifice are portrayed as admirable holy men whilst on the other the virtuous king Hydaspes permits the ancient rites to continue[150]. Such variation and compromise between belief and practise reflects the accommodations made by many Neoplatonists between their ascetic beliefs and traditional pagan piety.

> "Later Neoplatonists had more difficulty, since animal sacrifice, involving consumption of part of the victim, was a feature of many of the traditional rites they wished to defend. Here again Proclus' attitude was stricter than that of mosst of his contemporaries and caused concern on his teachers' part for his health (V.Pr.12); at sacrifices, however, he consented to taste a little meat for the sake of the ritual (ibid.19). The Neoplatonic attitude to such points thus remained flexible and far removed from extreme asceticism.[151]"

We can also construct an alternative reading of the *Aithiopika* to the polarisation between seeing it as a text which deliberately and unambiguously communicates a specifically Platonist "message" and a text which despite its constant religious and Neoplatonic references has no religious or philosophic agenda at all but is purely focused on itself as a masterpiece of literary technique.

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[149] Brown 1990 181

With the innovations in narrative structure and content outlined above, comes another factor which sets the *Aithiopika* apart from its fellows. The *Aithiopika* is not, like the other narratives, concerned solely with the relationship between the hero and the heroine. There is an alternative driving force to the narrative and it is centred upon Charikleia. Charikleia's decision to leave Delphi is precipitated not only by her wish to marry Theagenes and avoid the marriage to Alkamenes which is being planned for her by Charikles, but also because Kalasiris has told her that her real mother Persinna the queen of Ethiopia is anxious to reclaim her daughter and thus urges her to;

> "...exchange the life of a stranger beneath an alien roof for one that is truly your own in a ruling house, where you will share the royal throne with him whom you love best..."
>
> "...ξένου τε καὶ ὀθνείου γνήσιον καὶ ἄρχοντα βίον ἀνταλλάξασθαι σὺν τῷ φιλτάτῳ βασιλεύουσαν...[152]"

The force of the narrative is directed at drawing Charikleia towards her true home where she is finally acknowledged by her parents. As well as the words of Kalasiris, we have the prophecy of the Delphic Oracle which predicts that Charikleia and Theagenes will arrive in Ethiopia where they will be garlanded in acknowledgement of their virtue - a reference to the fact that their virginity singled them out as suitable sacrificial victims which are traditionally garlanded. The importance of the couple's eventual arrival in Ethiopia is given at least equal emphasis as their elopement together from Delphi.

The *Aithiopika* is thus not just a love story in which a young couple find fulfilment together. It is also the story of how Charikleia found her true parents, and as such, it is a narrative in which the hero can be seen as playing only a supporting role in the

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[150] Sandy 1982 165
[151] Wallis 1972 10
[152] Hld. 4.13

heroine's personal drama. This aspect makes it unique within the genre as we know it. While the narrative of *Kallirhoe* is centred on the experiences of its eponymous heroine, the main telos of the plot is to reunite her with her husband Chaireas. There are no issues that are peculiar to Kallirhoe and outside of her relationship with Chaireas. Even her relationship with Dionysius is bound up with the matter of preserving her child by Chaireas. The theme of Charikleia's return to her land and family on the other hand is not directly subsidiary to the fulfilment of her relationship with Theagenes in the same way.

Theagenes' role in the novel is a secondary one. He could almost be described as the romance element in the story of how Charikleia returned to the land of her birth[153]. Of all the heroes and heroines of the five novels, he is the only major protagonist within the genre whose parents are not introduced to the reader. We are told that he claims to be descended from Achilles, but we are never told the names of his mother and father. At the end of the novel we find him not finally restored to his home city after his adventures in unknown lands, but permanently transplanted to a country far from his birth, where he knows no-one but his bride, the parents of whom have only just been restrained from sacrificing him. Beyond the assurance that he is willing to accompany Charikleia anywhere[154], we are not invited to consider how Theagenes might feel about never seeing his own family or native land again or what the feelings of his parents might be (if he has parents) that their son never returned from his expedition to Delphi. In this respect the novel is guilty of a lack of "symmetry" between hero and heroine.

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[153] Winkler 1982 (329f in Swain 1999) ascribes Kalasiris' puzzlement with regard to the oracle concerning the ultimate fate of Charikleia and Theagenes to the fact that he had come only in quest of Charikleia. Theagenes as fulfilling the romantic component of the novel is, so far as Kalasiris is concerned, initially an unlooked for extra element. Later we come to understand that the workings of Fate had caused the couple to arrive in Ethiopia together in order to bring to an end the tradition of human sacrifice.

Much of the story of Charikleia's origins is first relayed to us by means of the complex pattern of narration that occurs in book two. Kalasiris tells Knemon what he was told by Charikles about what was related to him about Charikleia by the Ethiopian gymnosophist Sisimithres. By plunging his readers *in media res* and with his intricate use of alternate first and second person narrative, Heliodoros has combined the novelistic plot formula with that of the *Odyssey*.

While the stylistic similarities of the *Aithiopika* (and the thematic similarities of the Greek novel as a whole) and the *Odyssey* have been often noted[155], this has not been developed into a discussion of the implications of seeing Charikleia herself in the very male role of Odysseus[156]. The narratological complexities of the novel when considered in conjunction with other factors will however make the identification of Charikleia as a female Odysseus with what that implies in drawing her characterisation beyond the perimeters of the novelistic heroine a valid one.

To begin with, the basic outline of her story and that of the Homeric hero share certain correspondences[157]. Charikleia has to leave her native city of Meroe; due to events outside her control as Odysseus reluctantly leaves Ithaca to take part in the Trojan War. Charikleia spends around ten years in exile in Delphi (between the ages of seven and seventeen), as Odysseus is obliged to spend ten years at Troy. In the tenth year Charikleia, like Odysseus, sets out on her travels again, wandering over the Mediterranean, enduring much danger and hardship and eventually returns to the bosom of her family where her identity is confirmed by a distinguishing physical mark. She is by then in her late teens and her return thus occurs a little short of twenty

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[154] Hld. 4.13

[155] For example Pinheiro 1991 discusses Kalasiris' Odyssean role as narrator.

[156] Although see Haynes 2003 69 and n 56 for an approach to the idea and in particular the suggestion that Kalasiris and Charikleia share the role of Odysseus. Also see Whitmarsh 22 in Miles 1999 in which Charikleia is described as "the most important of the several "Odyssean" figures in this text."

[157] Whitmarsh 21in Miles 1999.

years since she left.

Certain elements of Charikleia's characterisation are also reminiscent of that of Odysseus. In the course of her adventures Charikleia finds herself in situations from which she has to extricate herself with the Oddysean gifts of cunning and verbal facility. Perhaps the best example of this is the scene already alluded to, which occurs at the beginning of the novel and in which Charikleia is asked both to give an account of herself and to reply to the brigand Thyamis' offer of marriage[158]. After much show of proper, womanly reluctance to put herself forward, Charikleia comes up with a detailed and entirely fictitious account of the identity of herself and Theagenes and of how they came to be found in the midst of treasure and corpses. Woven into this account is the perfect excuse for why her wedding to Thyamis, to which she consents in principle, must be delayed.

In a similar way, Odysseus, as he enters the hostile territory of his usurped home, answers each enquiry as to his identity, with a new and plausible invented account of himself and of how he came to be a wandering beggar[159].

On more than one occasion the text of the *Aithiopika* makes associations between the story of Charikleia and that of Odysseus more explicitly. When Charikleia and Theagenes plan to disguise themselves as beggars, Knemon says jokingly that they will ask for falchions and cauldrons rather than scraps[160] thus reversing the point of the disparaging comment thrown at Odysseus in his beggar guise[161].

At one point, the ghost of Odysseus actually appears to Kalasiris in a dream[162]. He reproaches Kalasiris for having failed to pay his respects to him when in the vicinity

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[158] See 34 above

[159] See Most 1989 for discussion of the conventions and dangers surrounding self revelation before strangers in Greek literature with regard to the Odyssey.

[160] Hld. 2.19

[161] *Odyssey* 17.222

[162] Hld. 5.22

of Ithaca and predicts that sufferings by land and sea such as Odysseus himself suffered will afflict Kalasiris and his entourage as a result of this neglect. By these words, the story of the *Aithiopika* is explicitly related to that of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus concludes his visitation by passing on Penelope's good wishes to Charikleia with whom she has found favour due to their shared regard for chastity. He also passes on her assurance that her adventures will end happily. This codicil invites comparison between the characters of Penelope and Charikleia. As aforementioned, they do share the virtue of remaining chaste under pressure and they achieve this often by similar methods. Charikleia keeps Thyamis at bay by promising her consent to marriage only when she can lay down her office of priestess[163]. Penelope keeps all her besieging suitors at bay by promising to consent to marriage with one of them but only when she has completed the weaving of her father's shroud[164]. Appeasement and delay are thus key tactics of the two women and both wear the adjective "prudent" well.

On the other hand, a sharp contrast between Penelope and Charikleia is evident. Penelope sits at home throughout the *Odyssey*, waiting for her husband's return. Charikleia is engaged upon her own journey home, facing adventures similar, as is pointed out to us, to those faced by Odysseus. She is accompanied by her fiancé who has thrown his lot in with hers. Charikleia is therefore a somewhat disquieting blend of husband and wife.

At one point Theagenes is compared to Odysseus[165], when he is mentioned as having a boar scar on his thigh but if anything I think it serves to alert us to how *unlike* Odysseus he is. He never makes his way home but instead is kept away by a woman, Charikleia, while although Odysseus is temporarily distracted by Calypso and Circe, he finally resists the temptation to make his home with them and returns to his own

[163] Hld. 1.22

land. Theagenes' nature is very different from that of Odysseus. He is impetuous and without guile. Throughout the novel, he often has to be restrained by Kalasiris or Charikleia from acting or speaking rashly[166]. He can be better compared to his alleged ancestor, the brave and temperamental Achilles, although as Kalasiris points out, he lacks that hero's savagery[167]. He can only be compared to Odysseus as far as Charikleia can be compared to Penelope. He is Odysseus in as far as he is Penelope's husband. Like the *Odyssey*, the *Aithiopika* offers a paradigm of an ideal partnership between a man and a woman which is characterised by loyalty in the face of all hardships and temptations, although the *Aithiopika* differs in applying a rigorous standard of sexual fidelity from the male partner as well as the female. In this light, Charikleia and Theagenes can be seen collectively as representing Odysseus and Penelope.

Just after the epiphany of Odysseus comes the attack by the pirate Trachinos. The result leads us back to the scene of feasting and devastation with which the novel opens in its famously enigmatic fashion. There are brigands lying dead in the midst of a feast. Although some have been killed with makeshift weapons such as axes, firebrands and stones, we are told that most of them were slain by arrows. It is not until the middle of the novel that we discover the true source of their deaths. This initial scene of feasting and death may well however, immediately trigger off another literary association in the readers' mind, the scene with which the *Odyssey* culminates, the shooting of Penelope's insolent suitors by her returning husband. This scene is recalled to us again as Kalasiris finally begins to unfold the events leading up

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[164] *Odyssey* 2.293-110

[165] Hld. 5.5, *Odyssey* 19.392-475

[166] E.g. Hld. 4.6 Kalasiris restrains Theagenes from rushing, sword in hand to claim Charikleia for himself as soon as he learns that she loves him, Hld. 5.24 Kalasiris and Charikleia hold Theagenes back from fighting Trachinos' pirates, Hld. 9.24 Theagenes expects Charikleia to claim her position as daughter of the Ethiopian monarchs immediately rather than waiting for the right time.

to the scene of massacre.

Kalasiris, Charikleia and Theagenes have been captured by the pirate captain Trachinos, who announces his intention of marrying Charikleia. Pretending to acquiesce, Kalasiris incites Peloros, Trachinos' deputy who had distinguished himself in the capture of the ship carrying Kalasiris and his protégés to make a counter claim for Charikleia. Peloros responds that if Trachinos does not give up his claim he will have a "bitter wedding". This rare compound "*pikrogamos*" is known from the *Odyssey* where it is used several times particularly with reference to the impending fate of the unwelcome suitors of Penelope[168]. The educated reader of Heliodoros is thus reminded again of the destruction of Penelope's suitors.

What then takes place in the narrative, as Peloros publicly challenges Trachinos for Charikleia, is a reworking and blend of two Homeric episodes; the quarrelling of Agamemnon and Achilles over the captured Chryseis[169] and the aforementioned slaying of suitors. In both of these episodes, men fight over a woman who passively awaits the outcome. In the present instance, once the brigands start fighting amongst themselves, Charikleia again absorbs the characteristics of Odysseus and Penelope by slaying her own suitors. Theagenes as we have seen is not without glory. He plays his part in eliminating the pirates in open fight but it is clear that while displaying more conspicuous courage in the engagement he does not wreak destruction on an equivalent scale to that achieved by Charikleia[170]. In this too, Charikleia may be compared to Odysseus, that she achieves her ends through cunning and from the shadows rather than relying on the physical strength and bravado typical of the likes

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[167] Hld. 4.5

[168] *Odyssey* 1.266,4.346,17.137.

[169] See Dowden 1996 for discussion of the textual relationship between Hld. 5.30-32 and Iliad 1.12-304.

[170] Hld. 1.1 emphasises that *most* of the deaths had been caused by the arrows which we later discover were fired by Charikleia.

of Achilles, with whom Theagenes was assimilated upon our initial introduction to him.

In conclusion; we have seen that Charikleia both fulfils and transcends the generic requirements of the novelistic heroine.

Like Anthia, the heroine of the novel at its most elemental, she is chaste, brave and ingenious and throughout many perilous adventures proves her constancy to her lover with whom she is united in wedded bliss at the novel's end.

The character and story of Charikleia are however of much greater complexity than that of Anthia's though without the psychological experimentation of Longus or the undermining irony of Achilles Tatios. We now have a heroine with a past and with her own personal philosophical and religious preoccupations. This tempts us to relate her character to the cultural, religious and philosophical context of the late pagan period to which the novel can be roughly dated in ways that are hard to imagine in the cases of the other heroines who have little life, personality, or opinions beyond their immediate reactions to emotions and events.

The structure of the *Aithiopika* in particular seems to deliberately and literally draw the narrative beyond the normal scope of the novel in that it recentres itself in a world which is geographically and otherwise alien to the Greek polis. This again would appear to urge us to look beyond the norms of the values, conventions and beliefs as presented to us in the other novels whose goal is a safe return home to the norms of Hellenistic life. It is also, as we have seen, remarkable in its focus on the origins and return of Charikleia so that her story contains and goes beyond the story of her love for Theagenes. This tale of a virgin priestess on a quest to the ends of the Earth which is also the story of a female Odysseus on her way home to be joined under the eyes of her parents in lawful matrimony with the man she loves is both very much a typical

novel but perhaps much more.

Chapter Two Charikleia as Virgin

Pre-Christian Precedents for Charikleia's Vow of Virginity

Introduction

Discussion of the reasons for Charikleia's commitment to virginity within the *Aithiopika* is confined to a tantalising passage in Book Two. Here, Kalasiris reports to Knemon what Charikles told him about why Charikleia refuses marriage. We thus have no direct explanation from Charikleia herself about her decision, but only a rather cryptic third hand report. In this section I will be contextualising what we are told about Charikleia's commitment to virginity in terms of traditional pagan Hellenic culture. To do this I will be investigating possible points of comparison between what we are told about Charikleia's commitment to virginity and instances of treatment and representation of the theme of commitment to celibacy within the classical tradition.

This will be divided into two broad subsections.

First, I will consider the mythology surrounding the virginity of Artemis and her companions and the connection with this mythology to initiatory rituals for young girls. The close relationship between Artemis and Charikleia throughout the *Aithiopika* will be considered in this context with reference made to the patronage by Artemis of Leukippe and Anthia in their respective novels. I will then go on to examine the related issue of the historical evidence for virgin priestesses for the light that it can shed on what we are told about Charikleia's priesthood and its nebulous relationship to her commitment to virginity. As well as the more strictly historical evidence for virgin priestesses I will also be adducing anecdotes, myths and legends

concerning virgin priestesses, in particular, with reference to those in which priestesses are either abducted or who voluntarily renege on their vows of chastity.

The second section will consist of an in depth comparison of the treatment of themes of virginity and sexual morality in the *Aithiopika* and Euripides' *Hippolytos*.

By comparing the story of Charikleia with the treatment of the closely related themes of virginity, Artemis and priestesses within the Greek literary tradition I hope to establish some of the cultural and literary connections that Heliodoros can have expected his readers to make when reading about Charikleia. An example might be that of a reader who linked the proud disparagement of Aphrodite by Charikleia with the characterisation of Hippolytos and thus expect her to attract Nemesis. We will then consider the extent to which Heliodoros goes on to fulfil or undermine his readers' expectations. Thus we can go a little way towards uncovering how the novelist would have anticipated and guided his reader's reception and interpretation of Charikleia's character and story.

I will begin by quoting the crucial passage in full as it will be analysed in some detail.

> "Yet, for all her qualities, she is, for me the source of a pain that will not heal. You see, she has renounced marriage and is resolved to stay a virgin all her life; she has dedicated herself to the sacred service of Artemis and spends most of her time hunting and practising archery. Life is a torment to me: I had hoped to marry her to my sister's son, a pleasant young man with nice manners and a civil tongue, but his hopes have been thwarted by her cruel decision. I have tried soft words, promises, and reasoned arguments to persuade her, but all to no avail. But the worst part is that I am, as the saying goes, hoist with my own petard: she makes great play with that subtlety in argument whose various forms I taught her as a basis for choosing the best way of life. Virginity is her god, and she has elevated it to the level of the immortals, pronouncing it without stain, without impurity, without corruption. But Eros and Aphrodite and all nuptial revelry she curses to damnation."

"Ἀλλ' αὕτη τοιαύτη τις οὖσα λυπεῖ με λύπην ἀνίατον· ἀπηγόρευται γὰρ αὐτῇ γάμος καὶ παρθενεύειν τὸν πάντα βίον διατείνεται καὶ τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι ζάκορον ἑαυτὴν ἐπιδοῦσα θήραις τὰ πολλὰ σχολάζει καὶ ἀσκεῖ τοξείαν. Ἐμοὶ δέ ἐστιν ὁ βίος ἀφόρητος ἐλπίσαντι μὲν ἀδελφῆς ἐμαυτοῦ παιδὶ

ταύτην ἐκδώσειν καὶ μάλα γε ἀστείῳ καὶ χαρίεντι λόγον τε καὶ ἦθος νεανίσκῳ, ἀποτυγχάνοντι δὲ διὰ τὴν ταύτης ἀπηνῆ κρίσιν.
Οὔτε γὰρ θεραπεύων οὔτε ἐπαγγελλόμενος οὔτε λογισμοὺς ἀνακινῶν πεῖσαι δεδύνημαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ χαλεπώτατον τοῖς ἐμοῖς, τὸ τοῦ λόγου, κατ' ἐμοῦ κέχρηται πτεροῖς καὶ τὴν ἐκ λόγων πολυπειρίαν, ἣν ποικίλην ἐδιδαξάμην πρὸς κατασκευὴν τοῦ τὸν ἄριστον ἡρῆσθαι βίον, ἐπανατείνεται ἐκθειάζουσα μὲν παρθενίαν καὶ ἐγγὺς ἀθανάτων ἀποφαίνουσα, ἄχραντον καὶ ἀκήρατον καὶ ἀδιάφθορον ὀνομάζουσα, Ἔρωτα δὲ καὶ Ἀφροδίτην καὶ πάντα γαμήλιον θίασον ἀποσκορακίζουσα."[171]

Artemis and Initiation

There is much in the preceding passage which would strike the reader immediately as familiar. When we read that Charikleia has dedicated herself to Artemis and spends her time hunting in the woods, we are reminded of the train of nymphs who were said to share Artemis' virginal woodland existence and who frequently make an appearance in mythography. An example is the description of Daphne and her way of life in Ovid's *Metamorphoses.* This bears some striking similarities to what we are told about Charikleia;

> "...but she fled the very name of love, rejoicing in the deep fastnesses of the woods, and in the spoils of beasts which she had snared, vying with the virgin Phoebe. A single fillet bound her locks all unarranged. Many sought her; but she, averse to all suitors, impatient of control and without thought for man, roamed the pathless woods, nor cared at all that Hymen, love, or wedlock might be. Often her father said: "Daughter, you owe me a son-in-law"; and often : "Daughter, you owe me grandsons," But she, hating the wedding torch as if it were a thing of evil, would blush rosy red over her fair face, and clinging, around her father's neck with coaxing arms, would say: "O father, dearest, grant me to enjoy perpetual virginity. Her father has already granted this to Diana." He indeed, yielded to her request."
>
> "fugit altera nomen amantis
> silvarum latebris captivarumque ferarum
> exuviis gaudens innuptaeque aemula Phoebes:
> vitta coercebat positos sine lege capillos.
> Multi illam petiere, illa aversata petentes
> Inpatiens expersque viri nemora avia lustrat
> Nec quid Hymen, quid Amor, quid sint conubia curat.
> Saepe pater dixit: "generum mihi filia debes,"

[171] *Hld.*.2.33

Saepe pater dixit: "debes mihi, nata, nepotes";
Illa velut crimen taedas exosa iugales
Pulchra verecundo suffuderat ora rubore
Inque patris blandis haerens cervice lacertis
"da mihi perpetua, genitor carissime," dixit
"virginitate frui! Dedit hoc pater ante Dianae,"
ille quidem obsequitur"[172]

Like Charikles, Daphne's father feels his daughter "owes" it to him to make a suitable marriage and to provide him with grandchildren. Daphne, on the other hand, like Charikleia, shuns all mention of love and marriage and cites the case of Artemis herself as precedent for being granted the privilege of perpetual virginity by her father.

Clearly then, the description of Charikleia's initial insistence upon a life of perpetual virginity, her sylvan activities and her devotion to Artemis owes much to the mythographic tradition concerning nymphs who followed Artemis. The trope of the young girl who shrinks fearfully from marriage and sexual initiation had thus already had a long history in Hellenic culture.

The frequent occurrence in Greek mythology of young women who reject marriage and hunt with Artemis in the woods was not indicative of a trend in classical Greek culture towards female celibacy and an independent lifestyle, rather the opposite.

Myths concerning the virginal attendants of Artemis follow a common pattern. The virgin nymph is never permitted to continue in her chaste way of life. She is invariably pursed by a male predator (usually divine). If he succeeds in raping or seducing her, she is often subject to the wrath of either Hera or Artemis resulting in her death or transformation (Kallisto for example was turned into a bear by Artemis as

[172] Ovid *Met.*1.474-488

punishment for being raped and impregnated by Zeus[173]). On the other hand, if the nymph does manage to escape with her virginity intact, the price is the loss of her humanity as she is metamorphosed to make her inaccessible to her pursuer[174]. Examples of the latter include of course Daphne who was turned into a laurel tree to escape Apollo, Syrinx who escaped Pan by metamorphosing into a reed[175] and Arethusa who became a spring of water to evade the pursuit of Alpheios[176]. Kore "the maiden" is separated from her mother by the forcible abduction and marriage of Hades and is exiled to the land of the dead[177]. The story of Narcissus who is punished for his denial of sexuality and wastes away having been fated to fall hopelessly in love with his own image[178] provides a male counterpoint to these tales suggesting that for boys, too reconfiguration as a sexual being could be seen as a liminal and therefore dangerous phase that needed to be successfully negotiated.

The death or metamorphoses of the young girl can also symbolise her death as a virgin in preparation for her reawakening as an adult woman. "Nymph" is also the Greek word for bride[179]. Artemis is not only the goddess of virginity – she also presides over marriage and childbirth –which often of course did indeed bring death to the new bride. These stories, with their dominant elements of metamorphoses, death and a liminal existence, have been linked to initiation rituals for pre-pubertal girls. Such rituals sometimes involved the girls enacting a feral mode of life in the service of Artemis prior to the domestication of marriage. The most well-known example is that of the *Arkteia* which has been associated with the story of the virgin

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[173] Ovid *Met* 2,401-530
[174] Parry 1964
[175] Ovid. *Met* 1,689-712
[176] Ovid *Met* 5.572-641
[177] Ovid. *Met* 5.346-571
[178] Ovid *Met* 339-510
[179] Burkert 1985 150-152

Kallisto[180]. This blurring of the concepts of death and marriage is articulated clearly in the *Aithiopika* itself. Thyamis has a dream in which in a temple of Isis surrounded by the bodies of sacrificed animals, Charikleia is presented to him by the goddess herself saying that he should have her and have her not and slay her and she should not be slain. To Thyamis, the obvious interpretation of the dream though one influenced by his own desires is that he should marry Charikleia. The slaying signified the taking of her virginity and that he should no longer have her meant that having undergone this initiation she being now a woman rather than a virgin is no longer quite the same person[181]. Although his interpretation happens to be incorrect, it accords well with the juxtaposition between the ideas of a girl dying and a girl marrying which runs through the *Aithiopika* and through pagan Greek culture.

Dowden suggests that the dead maidens of mythology and the cult centred upon their tombs in historical times were a means by which society expressed and negotiated the fundamental change in a woman's life and identity when she moved from virgin to wife[182]. The figure of a dead maiden is symbolic of the loss of maidenhood for each individual girl and her setting aside one stage of life before taking up a new one.

The figure of Artemis and the role of Charikleia as her priestess and protégé are present throughout Charikleia's story. At the start of Charikleia's journey to Ethiopia she is Artemis' acolyte and imitates her in her way of life[183]. The connection to Artemis is maintained throughout the novel; the goddess allegedly appears to Kalasiris in a vision commending Charikleia to his care and bidding him to lead her towards Egypt and from thence to where it pleased the gods she should go[184].

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[180] Bremmer 1994 69,
[181] Hld. 1.18-19
[182] Dowden 1989
[183] Hld. 2.33
[184] Hld. 3.11

Charikleia's elopement and journey to Ethiopia therefore takes place under Artemis' auspices.

From our initial introduction to Charikleia and onwards we are invited to compare her with the goddess. The speculations of the Egyptian bandits concerning her identity in the opening pages of the novel offer an interesting insight into the complexities of Charikleia's identity with Artemis. Before spotting Charikleia, the bandits have come upon a scene of devastation – a beach littered with dead men, mostly killed by arrows. They then discover Charikleia, wreathed with laurel, the headdress of Apollo the brother of Artemis- she is not only armed with a bow and arrows but has a sword placed across her lap. This intimidating appearance leads the bandits to speculate that she might be Artemis[185]. The matter is complicated by the fact that in this initial portrait of Charikleia, Heliodoros is drawing on at least two iconographic traditions. Charikleia is bristling with weaponry but she is also mourning over a wounded and seemingly moribund young man. This would explain why the bandits also identify her as Isis, the sight recalling the story of how Isis mourned over the dismembered body of her husband Osiris (the image also recalls the iconography of the Madonna, weeping over the body of Christ). The fact that the scene takes place on the bank of the Nile deepens the association. Charikleia thus hovers between the appearance of a virgin goddess and a goddess whose role as wife and mother is central to her cult. Charikleia's passionate display of grief over the body of the apparently expired Theagenes, however, convinces the bandits that the girl must be mortal.

"How could a divine being kiss a corpse with such passion?"

"...ποῦ δ' ἂν νεκρὸν σῶμα φιλοίη δαίμων οὕτω περιπαθῶς;"[186]

[185] Hld. 1.2

This seems slightly odd when we recall the devotion and passion lavished by Isis on the corpse of Osiris. This point might however serve to remind readers of Artemis' cold withdrawal from the deathbed of Hippolytos[187] in Euripides' play[188]. By falling in love and thus renouncing her lifelong virginity, Charikleia has therefore put herself on a level with the rest of humanity. This might on the one hand be regarded as a loss – when the bandits observe Charikleia's passionate, human gesture they no longer stand back from her in awe as from an immortal but move forward to take her prisoner. It also means that she has the emotional range proper to a mortal woman rather than the emotionless and distant stance of a goddess such as Artemis as she is portrayed in *Hippolytos* for example. An approving authorial comment on Charikleia's devotion to Theagenes indicates that her emotional display is to be viewed positively[189].

When, halfway through the novel, we discover the true cause of the scene of devastation on the beach it is confirmed that Charikleia was indeed responsible for much of the carnage[190]. Like Artemis intruded upon by Actaeon[191], she had responded ruthlessly to a threat to her chastity. The mysterious and silent death she brings from shooting from the shadows is like the slaughter of the Argives by plague sent by the arrows of Apollo in the first book of the *Iliad*[192] or the death brought by Artemis and Apollo to the luckless children of Niobe[193].

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[186] Hld. 1.2
[187] Eurip*Hipp* 1437-9
[188] To fourth century pagan readers the words might also echo the distaste which contemporary pagans expressed for a cult which they saw as morbidly focused on the tombs of martyrs and the death of an executed criminal Eunapius 472-3
[189] Hld. 1.2
[190] Hld. 5.32, Charikleia shoots at the pirates. At Hld. 1.1 it is emphasised that most of the dead were victims of arrows.
[191] Ovid. *Met.* 3.138-252
[192] *Iliad* 1.44-52
[193] Ovid *Met.* 6.146-312

Although Charikleia's skill in archery is only employed in this instance in the novel, her bow and quiver are alluded to throughout as vital accessories, though their importance as symbols of her priesthood of Artemis is usually stressed rather than their practical application. We see Theagenes regard the task of carrying Charikleia's weaponry as an honour rather than a common burden as the bow was an attribute of Apollo[194]. At the end of the novel, when she has reached her destination, she is consecrated as priestess of the Moon[195], a position open only to married women[196].

Artemis is frequently assimilated with moon goddesses such as Selene or the Roman Diana. The changing aspect of the Moon is often associated with the successive phases and menstrual cycles occurring through a woman's reproductive life.

It was Artemis and Apollo who appeared to Kalasiris urging him to guide Charikleia and Theagenes to Ethiopia thus precipitating their wanderings. By entrusting Kalasiris with the task of guiding the pair into their adult roles both gods can be understood as fulfilling their initiatory functions.

At the end of their adventures and the beginning of their marriage and their adult lives of responsibility they are finally committed to the care of the Sun and Moon gods who represent the Apollo and Artemis in another aspect. The link between the Sun god of Ethiopia and Apollo at Delphi is made explicit by Charikles who insists that Hydaspes as priest of the Sun should regard the abduction of Charikleia from the temple of Apollo as an affront to his own religion, Apollo and Helios being one and the same[197]. This is before Charikles has come to understand that his stepdaughter's abduction, return to the land of her birth and marriage to Theagenes is the fulfilment of the

[194] Hld. 5.5
[195] Hld. 10.41
[196] Hld. 10.21
[197] Hld. 10.36

puzzling prophecy uttered at Delphi just prior to the fateful meeting of the young couple. We can therefore see Apollo and Artemis who in their epiphany to Kalasiris sent Charikleia and Theagenes off on their adventures as alternative manifestations of the same deities as the Sun and the Moon under whose protection the young pair comes at the end of their Odyssey.

Charikleia saw her devotion to Artemis as requiring from her a life long commitment to virginity like Hippolytos or the nymphs of mythology. In terms of cult practice it is, in fact, the role of the virgin Artemis to guard virgins until the time of their marriage and see them safely over the liminal period into womanhood before coming again to their protection in the shape of Eilitheia goddess of childbirth. Proper devotion to the goddess of virginity is shown by young girls in offering a lock of hair and other mementoes of childhood at the time of marriage by way of giving thanks to Artemis for her protection throughout their childhood and to request her protection in the dangers of childbirth to come. Artemis did not expect girls to honour her by remaining in a state of childhood forever[198].

Other novelistic heroines are closely associated with Artemis with respect to their status as most beautiful of young virgins. In the *Ephesiaka*, Anthia presented herself as the chief follower and quasi representative of Artemis when she processed with the other unmarried girls at a festival[199] and in Achilles Tatios' novel, Leukippe called upon Artemis in her role as a protector of virgins.[200] This acceptance of Artemis' patronage in no way entailed on the girls a refusal of legitimate marriage. We are told that Anthia and the other young girls in the Ephesian procession were not only there to honour Artemis but also to parade themselves before prospective husbands. Clearly

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[198] Cole 1998 34
[199] Xen. Eph.1.1. See Dowden 1989 40
[200] Ach.Tat. 7.21

no contradiction was perceived between the two. Indeed it is partly for the very purpose of achieving legitimate marriage that the protection of a young girl's virginity is of such importance[201].

Myths and rituals concerning young girls who refuse to marry and live outside the community therefore function to reconfirm the usual order of society; wild young girls inevitably have to accept marriage and childrearing as their lot.

Myths about maidens who wanted to remain virgins and follow Artemis are thus stories about the inevitability of the end of maidenhood and these myths are closely linked with initiation rituals for young girls to prepare them for their future lives as wives and mothers. Our conclusion therefore must be that these myths do not exemplify any trend towards female celibacy in classical Greek culture. Rather they indicate the opposite. The point of these narratives was the inevitability of marriage and the doomed nature of any attempts for a girl to thwart this destiny.

The association of Charikleia with the nymphs who follow Artemis thus affirms what the reader already knows about Charikleia by the time they read this passage in book two; that her attempt to live free of marriage and sexuality will prove short-lived. From this perspective Charikleia's reluctance to wed could be dismissed as nothing more mysterious than the cultural stereotype of the coy young girl who has to be brought to accept her sexual destiny after a token show of reluctance[202]. What prompts us to enquire further is that Charikleia is not a woodland nymph but a learned and pious young woman who has some mysterious ideological support for her strange resolution.

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[201] Ach.Tat. 8.5 Kleitophon with unblushing hypocrisy asks Aphrodite not to be offended by the couple's outstanding devotion to Artemis and chastity assuring her that they were only waiting for the presence of Leukippe's father in order to honour Aphrodite through the celebration of lawful marriage.
[202] Clark I 1998 14

Priestesses and Virginity

The relationship between Charikleia's dedication to virginity and her role as acolyte of Artemis is at first sight puzzling. She clearly holds an official and important post as attendant of Artemis at Delphi as we can see in the central part she plays in the ritual at the Pythian Games. Virginity is also clearly integral to this position as is evidenced for example by her segregation in a separate residence[203]. Charikleia's determination to reject marriage and remain a virgin is however described by Charikles, priest of Apollo as a perverse and heartbreaking personal decision rather than a condition imposed by her priestly vocation.

A clue to this confusing situation may perhaps be revealed by looking at the fictional persona which Charikleia devises for herself at the beginning of the novel in her skilful address to Thyamis. Like the versions of himself which Odysseus offers to the curious, Charikleia's story is a blend of invention and truth. Charikleia is truthful about her position as ministrant to Artemis but she tells us that she is holding the office for only one year. If she is to marry Thyamis as he wishes, he must allow her to formally give up her priesthood along with its insignia at an altar of Apollo[204]. For Charikleia's invented yet closely parallel persona, the role of virgin priestess is a temporary one to be held for one year after which she is free to marry. This would seem to provide a vital clue to understanding the nature of Charikleia's priesthood at Delphi which is not so clearly spelt out.

We are, I believe, intended to assume that Charikleia held the office of virgin priestess of Artemis up to this point with her father's blessing but that the expectation had been that she would lay down the office when it was time for her to marry. Charikleia has

[203] Hld. 3.6
[204] Hld. 1.22

confounded her stepfather by refusing to see her seclusion and dedication to Artemis as a liminal phase in her life but on her own initiative has chosen to regard it as a personal lifelong vocation. This interpretation is supported by evidence available to us about actual priestesses of Artemis and other deities in historical times. While rare posts did demand a lifelong commitment to virginity, most priestly offices for which virginity was a requirement were in fact tenanted temporarily by young girls who were expected to relinquish their office when the time came for them to marry[205]. Other offices simply demanded that their holders be celibate for the time of their tenancy, that the woman had been previously married was not a bar to office.

The famed example of the Roman Vestal Virgins illustrates how alien and unnatural it could seem in Greco-Roman pagan society for women to live without husband and children throughout their childbearing years. Suetonius, for example, indicates that despite the great status and privileges bestowed on a Vestal Virgin, parents were far from keen that their daughters should attain this position;

> "He [Augustus] increased the priesthood in numbers and dignity, and in privileges too, being particularly generous to the College of Vestal Virgins. Moreover, when the death of a Virgin caused a vacancy in this College, and many citizens busily tried to keep their daughters' names off the list of candidates - one of whom would be chosen by lot – Augustus took a solemn oath that if any of his granddaughters had been of eligible age he would have proposed her"
>
> "sacerdotum et numerum et dignitatem sed et commoda auxit, praecipue Vestalium uirginum. cumque in demortuae locum aliam capi oporteret ambirentque multi ne filias in sortem darent, adiurauit, si cuiusquam neptium suarum competeret aetas, oblaturum se fuisse eam."[206]

Famously the Vestal Virgins were subject to the awful penalty of being buried alive if they broke their vows of chastity. This is suggestive not only of the great religious

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[205] Dillon 2002 77
"Virginity for women priests was usually a temporary requirement, and young virgin girls appointed as priests ordinarily relinquished their roles when the time for marriage came, emphasising that marriage was the role allocated by society to the adolescent woman."
[206] Suet. *Augustus* .31

importance attached to their virginity but also that a terrifying deterrent was seen to be necessary in order to enforce chastity upon women who after all, had not volunteered to remain celibate for thirty years from the age of 7-10.

The unique status of the Vestal Virgins in Roman society and the mixture of awe and pity with which they were regarded are also illustrative of the possibilities that can be open in a patriarchal society for a woman to transcend the prescribed role for her gender if only she gives up marriage, sexuality and childbearing as the price[207]. This will be a very important factor to consider when we come to consider the celibacy of early Christian women.

Pausanias provides us with examples of young virgin priestesses, who were dedicated only on a temporary basis[208]. We will now turn to a series of narratives concerning these maiden attendants which will be seen to have a significant bearing on the story of Charikleia.

Abducted Virgin Priestesses

Among the maiden dedicatees mentioned by Pausanias, of particular interest is an anecdote concerning a priestess of the cult of Triklarian Artemis which is peculiarly relevant to Charikleia's story. At the Ionian's sanctuary of Triklarian Artemis at which they held a yearly festival and vigil, there resided a virgin priestess who held her position

[207] See Beard 1980 for a discussion of the ambivalent status of Vestal Virgins.
[208] Paus. 2.33.2, 7.26.5
In one instance he describes a cult of Herakles at which the serving priestess is dedicated to lifetime virginity but it is stressed in the aetiology of the cult that this was originally instituted as a *punishment* for a young woman who refused Herakles' advances. Pausanias thinks it unlikely that Herakles would in fact have treated the daughter of a friend so harshly. 9.27.6-7.

"...until she was due to be given to a man"

"...ἐς ὃ ἀποστέλλεσθαι παρὰ ἄνδρα ἔμελλε..[209]

One particular priestess named Komaitho was of remarkable beauty. A youth called Melanippos, foremost among his contemporaries particularly in beauty, falls in love with her and his feelings are returned. In this introductory scenario we have the beginning of three of the extant novels; *Kallirhoe*, the *Ephesiaka* and the *Aithiopika* all begin with the most outstandingly beautiful youth and maiden falling in love in a civic religious context. We are not explicitly told that Melanippos first set eyes on Komaitho during the yearly festival but this seems a probable implication.

We remain on familiar ground when we learn that the young people's love was frustrated by familial opposition. The story now, however takes on a different tone. Instead of eloping, the couple carry on a clandestine relationship in Artemis' sanctuary, using the place as a "bridal chamber" as Pausanias would have it. The goddess is predictably offended and brings down plague and famine on the populus. The Delphic Oracle points the finger of guilt at the young couple and decrees that they are to be sacrificed to Artemis with the foremost youth and maiden to be sacrificed each year hereafter. Pausanias comments that;

> "Melanippos' sufferings proved once more that it is the property of love to confuse the laws of mankind and overturn the worship of the gods."
>
> "ἐπέδειξε δὲ ἐπὶ πολλῶν τε δὴ ἄλλων καὶ ἐν τοῖς Μελανίππου παθήμασιν, ὡς μέτεστιν ἔρωτι καὶ ἀνθρώπων συγχέαι νόμιμα καὶ ἀνατρέψαι θεῶν τιμάς ...[210]

The story of Komaitho and Melanippos is used by Pausanias, our only source, to provide a teleology for the practice of human sacrifice at the shrine of Triklarian

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[209] Paus. 7.19

Artemis. He thus continues the tale to explain how this practice in its turn came to an end. The Delphic Oracle once again has a role in the narrative, prophesising that the custom of human sacrifice will cease when a foreign king arrives to introduce a foreign divinity. This role is fulfilled by a certain Eurypylos, a king of Thessaly who appears as a minor character in the *Iliad.* In Troy, Eurypylos had come into possession of a cursed statue of Dionysos which caused him to suffer intermittently from attacks of madness. Rather than returning home to Thessaly therefore, Eurypylos made his way to the Delphic Oracle which decreed that he would be cured from his madness when he had brought the statue of Dionysus to a land where they conducted a foreign sacrifice. He was to set up the chest containing the god for worship at this place and was to make it his home. On his travels again, Eurypylos' ship cast him adrift at Aroe where he came ashore to find the people in the very act of offering a boy and a girl to Triklarian Artemis. On seeing the noble stranger bearing the mysterious chest, the people remembered the Oracle and brought the custom of sacrifice to an end. The story of Eurypylos, Komaitho and Melanippos shares key elements with that of the *Aithiopika* although they are developed and arranged in different ways.

In Pausanias' story, the illicit love affair of a young man with a virgin dedicated to Artemis leads to their both becoming victims of human sacrifice. The Oracle at Delphi utters this decree. We then have a Thessalian stranger, directed by the Delphic Oracle, bearing a mysterious cult object whose appearance at the scene of sacrifice persuades the people that the custom should now be laid aside. Eurypylos then takes this land as his home and never returns to Thessaly.

In the *Aithiopika* the roles of Eurypylos and Melanippos are combined in Theagenes. He is both the young man who faces human sacrifice as a result of his illicit love for a

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[210] Paus. 7.19

maiden dedicated to Artemis and also the Thessalian stranger who, directed by the Delphic Oracle, arrives at a distant land and brings human sacrifice to an end by the presentation of a mysterious gift. By that assessment, Charikleia is equivalent not only to the delinquent Komaitho but also to the mysterious offering. This does not sound so bizarre when we consider variations on the story of abducted priestesses and consider the close association between stealing the priestess of Artemis and stealing the sacred image of the goddess herself. This can be seen for example in the stories of Artemis Knagia and of Iphigeneia in Tauris. The cult of Artemis Knagia derives its name from a certain Knageos who as a prisoner of war was sold into slavery in Crete but escaped with the help of the virgin priestess of Artemis with whom he eloped and who brought the image with her[211]. In this case, by contrast, the abduction of an attendant of Artemis does not provoke the goddess' wrath but actually appears to transfer her patronage to the despoiler of her sanctuary.

Yet another tale of priestess abduction reported by Diodorus Siculus offers further parallels to that of Charikleia;

> "It is said that in ancient times virgins delivered the oracles because virgins have their natural innocence intact and are in the same case as Artemis; for indeed virgins were alleged to be well suited to guard the secrecy of disclosures made by oracles. In more recent times, however, people say that Echecrates the Thessalian, having arrived at the shrine and beheld the virgin who uttered the oracle, became enamoured of her because of her beauty, carried her away with him and violated her; and that the Delphians because of this deplorable occurrence passed a law that in future a virgin should no longer prophesy but that an elderly woman of fifty should declare the oracles and that she should be dressed in the costume of a virgin, as a sort of reminder of the prophetess of olden times Such are the details of the legend regarding the discovery of the oracle; ..."
>
> "θεσπιῳδεῖν δὲ τὸ ἀρχαῖον λέγεται παρθένους διά τε τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀδιάφθορον καὶ τὸ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ὁμογενές: ταύτας γὰρ εὐθετεῖν πρὸς τὸ τηρεῖν τὰ ἀπόρρητα τῶν χρησμῳδουμένων. ἐν δὲ τοῖς

[211] Paus.3.18.4

> νεωτέροις χρόνοις φασὶν Ἐχεκράτη τὸν Θετταλὸν παραγενόμενον εἰς τὸ χρηστήριον καὶ θεασάμενον τὴν χρησμολογοῦσαν παρθένον ἐρασθῆναι διὰ τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς καὶ συναρπάσαντα βιάσασθαι: τοὺς δὲ Δελφοὺς διὰ τὸ γεγενημένον πάθος εἰς τὸ λοιπὸν νομοθετῆσαι μηκέτι παρθένον χρηστηριάζειν, ἀλλὰ γυναῖκα πρεσβυτέραν πεντήκοντα ἐτῶν χρησμολογεῖν: κοσμεῖσθαι δ' αὐτὴν παρθενικῇ σκευῇ, καθάπερ ὑπομνήματι τῆς παλαιᾶς προφήτιδος. τὰ μὲν οὖν περὶ τῆς εὑρέσεως τοῦ μαντείου μυθολογούμενα τοιαῦτ' ἐστίν;[212]"

Here we have a virgin priestess of Delphi being abducted by a visiting Thessalian. As a result the Delphians change their existing regulations about virgin priestesses in order to ensure that such a thing can never happen again. It is to be remembered that after Charikleia's abduction by the Thessalian Theagenes, the Delphians decree that never again should the virgin priestess of Artemis present the prize to the victor at the Pythian Games as this is how they imagine she caught her abductors attention. Heliodoros, it seems, was drawing on a pre-existing tradition held at more than one local cult about virgin priestesses being abducted from their shrines by strangers.

The story of Artemis Knagia and the story of Komaitho, Melanippos and Eurypylos share parallels with *Iphigeneia at Tauris* in which we are told that Iphigeneia who was thought to have been sacrificed by her father Agamemnon has in fact been carried off by the goddess to Tauris at the edge of the known world. Here she serves as virgin priestess of Artemis, sacrificing all Greeks who find their way there. Iphigeneia's brother Orestes comes to find her and she is about to sacrifice him before discovering his true identity. Orestes and Iphigeneia escape back to Hellas bearing a wooden image of Artemis which Apollo at Delphi had commanded Orestes to remove in order to found an alternative shrine in Athens where in substitution for human sacrifice, a sword would be touched to a man's throat drawing a drop of blood[213].

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[212] Diodoros Siculos 16.26, Sissa 1990 35-6
[213] Eur. *I.T.* 1450-1465

Thus Heliodoros is drawing on a whole narrative complex in which the abduction of a priestess and the arrival of mysterious strangers can provoke profound changes in cult both on the part of the offended shrine in response to the abduction and in the new cult which comes into being as a result. The twists in Heliodoros' version are striking. What is remarkable is that he has developed a narrative concerned with sacrilege, rape and the disregard for the laws of mankind and the worship of the gods into a tale of the chaste love of two particularly virtuous young people.

In the place of Echekrates' rape or the sacrilegious abuse of the sanctuary by Komaitho and her lover, the *Aithiopika* offers an erotic abscondment from the sanctuary of Artemis which is both consensual and decorous. The account of Charikleia's removal from her sanctuary is humorous in its contrast between the violent and terrifying appearance of the abductors and the willingness of the abductee – Charikleia has been waiting in readiness for the arrival of her noisy captors who are also loaded up with the maiden's substantial luggage[214]. Immediately following the flight from the sanctuary it is emphasised that Charikleia will remain a maiden until marriage[215], that is, until she has properly made the transition from maiden to wife and thus she avoids profaning her service to Artemis. In terms of a narrative in which removal of a priestess from her service to Artemis is treated with approval the story of Theagenes and Charikleia comes closest to that of Iphigeneia and Orestes. This is interesting for two reasons. The first is that it aligns an erotic narrative with one involving relations between brother and sister. The fact that the relationship between Charikleia and Theagenes is chaste and that they have been masquerading as brother and sister for much of the novel makes a certain sense of the casting of Theagenes as Orestes to Charikleia' Iphigeneia. There seems to be a direct reference to

[214] Hld.4.17

Iphigeneia's near sacrifice of her brother Orestes when she bizarrely requests that if Theagenes must be sacrificed then she should be the one to carry it out[216]. The only vaguely logical explanation for her request is that Charikleia has some plan for them to die together. Thus by using the flight of Iphigeneia and Orestes as a model the elopement of Charikleia and Theagenes is transformed into a chaste and virtuous action.

This alerts us to the second point which is the geographical and cultural reversal implied in the removal of a dedicated maiden from Delphi to the ends of the earth. The *Aithiopika* like *Iphigeneia in Tauris* sends its heroine to the ends of the earth where human sacrifice is practised (on a regular basis, rather than the more or less one –off sacrifice of Iphigeneia authorised by the Hellenes). Like Iphigeneia, Charikleia is consecrated as priestess in her new home. Tauris however is presented as a land of foolish and bloodthirsty barbarians who are easily tricked[217] while Ethiopia is a land ruled by a great king and under the influence of wise sages who abolish human sacrifice of their own accord. Instead of returning to Greece to found a new cult in which human sacrifice has implicitly been declared obsolete as Iphigeneia does at Athens, the arrival of Charikleia and Theagenes at Ethiopia signals a change for the better in the religious practices of that kingdom.

So the abduction of a consecrated maiden from the very heart of Greece is represented as a virtuous action to be compared to Orestes and Iphigeneia's escape from the land of the savage Taurians and the important religious development is also seen as taking place in a distant "barbarian" land rather than in the Hellenic world. Like the barbarian king Thoas, Charikles is finally forced to accept that the abduction of a

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[215] Hld 4.18
[216] Hld. 10.20
[217] Sansone 1975: 294.

consecrated virgin from the shrine under his jurisdiction actually occurred in accordance with the will of the gods and that he must therefore abandon all attempt at revenge for the outrage[218]. This seems perhaps the stranger when we consider the significance of maiden abduction in terms of the security and integrity of the state from which the capture was effected[219]. The abduction of Charikleia took place not at a liminal shrine but from the very centre of Hellenic paganism. It may even be that with the arrival of Charikleia in Ethiopia we are concerned not only with the transfer of a priestess from one shrine to another but also the removal of an image. Charikleia, as we discover at the Ethiopian denouement, which leads to her sacrifice being abandoned, actually embodies a portrait of Andromeda, heroine and Ethiopian foundress.

Accounts such as those concerning Artemis Triklaria and of Echekrates at Delphi of shrines profaned by the abduction of their priestess offer us an interesting alternative perspective on the tale of the pious and virtuous Theagenes and Charikleia. As we consider these stories it becomes ever clearer that Heliodoros is creating something quite original and disturbing to traditional pieties by transforming the motif of the profanation of a Greek shrine of Artemis though sexual abduction of its virginal attendant into a story of a chaste young couple with a happy ending. The elements of the story of Komaitho and Melanippos which are shared by the romance of Charikleia and Theagenes have been reassembled and given a radically different complexion. The Delphic Oracle gives its blessing to their chaste love rather than condemnation. The young couple are almost sacrificed only to be reprieved at the last moment. Their marriage finally takes place with full parental sanction.

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[218] Eur. *I.T.* 1475-1489, Hld 10.41
[219] Cole 1998 27-30

It thus seems clear that Heliodoros was drawing on a pre-existing tradition held at more than one local cult about virgin priestesses being abducted, from their shrines, seduced or raped by strangers. The theme of elopement itself in the *Aithiopika* is not generically unexpected. The novelistic genre as we know it is generally focused on the spontaneous passion of two young people which takes precedence over their parents plans for them but with the intergenerational conflict being quickly smoothed over and *Leukippe and Kleitophon* is the obvious example of this. That Heliodoros however deliberately stages the elopement of his young pair in a setting which would recall for his readers stories of violence and impiety suggests that something more is at issue.

With Kalasiris, the reader is in the slightly uncomfortable position of being able to enjoy the hoodwinking of the anguished Charikles and the townsfolk of Delphi in their righteous indignation as they believe their beloved priestess has been taken from them against her will. That it is a chaste and pious priest who has orchestrated the abduction of the consecrated virgin, apparently at the behest of the gods, only adds to the moral confusion. Thersandros' speech in *Leukippe and Kleitophon* in which he crudely calumnies the hero, heroine and the priest who has given them sanctuary[220], shows that the account of Charikleia's elopement with Theagenes, under the direction of an elderly priest could be given a far from pleasant construction if the outline were related by a hostile narrator.

Charikles, when he finally catches up with his errant daughter and her "abductor," denounces Theagenes in terms which appear entirely reasonable given that to all appearances, his virginal and priestly daughter was dragged from her chamber against her will by visitors to Delphi on a sacred mission. He stresses not only the anguish

caused to him personally, but also the outrage done to Apollo for this assault upon his sanctuary. One might have assumed that Thyamis, from whom Charikles obtained the information that enabled him to track down Charikleia, would have made it clear to Charikles that his adoptive daughter was no unwilling prisoner. Charikles however, saves all his reproach for Theagenes and does not appear to hold Charikleia responsible for her flight. Lest we underestimate the transgression of the chaste couple and their helper, it is worth remembering that under Constantine's law of 320 on *raptus,* death would have been the penalty for all parties for their elopement without the consent of Charikleia's legal guardian, regardless of whether or not Charikleia herself had been a willing party[221].

Heliodoros, then with all the vaunted concern for sexual morality throughout the *Aithiopika,* as evidenced in its merciless condemnation of adulteresses, is actually presenting some cautious but real challenges to the conventions of sexual morality and religion of his own time. Fathers, even priestly ones, do not always know what is best for their daughters, so disobedience may be necessary. This message is diluted somewhat by Charikleia's expression of penitence to Charikles at the end of the novel as well as the emphasis on the fact that both she and Theagenes were acting in obedience to the will of the gods rather than purely from their own inclinations. Of course, Charikleia in the very act of deserting her foster-father was actually bringing about reconcilement with her natural parents.

It seems to have been understood then as only right and natural that a girl's life as a closeted virgin priestess should come to an end and that love and desire, prompted by meeting with a beautiful young man, should tempt her from her shrine. The young couple however, must wait until they are formally married with their parents' blessing

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[220] Ach.Tat. 8.8

before consummating the relationship. Komaitho and Melanippos did not sin in the fact of their love for each other but in that they did not consummate their love in lawful marriage but illicitly in the temple itself.

What might appear at first sight to be a blasphemous act – a virgin consecrated to Artemis runs off with her lover – turns out to have the goddess' approval-Artemis guides Charikleia through her adventures and she ends the novel being consecrated to the Moon Goddess (closely related to Artemis) as a married woman.

The *Aithiopika* and Euripides' *Hippolytos*

Euripides' *Hippolytos* is a text that contributes to an understanding of the *Aithiopika* for broadly two reasons.

The first is that both texts present a portrait of a young person who, in their worship of Artemis and their personal dedication to celibacy, have gone against the normal values of pagan Greek society which saw marriage and the production of legitimate offspring as central to fulfilling the duties of a citizen whether male or female. The *Hippolytos* therefore provides a paradigm to the presentation of Charikleia as elective virgin which is central to the Greek literary tradition and thus provides a useful point of comparison and guide as to the kind of reactions and resonances Heliodoros is expecting to provoke in his representation of Charikleia's embrace of celibacy.

The second reason is that variations of the basic plot formula of the *Hippolytos* occur prominently three times in the course of the *Aithiopika*. By looking at how Heliodoros plays with and develops this narrative sequence that concerns, at its core, issues of sexuality, sexual abstinence, gender and morality, we can gain an insight into the

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[221] Clark 1993 36-7

kinds of attitudes and thinking which inform the *Aithiopika* and the characterisation of Charikleia.

Euripides' hero has certain key resemblances to Heliodoros' heroine Charikleia. They are both described in similar terms as devotees of Artemis who prefer to spend their time out hunting in imitation of their patron goddess. In the *Aithiopika* Charikleia's stepfather Charikles describes her way of life;

> ...she has dedicated herself to the sacred service of Artemis and spends most of her time hunting and practising archery."
>
> "...καὶ τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι ζάκορον ἑαυτὴν ἐπιδοῦσα θήραις τὰ πολλὰ σχολάζει καὶ ἀσκεῖ τοξείαν..."[222]

In the prologue to the *Hippolytos*, the offended Aphrodite illustrates how the youth is solely devoted to another goddess.

> "Instead, he honors Apollo's sister Artemis, Zeus's daughter, thinking her the greatest of divinities. In the green wood, ever consort to the maiden goddess, he clears the land of wild beasts with his swift dogs and has gained a companionship greater than mortal."
>
> "Φοίβου δ' ἀδελφὴν Ἄρτεμιν, Διὸς κόρην,
> τιμᾶι, μεγίστην δαιμόνων ἡγούμενος,
> χλωρὰν δ' ἀν' ὕλην παρθένωι ξυνὼν ἀεὶ
> κυσὶν ταχείαις θῆρας ἐξαιρεῖ χθονός,
> μείζω βροτείας προσπεσὼν ὁμιλίας."

As a concomitant to their devotion to the virgin goddess Artemis, both Hippolytos and Charikleia also strongly reject sexuality and marriage as impure and beneath them, and have dedicated themselves to lifelong virginity. For Charikleia, we are told by the exasperated Charikles;

> "Virginity is her god, and she has elevated it to the level of the immortals, pronouncing it without stain, without impurity, without corruption. But Eros and Aphrodite and all nuptial revelry she curses to damnation."

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[222] Hld. 2.33

"ἐκθειάζουσα μὲν παρθενίαν καὶ ἐγγὺς ἀθανάτων ἀποφαίνουσα, ἄχραντον καὶ ἀκήρατον καὶ ἀδιάφθορον ὀνομάζουσα, Ἔρωτα δὲ καὶ Ἀφροδίτην καὶ πάντα γαμήλιον θίασον ἀποσκορακίζουσα."[223]

According to Aphrodite, Hippolytos;

"...says that I [Aphrodite] am the worst of deities. He shuns the bed of love and will have nothing to do with marriage."

λέγει κακίστην δαιμόνων πεφυκέναι·
ἀναίνεται δὲ λέκτρα κοὐ ψαύει γάμων,[224]

Hippolytos is punished for his *hubris* towards Aphrodite by becoming the object of his stepmother Phaidra's passion and, after his violently expressed rejection of her, the victim of her fatal revenge. Charikleia's contempt for Aphrodite is not answered by the savage vengeance meted out to Hippolytos but it is none the less impressed upon her that the power of the deity is not so easily dismissed.

Despite her best efforts, Charikleia falls inextricably in love with Theagenes and like Phaidra, the strength of the emotion and the anguish caused by the dilemma it introduces causes her to take to her bed, sleepless and feverish. Charikleia is thus forced to revise her previous dedication to perpetual virginity and acknowledge the power of Eros. This does not however represent for her the destruction that was wrought upon Hippolytos as punishment for his slighting of Aphrodite or the shame of a lust which was both adulterous and quasi-incestuous which racks Phaidra. It forms rather, a compromise, a more realistic evaluation of what is required of a chaste woman. Kalasiris persuades Charikleia that she can be both fulfilled and virtuous if she becomes joined with the object of her love in lawful matrimony.

Heliodoros then can be seen to be echoing the message of Euripides' *Hippolytos* – that denying the power of Aphrodite and seeking to cut love and sexuality from one's

[223] Hld. 2.33

life is not a right or realistic way for a young man or woman to live. At the same time however the message is modified and softened. Charikleia needed to revise her ideas about sexuality but her initial abstinence is not treated as something blasphemous, attracting the anger of the gods. Instead, the divine powers seem only anxious to correct Charikleia's mistake by uniting her with her beloved Theagenes under the protection and guidance of Kalasiris. While the divinities presiding over the *Aithiopika* are more tolerant to those who reject the gifts of Aphrodite, there is far less sympathy for those who in the Phaidra model embrace them all too keenly and inappropriately.

The essentials of the Hippolytos story as it appears in Euripides can be summarised in this way; Hippolytos' stepmother (Phaidra) falls in love with her stepson. The stepmother's servant intercedes with the stepson to accede to his stepmother's amorous demands. The stepson rejects his stepmother. In retaliation and in order to protect her own good name, the stepmother calumniates the stepson with his father and kills herself. The father punishes his son but then discovers the truth of the matter and the son is redeemed.

This pattern of events reoccurs three times throughout the *Aithiopika*[225].The first variation on this theme occurs early on in the novel, when we are disorientated by the unexpected insertion into the narrative of the story of Knemon, a secondary character, before we are clear as to the identity of the protagonists themselves.

Knemon, the young son of a wealthy Athenian citizen, by no means adheres to Hippolytos' ideals of chastity (he has already attempted to seduce the family

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[224]Eur. *Hipp.* 13-14
[225] Pletcher 1998

maidservant without success[226]) He is however shocked and disgusted when his stepmother Demainete makes a sexual advance upon him. We are alerted in none too subtle terms that this is to be a Hippolytos type narrative by the fact that Knemon's stepmother swoops upon him with a cry of

"My young Hippolytos!"

"...ὁ νέος Ἱππόλυτος"[227].

Mortified at being rejected, Demainete emulates Phaidra, at first in a smaller way, by taking to her bed and accusing Knemon of having kicked her in the stomach to cause a miscarriage. This earns Knemon a severe beating from his father[228]. Demainete is not content with this however, and here her machinations make the plot a lot more involved than the basic Hippolytos narrative. The role of the female attendant is introduced at this point, in the shape of the slave girl Thisbe. On her mistress's instructions, Thisbe begins a liaison with Knemon, whom she had previously rebuffed, and tricks him into drawing a sword upon his father under the misapprehension that he has surprised his stepmother with an adulterous lover. On a charge of attempted parricide, Knemon, like Hippolytos, is banished from the city and unlike Hippolytos just manages to escape with his life[229]. Maddened with her infatuation for Knemon, Demainete now starts to turn against Thisbe as responsible for his banishment and, to save herself, Thisbe plots against Demainete. Reversing the trick she played upon Knemon, she takes Aristippus to find his wife in bed in the house of a courtesan, apparently engaged on an adulterous assignation. In fact she had tricked her unstable mistress into waiting in the bedroom alone in the hope that Knemon would come to her there. On being dragged back to Athens to face justice,

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[226] Hld. 1.11
[227] Hld. 1.10
[228] Hld. 1.10-11

Demainete tears herself free and throws herself into a pit. Demainete's story, like that of Phaidra ends in suicide[230].

The moral preoccupations behind this story seem to be rather different and less open to ambivalence than those that emerge from Euripides' *Hippolytos*. We are explicitly told at the outset of Euripides' play that Hippolytos' miserable fate is to come about as a punishment for his contempt of the goddess Aphrodite[231]. Aphrodite acknowledges that Phaidra is an innocent victim who will nonetheless die in the cause of the goddess' vengeance on Hippolytos. Phaidra, we are told, intends to die in silence rather than reveal her shameful passion for her stepson[232]. It is only after Hippolytos' angry and hate filled tirade in response to the unauthorised approach of Phaidra's nurse, that, humiliated and in terror of her illicit infatuation being publicly revealed, she commits the wrong of accusing Hippolytos of rape and then commits suicide.

The nature of the moral lesson we are intended to derive from the *Hippolytos* has been much debated. In ancient times Euripides was accused of misogyny and his presentation of Phaidra is mentioned as a major contributing factor[233]. Whether this was due to the mere fact of Euripides choosing to put on stage a character notorious for her illicit and destructive passion or whether the content of either of the two plays entitled Hippolytos was deemed misogynist is unclear.

More recently, critics have tended to see the character of the chaste Hippolytos as the focus for Euripides' criticism, firstly for provoking Aphrodite by refusing to courteously acknowledge her power and then by driving Phaidra to her desperate

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[229] Hld. 1.11-14
[230] Hld. 1.15-17
[231] Eur.*Hipp.* 21-22
[232] Eur.*Hipp.* 38-40

action by the harshness and intractability displayed in his speech to her nurse. This view has frequently been restated in more recent times in the language of psychology rather than theology, so that Hippolytos is interpreted as a young man who is suffering from some kind of regrettable neurosis causing him to be sexually repressed[234].

Whether or not modern critics are right in their assumption that we are intended to view Phaidra with sympathy, the point here is that Euripides' sympathetic and humane portrayal of Phaidra and her nurse leaves such an interpretation open.

In the first half of the play, Euripides shows Phaidra to be a woman very much concerned with sexual morality[235] but who despite herself has become besotted with her own stepson. The audience is surely being invited to feel pity for the woman whom we see crazed and brought seemingly to the brink of death as she struggles to salvage some honour and dignity from the situation which has not been of her own making. The attempt of Phaidra's nurse to intercede between Hippolytos and Phaidra was a disastrous error and is condemned by Phaidra herself in no uncertain terms[236]. It is however acknowledged that she had no other motive than that she loved Phaidra and was determined to save her life no matter what[237]. Her fatal mistake was her failure to understand that in elite Athenian society, a woman's life is counted worthless once she has lost her good name. This is something understood only too

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[233] Aristophanes *Thezmophoriazusae* 544-154,497, *Frogs* 1043-4. See also Gibert 1997 for discussion of original reception of the two *Hippolytoi* of Euripides.
[234] Dodds 1925, Grene 1939, Luschnig 1983 as examples of variations of this viewpoint. See Kovacs 1980 for contrary opinion that Hippolytos is to be understood as an innocent devotee of Artemis, unjustly victimised by jealous Aphrodite.
[235] Eur. *Hipp.*407-18
[236] Eur.*Hipp* 683-694
[237] Eur.*Hipp* 493-7

well by the chorus of Trozenian women who discreetly stand by while Phaidra does the honourable thing and hangs herself[238].

On first being told of the cause of Phaidra's languishing, the Nurse is genuinely shocked and horrified[239]. She simply puts these reactions into second place with restoring her mistresses' health. The blunt pragmatism of her words;

> "Why this high and haughty tone? Noble sounding words are not what you need but the man!"
>
> "τί σεμνομυθεῖς; οὐ λόγων εὐσχημόνων
>
> δεῖ σ' ἀλλὰ τἀνδρός.[240]"

is such as to horrify the likes of the principled Hippolytos or Phaidra (some of the tragic irony of the play seems to lie in the fact that the ill fated pair are actually very alike[241]). She is however clearly not the kind of servant who relishes the potentially profitable role of her mistress' go-between.

In Knemon's story, by contrast, we are left in no doubt that the moral of the story lies in the wickedness of Demainete. The delineation of her character and actions clearly illustrates the well known precept that the uncontrolled sexuality of women leads to wicked deeds, disaster and well merited destruction. From the beginning of Knemon's account, Demainete is portrayed as a dangerous and manipulative woman who captivates Knemon's old father with her sexual wiles[242]. There is no suggestion, as with Euripides' depiction of Phaidra, that Demainete can be pitied as an innocent victim of a god-sent and irresistible infatuation. It is true that at one point she is described as tormented and pursued by the Furies as she persists perversely in her

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[238] Eur. *Hipp* 780-85
[239] Eur. *Hipp* 353-361
[240] Eur. *Hipp* 490-491
[241] Dodds 1925
[242] Hld. 1.9

passion even after she has caused Knemon's exile. On the other hand, she never expresses remorse as such for her actions but regrets that she had not brought about Knemon's death so that she would not be plagued by longing for his return[243].

There is also no indication that there was anything in the behaviour of Knemon beyond the fact of his refusal of her, which would have provoked Demainete's vengeful behaviour towards him or indeed the anger of Aphrodite. Demainete herself acknowledges that she reacted with unnecessary savagery to a refusal that was only to be expected[244]. (She then expresses a wish that she had been more subtle in her approach to him so she is not expressing any remorse about having propositioned him in the first place, she is merely blaming herself for having gone about it the wrong way.)

The reactions of Knemon's virtuous listeners, Theagenes and Charikleia, confirm that the reader is desired to concur with the general certainty within the text that Demainete deserved her miserable death and does not deserve any attempt on the part of the reader to empathise with her situation or to spare her any pity.

> "But it will only add to our misery" said Theagenes, "if the wicked Demainete is left unpunished in your story."
>
> "Καὶ μὴν προσεπιτρίψεις γε ἡμᾶς ἔφη ὁ Θεαγένης εἰ τὴν κακίστην ἀτιμώρητον ἐάσεις ἐν τῷ λόγῳ Δημαινέτην."[245]

Demainete is a character who has none of the complexity or humanity of Phaidra. She was a bad woman who came to a bad end.

This lesson of the evil of unchaste women and what happens to them is repeated in the final variation on the Hippolytos theme which we will look at in conjunction with the

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[23] Hld. 1.14-15
[24] Hld. 1.15
[25] Hld. 1.14

first before looking at the central variation, that of Charikleia and Theagenes, which these two narratives frame.

This final Hippolytos type story occurs when Charikleia and Theagenes, in one of their last great ordeals before the end of their adventures, find themselves at the mercy of Arsake, wife of the Persian satrap Oroondates. This episode is in fact a close relative of the Hippolytos story; a Potiphar's wife/Proetus' wife story, in which the stepson is replaced by a servant or underling of the father/ master. This story type was a very popular ingredient of ancient narrative. It also occurs for instance in the *Ephesiaka*[246] (in this version the master's wife is replaced with a daughter;) and in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses,* in an elaborate inset tale, elements of which contain striking parallels with both the Arsake and the Demainete stories in the *Aithiopika*[247].

That we are to read this episode with specific reference to the *Hippolytos* is suggested by another direct reference to the play. When Arsake, like Phaidra, finally hangs herself to avoid public infamy, it is reported using the phrase "a strangling noose" which quotes the words used to announce the death of Phaidra[248]. The relationship between Arsake and her nurse Kybele is also evidently modelled upon that of Phaidra and her nurse.

Arsake becomes besotted with Theagenes at first sight. Like Phaidra, Arsake responds to this overwhelming passion by taking to her bed. Like her tragic prototype, she manifests the standardised symptoms of love sickness in ancient literature. She is brought to the brink of delirium, as Phaidra is.[249]

"In short her desire was degenerating imperceptibly into insanity"

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[246] Xen. *Eph.* 2.3-11
[247] Apuleius' *Me.t* 10.2-12
[248] Eur. *Hipp.* 802, Hld 8.15
[249] Eur. *Hipp.* 215-222

"Καὶ ἁπλῶς εἰς μανίαν λοιπὸν ἐλάνθανεν ὁ ἔρως ὑποερόμενος"[250]

She issues contradictory orders to her maid, summoning her and then immediately sending her away again, similarly Phaidra's nurse complains that her patient has been displaying difficult and contrary behaviour[251].

In the case of both Phaidra and Arsake, their fevered behaviour results in their respective old nurses trying to find out what ails them. Although the two scenes have strong parallels with each other, there are important differences, both in the details of the respective situations and the personalities of the two pairs of lady and nurse who play out each scene. It is the later differences which are revealing of the implicit attitude of Heliodoros' text towards certain manifestations of female sexuality.

From the outset, we have already been discouraged from feeling the kind of sympathy for Arsake that Euripides' audiences were invited to feel for Phaidra by the introduction that we are given to her. Arsake like Demainete, is, it is made clear, no innocent victim of a goddess' whim but a habitual and depraved adulteress.

> "But the life she led was disreputable: in particular she was a slave to perverted and dissipated pleasure."
>
> "...ἄλλως δὲ τὸν βίον ἐπίμωμος καὶ ἡδονῆς παρανόμου καὶ ἀκρατοῦς ἐλάττων."[252]

It is revealed that Arsake had previously been ultimately responsible for the deposition and exile of Thyamis. Petosiris having observed Arsake's infatuation with his brother Thyamis used it to turn her husband Oroondates against the latter resulting in his being driven into exile[253]. It is made clear throughout, that Theagenes is the object of just one in a long line of illicit passions for young men entertained by

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[250] Hld. 7.9
[251] Eur.*Hipp.* 180-85
[252] Hld. 7.2
[253] Hld. 7.2

Arsake. Achaimenes, upon catching sight of Theagenes, assumes that he must be the latest of Arsake's amours[254].

As the bedside scene between Arsake and Kybele develops, it becomes clear that both characters entirely lack the qualities possessed by Phaidra and her nurse which make a reading of the *Hippolytos* a far from straightforward matter. Phaidra wastes away because she is so ashamed of her inescapable feelings for Hippolytos that death seems to her the only solution. Arsake appears to have been prostrated out of sheer frustration at not yet having possessed the object of her passion.

Although there seems to be a close bond between Arsake and Kybele[255] we are given the impression that the latter devotes herself to forwarding her mistresses' affairs and providing her with advice, comfort and flattery more for the maintenance of her own position than from disinterested affection. We are told that Kybele's son Achaimenes has achieved a high position in Arsake's service due to his mother's influence[256].

There is also a strong element of fear to Kybele's attempts to placate Arsake. As things start to go wrong for the pair, first with Theagenes' obduracy and then Achaimenes' suspicious disappearance, Arsake's relationship with Kybele changes from that of a fretful child who must be soothed by her indulgent nurse, to that of a cruel and capricious mistress displeased with her slave as is indicated for example by Kybele's conversation with her son.

> "...I know for certain that now Arsake will put an end to her life and have me killed as well for having deceived and humiliated her with my promises."

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[254] Hld. 7.16

[255] This is evidenced for example by Arsake addressing her servant as "mother" at several points in her speech.

[256] Hld. 7.23

"...οὐδὲ ἐκείνην οἶδα βιωσομένην καὶ ἐμαυτὴν ἀναιρησομένην ὡς ἐκείνην οἶδα βιωσομένην καὶ ἐμαυτὴν ἀναιρησομένην ὡς χλευάσασαν ταῖς ἐπαγγελίαις καὶ διαψευσαμένην.[257]

This is in stark contrast to the motivation of Phaidra's nurse under similar circumstances; she never expresses any self interest but is only concerned to save her mistress. Kybele cannot be allowed to want to save her mistresses' life for its own sake; her own must also be in danger, with the result that we are encouraged to have a less favourable opinion of both characters. Arsake's own words leave us in no doubt that she is as ruthless as she is dissolute.

> "Remember too that if I despair of my own life, there will, of course, be no possibility of my sparing others, you will be the first to enjoy the fruits of your son's schemes."
>
> "καὶ ἅμα ἐννοῦσα ὡς οὐκ ἔστι πῶς γάρ; ὅπως ἐμαυτῆς ἀπογνοῦσα φείσομαι ἄλλων, ἀλλὰ πρώτη παραπολαύσεις τῶν τοῦ παιδὸς ἐπιχειρημάτων." [258]

Arsake's relationship with Kybele is comparable to that of Demainete with Thisbe. Both mistresses keep their servants as close confidantes and confederates yet each servant must always remain one step ahead with their scheming, under the threat that their ruthless and unstable mistress might suddenly turn against them and bring about their destruction.

It is interesting that along with both Demainete and Arsake, their two accomplices, Thisbe and Kybele also come to nasty ends. Thisbe is stabbed by Thyamis who mistook her for Charikleia, while Kybele is poisoned, also with a potion intended for Charikleia. The rules seem as clear as they used to be in soap opera; the woman who offends against the sexual conventions always comes to a bad end. In this context it is

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[257] Hld. 7.23

worth remembering also that in *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, a prostitute is beheaded in one episode as a substitute for the virtuous heroine[259]

Within the *Aithiopika*, the four unchaste women in the novel die what we are encouraged to consider well merited deaths whilst the paragon of chastity, Charikleia, survives her perilous adventures to find happiness and fulfilment. This provides further indication that the text has a particular emphasis on the issue of chastity that goes beyond what we find in any of the other romantic narratives. There is no scope within the moral universe of the *Aithiopika* for a Lycainion or a Melite and certainly not for a Kallirhoe.

We turn now to the central version of the Hippolytos story. In this version the role of Hippolytos and Phaidra are combined in Charikleia as she shares the part of Hippolytos with Theagenes. The virtuous Charikleia falls in love despite herself with the handsome young Theagenes. In the throes of her passion, in shame and anguish, Charikleia takes to her bed. All about her are in consternation until Kalasiris, a knowing and elderly person

> "...yawning blearily, for all the world like some old beldam."
> "καὶ ὑπνῶδές τι μᾶλλον δὲ γραῶδες ἐπιχασμώμενος ὀψὲ..."[260]

manages to coax her to reveal the cause of her apparent illness. Like Phaidra, Charikleia will not directly confess the name of the one she loves and it is up to Kalasiris to interpret an allusive quote from the *Iliad* just as it is left to Phaidra's nurse to draw conclusions from her mistresses' convulsive response to an oblique reference

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[258] Hld. 8.5
[259] Ach. Tat. 8.16.1-4
[260] Hld. 4.5

to Hippolytos[261]. This is in contrast to the two adulterous women of the *Aithiopika* who have no false modesty about naming the object of their passion to their intimates. On Charikleia's confirming that it is her love for Theagenes that renders her prostrate, Kalasiris acts as a go between for the young people. Theagenes had previously been a rather aloof young man who had never previously succumbed to Eros[262] – a little like Hippolytos. He does however reciprocate Charikleia's feelings and with the help of Kalasiris, the pair flee the city and the wrath of Charikleia's stepfather who had made alternative marriage arrangements for her.

Heliodoros thus appears to have constructed what we might call a "good" version of the Hippolytos story – one with a happy ending. In place of the married woman tortured by adulterous passion, we have the pure young girl in love, tortured by her over refined scruples. While Hippolytos was savagely punished by Aphrodite for refusing her gifts, Charikleia is simply overcome by Eros and thus obliged to acknowledge his power. The assistance of a female slave is replaced by the guidance of a male priest. The deceived *paterfamilias* is finally brought to accept that all has happened as it should according to divine plan.

In looking at the *Aithiopika's* relationship to the *Hippolytos*, we can see that while Hippolytos and Charikleia's youthful fervour leads them to renounce marriage altogether, this is seen from the moral viewpoint of the *Aithiopika* to be an excessive and unobtainable (although not discreditable) ideal for a mortal and one from which its heroine must be gently guided. The role of Hippolytos is however clearly to be regarded as greatly preferable to the uncontrolled and lawless sexuality manifest in the character of Phaidra which from the point of view of the *Aithiopika* is one who

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[261] Hld. 4.7, Eurip. *Hipp* 351

[262] Hld. 3.17 In this Theagenes also of course resembles Habrokomes Xen. Eph.1.1

can possess no good quality or virtue and is deserving of no sympathy, or hope of redemption but only a miserable death.

While the *Aithiopika* is remarkable for its presentation of the learned and independent Charikleia, her juxtaposition with Thisbe, Arsake and Demainete, the first two of whom at least share Charikleia's powers of intelligence and dissimulation, indicates that Heliodoros' view point is by no means simplistically "feminist". Rather, the contrast between the behaviour of the "wicked women" of the novel with that of the shining conduct of Charikleia can be seen to illustrate the dangerous and uncontrolled state to which women are liable to descend if they are without the guidance of philosophy, religion and the tutelage of wise and good men such as Kalasiris and Charikles. Like the virginal, wise and controlled Athene who emanated from the head of Zeus, Charikleia is effectively motherless and is brought up in a cerebral and masculine environment.

Charikles may have been dismayed at the extremes which his encouragement to knowledge and self improvement took his step daughter but he could at least be satisfied that it led her to err in the right direction.

The *Aithiopika's* preoccupation with the evil potentialities of female sexuality can be found again in the allusion to another bad and dangerous woman in the novel, the courtesan Rhodopis, whose dangerous and freelance sexuality is at one point held responsible by Kalasiris for having driven him from his home and priestly office[263]. This mention of Rhodopis has no concrete narrative function in terms of advancing the plot, as Kalasiris then goes on to add that he actually had a more fundamental reason for leaving Memphis, which was his premonition of the strife between his two sons. This latter reason turns out to be central to the plot. As the story reaches its

climax, Kalasiris arrives back in Memphis after his long exile and with Sophoclean irony, he faces the very sight he had fled to avoid - his two sons in the midst of combat. Rhodopis by contrast is never mentioned again. The question then is raised of why Rhodopis is brought into Kalasiris' story at all.

One function of course of the allusion to this historical character is to place the setting of the *Aithiopika* firmly in the distant past.

According to Herodotus, Rhodopis lived at the time of Sappho and Aesop, and travelled to Egypt where she had a liaison with Sappho's brother[264]. This mention of Rhodopis thus places the *Aithiopika* as far back the seventh century BCE although the occurrence of anachronisms within the text indicate that we should take this setting only as providing a sort of impressionistic background. It may be worth bearing in mind however that Heliodoros has chosen to set his novel around a thousand years in the past, earlier than any of the other surviving novels.

By drawing a character that would be familiar to readers of Herodotus into the scope of his story, Heliodoros is associating his text to the tradition of classical historiography. In the same way, we are told that Kallirhoe's father was the historical general Hermocrates written about by Thoukydides[265]. These references provide the playful illusion of historical validity[266].

This episode from Kalasiris' life can also be seen as another indication of the self positioning of the *Aithiopika* with regard to sexual morality, and thus informs the debate that follows about what is an acceptable standard of sexual purity.

Kalasiris tells us first that he was a prophet, then that he married;

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[263] Hld. 2.25
[264] Herodotos 2.134
[265] Char. 1.1
[266] See Morgan 1982, Hagg 1999 for discussion of the *Aithiopika.* as historical fiction.

"By the law of my city"

"...νόμῳ τῆς πόλεως ..."[267]

-and had two children who were a source of pride to him after his wife's death. This introductory sketch of Kalasiris' life suggests that marriage and pride in legitimate children are worthy and appropriate elements in the life of a person dedicated to sacred matters. Into this peaceful and proper existence comes Rhodopis and Kalasiris leaves us in no doubt as to how we are to regard this figure.

I know not whence or how she came there, but she brought evil to all she met..."
"οὐκ οἶδ' ὁπόθεν ἢ ὅπως κακῇ μοίρᾳ τῶν ἐγνωκότων ὁρμηθὲν .." [268]

As a courtesan then, Rhodopis is, for Kalasiris, unequivocally malign and dangerous just like the adulterous women described above. Kalasiris makes it clear that giving in to his unwilling passion for Rhodopis would be a grave offence to the gods whom he serves.

"I decided not to bring disgrace on the priesthood with which I had grown up, resolved not to defile the gods' temples and precincts."
"...τὴν μὲν ἐκ παίδων μοι σύντροφον ἱερωσύνην ἔγνων μὴ καταισχῦναι καὶ ἀντέσχον μηδὲ ἱερὰ καὶ τεμένη θεῶν βεβηλῶσαι."[269]

This account of Kalasiris' earlier life, and the place in it of Rhodopis, thus provides us with an idea of what, for Kalasiris, constitutes acceptable and unacceptable forms of sexual behaviour in a priest; lawful marriage and the procreation of legitimate children is a good thing, while sex simply for the sake of pleasure, and outside marriage is an abomination. The story of Kalasiris' temptation by Rhodopis also

[267] Hld. 2.24
[268] Hld. 2.25

offers an interesting parallel to that of Charikleia's temptation by Theagenes[270]. Both Kalasiris and Charikleia occupy priestly positions and both find themselves distracted with passion for a beautiful visitor from outside the city. Each of them feels that to give in to their feelings would be an outrage to their religious commitments and struggles in vain to overcome their infatuation. For Kalasiris, inability to withstand lust for a notorious courtesan leaves exile as the only way out of the situation. For Charikleia, captivation by pure love for a pure young man must also be resolved by exile but in her case it is in order not only that she can realise her passion in the form of legitimate marriage but also return to her true home.

Kalasiris' moral outlook on sexuality and his experience of temptation with Rhodopis make him the ideal person to persuade Charikleia that legitimate marriage to Theagenes is an acceptable alternative to pining to death for him. His morals are sufficiently austere to command a respectful hearing from Charikleia and thus close enough to her own that he can sympathise with her viewpoint while seeking to modify it. He can also speak as one who can empathise with someone in Charikleia's situation as he too knows what it is to be a priest subject to temptation.

The stories of Demainete, Arsake and Rhodopis thus provide a backdrop on which Charikleia's purity can be prominently displayed and on which the moral self positioning of the *Aithiopika* can be illuminated.

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[269] Hld. 2.25

[270] There is perhaps a deliberate contrasting of Kalasiris' passion for Rhodopis and Charikleia's for Theagenes in that Kalasiris says a battle raged between the eyes of his soul and the eyes of the flesh (2.25) in other words his passion for Rhodopis was purely physical. By contrast when Charikleia meets Theagenes it is the eyes of the soul which are affected (3.5).

Conclusion

In his creation of the story of Charikleia the virgin priestess who does not want to marry but falls in love and is "abducted", Heliodoros is drawing on familiar mythic and legendary traditions. His drawing on the mythology of Artemis and her followers illustrates that while a tradition of stories about young girls (and boys) refusing marriage does exist in Greek pagan culture they serve to indicate the undesirability and lack of viability of this way of life. Hippolytos is destroyed, Daphne metamorphosed, Kallisto is raped while Narcissus is punished by Nemesis and wastes away[271]. Charikleia however is more gently diverted from her mistaken path by being overwhelmed by true love.

A brief look at historical priestesses shows us that the norm was for girls to give up their role as virgin priestess when the time came for them to marry. Charikleia's initial refusal to move onto the next stage of life indicates that she was motivated by ideals outside the pagan religious/cultural norm.

Our survey of stories of virgin priestesses who like Charikleia were either taken from their shrines or otherwise gave way to Eros uncovers reoccurring elements of violence, blasphemy, human sacrifice and the wrath of a goddess –Iphigeneia, Komaitho, the Delphic priestess[272]. There are clear links between these stories and that of Charikleia but the tone is very different.

Why has Heliodoros drawn on stories which one would have thought disagreeable to the ears of a pious pagan to construct a pious pagan tale?

One explanation may be that Heliodoros' presentation of the abduction and marriage of a consecrated virgin as a positive and even pious act is a reflection of pagan

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[271] See above 79-80

distaste of the contemporary Christian practice of young girls dedicating themselves and being dedicated to a lifetime of virginity, seclusion and the trappings of poverty.

It may be that to gain further insight into why Heliodoros shaped the story of Charikleia as he did, we must turn from our investigation of the virgins of pagan history and mythology and look to the increasingly Christianised world of Heliodoros' own time. In this milieu, Charikleia's rejection of marriage and pursuit of purity would have been widely commended and understood.

Christian Virginity

Introduction

We have seen that aspects of the story of how Charikleia, the pious priestess who dedicated herself to lifelong virginity only to fall in love and abscond with a visiting stranger has parallels and echoes in the pagan literary and cultural tradition. Nymphs dedicated themselves to Artemis and chastity only to be raped by gods. Tales abound of virgin priestesses seduced or raped by impious strangers. Heroines of other pagan novels elope with their lovers yet guard their virginity.

However, we have not been able to identify stories of girls who personally pledge themselves to lifelong virginity in pursuit of "purity", or who are abetted in their refusal of an arranged marriage by a wandering holy man who accompanies her on her flight.

In the character of the priest Kalasiris, an elder spiritual advisor to the primary couple, a new element has been introduced to the pagan novel as we know it. We could perhaps cite the examples of the elderly Philetas who instructs Daphnis and Chloe

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[272] See above 91

rather unhelpfully on the arts of love[273] or the Rabelaisian priest of Artemis who comes to the rescue of Leukippe and Kleitophon[274] as possible precedents. I do not however think their roles in their respective novels or their level of influence and guidance of the young couple are such as to render them adequate progenitors of the characterisation and role of Kalasiris in the *Aithiopika*. The characterisation of Kalasiris can of course be broadly derived from that of the generic pagan holy man as satirised by Lucian and epitomised by Apollonius of Tyana[275]. His role in the plot is not however covered by this derivation. In particular, the fact that Kalasiris in his role of spiritual advisor and protector is closer to Charikleia rather than Theagenes illustrates the unusual nature of his place in the novel. No other novelistic heroine with the very particular exception of Kallirhoe has any kind of close male friend other than her lover. Female companions of Apollonius of Tyana are notable for their absence.

In order to find closer parallels with these new elements to Charikleia's story it is necessary to cross the divide into Christian literature, in particular to the strange world of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles.

The Apocryphal Acts of John, Peter, Paul, Andrew and Thomas were written in the second and early third centuries in Asia Minor and Syria and were translated and disseminated among diverse groups of Christians[276] remaining popular for the succeeding centuries. They tell often fantastical tales of the various Apostles' wanderings in different lands, their performance of miracles, making of converts and their conflicts with the rich and powerful which culminate in the Apostle's martyrdom. The Apocryphal Acts share key narrative elements with the "romance"

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[273] Longus 2.3-8
[274] Ach.Tat. 8.9
[275] See 62 above.
[276] Perkins; 1995 25

novel. The Apostle undertakes long and difficult journeys by land and sea; he comes into conflict with the powerful resulting in imprisonment, torture and amazing escapes before he finally triumphs.

While these narrative ingredients provide the same function in both the romance novel and the Apocryphal Acts of keeping the reader entertained they are enacted in a radically different fashion. The values evinced in the Acts are diametrically opposed to those of the pagan romances which were being also being written in around the 2nd century in the Near East.

The pagan romance celebrates the marriage of two well born, beautiful and privileged members of the community. It begins with a disruption to the normal course of elite family life so that the lovers are separated from their family, community and all the privileges of their position and ends with the reestablishment of the status quo. The apostolic genre on the other hand, contains in each of its surviving members episodes which have as their telos the dismantling of the status quo; the hitherto happy marriages of well born couples break apart, childlessness, poverty and lawlessness are preferred over wealth, social status, sexuality and life itself[277].

These episodes follow a common pattern[278]. At the instigation of a visiting apostle, upper class women refuse to continue sexual relations with their husbands and are ready to endure imprisonment and hardship, giving up all the privileges and comforts of their elite status in order to remain true to their new faith which is principally expressed in its total rejection of sexuality. It is the alienation of these highly placed women from their husbands which is the central cause for the apostle being persecuted and finally martyred by the authorities.

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[277] Perkins 1995 25-30, Aubin 1998 260-272
[278] Kraemer 1980 300

In the Acts of Thomas, Andrew and Paul this theme acquires a central importance. In the case of Thomas and Andrew we encounter more than one similar episode within each act with none of the women involved being really developed as an individual character or distinguishing herself with any remarkable action beyond her refusal of her husband and passive resistance. The emphasis is on the achievement and fate of the apostle rather than his female acolytes. The *Acts of Paul and Thekla* is very different and will be addressed in much greater detail in the following section.

To introduce this section and the strikingly different thought world and values system which we will now be exploring I will now relate a notorious episode in the *Acts of Thomas*, the best preserved of the Acts. This will elucidate the general pattern of the narrative so that we can make relevant comparisons with the *Aithiopika*. I will then set out how treatment of some very similar themes illustrates some of the radical differences in the two texts moral and social outlook.

The *Acts of Thomas* begins with the twelve apostles drawing lots to decide where each should go on their missionary journey. Thomas is dismayed when he is allocated India. Communicating with a people of such a different culture seems to him an impossible task. Jesus however appears and unceremoniously sells Thomas to an Indian merchant who fortunately happened to be on the lookout for a skilled carpenter to build his king's palace in India. Thomas accepts his fate.

Upon arriving in India, Thomas and the merchant are straightaway obliged to attend the wedding feast of a local king's only daughter. Sitting in ascetic gloom, Thomas is struck and insulted by a cupbearer for his bad manners. Thomas prophesies that the cupbearer's severed hand will be carried in a dog's mouth. This comes to pass almost immediately. All this is observed by a Jewish flute girl who is initially merely attracted to Thomas but on being the only one who understands his words is so

impressed by his prophetic powers that she abandons her former life (as symbolised by her breaking of her flute) and is converted.

The king hears of Thomas' prophetic powers and calls upon him to bless the marriage of his daughter as one specially favoured by divinity. Thomas does so in fairly begrudging terms. Once everyone has left the couple in their nuptial chamber however, Jesus appears before the astonished young bride and groom in the guise of Thomas, sits them down together and preaches the virtues of abstinence and childlessness to them. The rearing of children leads to sin and grief he tells them, but with celibacy they will lead a tranquil existence entering into

"...that incorruptible and true marriage"

"τὸν γάμον τὸν ἄφθορον καὶ ἀληθινόν"[279]

The couple are duly convinced and remain chaste. The king on learning that his daughter and son in law now refuse to consummate their marriage, seemingly under the influence of Thomas, is furious and orders him to be hunted down. However Thomas has already left the area and is beyond the king's reach.[280]

The outline of this episode can be compared in many particulars with that of Kalasiris' first meeting with Charikleia and Theagenes. Kalasiris, a pious Egyptian sage arrives in a strange land, having been set upon a life of wandering against his will. Upon his arrival in Delphi, he impresses the people and inspires a following not through his own power of prophecy but through the Delphic prophetess spontaneously delivering him a prophecy – a highly unusual honour from the god[281]. Kalasiris is conspicuous for the frugality of his diet, eating no meat and drinking no wine[282].

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[279] *AThom* 12
[280] *AThom* 1-16
[281] Hld 2.25-27
[282] Hld 3.11

In his asceticism he can thus be compared to both the likes of Apollonius of Tyana and to a lesser extent to the Apostles as portrayed in the *Apocryphal Acts* who restricted their dietary intake with somewhat greater severity[283]. As a respected member of the priestly and intellectual community at Delphi, Kalasiris becomes a trusted friend of Charikles[284], priest of Apollo and hence a most important figure at Delphi. It is to Kalasiris as one who supposedly has some supernatural abilities that Charikles turns when in perplexity about his daughter Charikleia who is refusing to marry the man he has chosen for her[285]. When Charikleia falls mysteriously ill (she is lovesick for Theagenes) Charikles asks Kalasiris to use his special powers both to cure her illness and to reconcile Charikleia to her marriage, if necessary by working magic upon her. In fact, Kalasiris does succeed in curing Charikleia's illness and in changing her mind about marriage but with the twist that he actually persuades her to go against the wishes of her stepfather by rejecting the marriage he has arranged and eloping with the young man of her choice. This is in accordance with divine will as manifested in an oracle uttered by the Delphic prophetess and the implications of which are noticed only by Kalasiris[286].

This scenario in which a stranger who appears to be in divine favour is asked by a powerful person to use this power to benefit his children only for the holy man's influence to backfire is one which we have seen occur in the passage we have been considering. Thomas is asked to bless the marriage of the king's only daughter with the result that the girl and her husband decide to renounce marriage. This sequence of events reoccurs in the *Acts of Andrew* when the Apostle is asked by the Proconsul to

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[283] E.g. *AThom* 5 Thomas like Kalasiris at 3.11 causes offence by refusing to partake at a public feast. *AThom* it is reported that Thomas fasts continually and eats only bread and salt and drinks only water. *Acts Pt.* 5-6 Peter fasts throughout a sea voyage from Caesarea to Puteoli.

[284] Hld. 2.29

[285] Hld. 2.33

[286] Hld. 2.35, 3.5

heal his sick wife Maximilla only for him to take the opportunity to convert her and thus permanently alienate her from her husband[287].

On the one hand, Kalasiris does precisely the opposite of his apostolic counterparts in that he persuades the maiden that her rejection of sexuality in preference to devotion to a divinity and the pursuit of purity and incorruptibility is actually impractical and had better be exchanged for virtuous matrimony. On the other hand, Kalasiris imitates the apostles by inciting the young woman to rebel against the wishes of her family and reject the marriage arranged for her. Charikles' rage and bewilderment and indeed the indignation of the entire polis of Delphi at Charikleia's "abduction" mirrors the mingled grief and fury of the pagan husbands, fathers and mothers portrayed in the Acts when they realise that the wandering apostle has caused their beloved wife or daughter to reject all family and marital ties[288]. Like Thomas, Kalasiris has disappeared before he can be called to account for his effect upon a leading citizen's only daughter.

By the time Charikles catches up with his stepdaughter at the end of the novel, Kalasiris is already dead – peacefully of old age, but Charikles speaks of his death as though it were the deserved penalty for taking his child away from him[289]. He also casts a fold of his tunic around Theagenes' neck in a recognised gesture of making a citizen's arrest[290]. This gesture is duplicated in a later episode of the *Acts of Thomas* by Charisius who seizes the apostle in order to bring him to justice for causing his wife to turn from him[291]. As the repository of Charikles' rage and blame for the abduction of his daughter including his belief that Kalasiris has met death as the merit for his actions, Kalasiris echoes further the role of the apostle who is persecuted and

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[287] Gregory of Tours; *Liber de Miraculis Beati Andreas Apostoli* 30-36 , see also Cooper 1996 46-49
[288] Hld 4.19-21
[289] Hld. 10.36
[290] Hld.10.35

finally loses his life principally through the vengeance of a leading man of the city whose womenfolk he has alienated.

In addition to his reversal of the role of apostle in his encouragement to marry, Kalasiris' influence over Charikleia is paradoxical in another sense also. Within the apocryphal texts, an effect on both women and men of being converted by the apostle is that they implicitly reject the wealth and status belonging to them in this life in exchange for an otherworldly kingdom. In the case of the *Acts of Thomas* in particular the humbling of the wealthy and nobly born in contrast with the valuation put upon the spiritual wealth of Thomas the humble carpenter is manifest in scenes in which wealth and status are shown to be of little worth. For example, the noblewoman Mygdonia in her eagerness to hear Thomas preach gets her servants to beat the crowd out of her way so that she can get close enough to hear, only for Thomas to address her sedan bearers on their degrading treatment and spiritual equality[292]. By the end of Thomas' extended sermon, Mygdonia has thrown herself out of her sedan and onto the ground in an ecstasy of repentance[293]. There is also a kind of subversive humour in the story of how Thomas the Carpenter, commissioned by the king to build him a great palace, spends the money on ministering to the poor then blandly explains to the king who asks where his palace is that he can't see it now but will have to wait until he dies[294]. While we have little information concerning the first readers of the Apocryphal Acts[295] we can detect a definite challenge to the concept that the wealthiest and most nobly born families were inherently better or more worthy.

Heliodoros offers his readers no such challenges but he seems to play with the concept of being offered an otherworld kingdom in place of an earthly one and a

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[291] *AThom* 106
[292] *AThom* 83
[293] *AThom* 87
[294] *AThom*21

spiritual marriage in place of a fleshly one. Charikleia is talked out of her vow of virginity by Kalasiris but she is also encouraged to persist in her resistance to the marriage arranged for her by her stepfather. Kalasiris also teaches her that her self understanding must go deeper than her identity as the daughter of a prominent citizen of a Greek polis; she is in fact heir to a mysterious kingdom at the ends of the earth. Far from this revelation inspiring humility and a rejection of worldly glory, Charikleia rejoices at her enhanced social status.

> "When she learned who she was, a pride befitting her birth was awakened in her."
> "Ὡς δὲ ἐγνώρισεν ἑαυτήν, καὶ τὸ φρόνημα διανιστᾶσα πλέον τῷ γένει προσέδραμε..."[296]

She then receives as her birthright a quantity of precious jewels and a fine embroidered cloth[297]. Throughout her vicissitudes in the course of the novel, Charikleia treasures and guards these mysterious yet worldly goods. She even carries them to the stake with her. She gives two reasons for this. The first is that they would provide a means by which she could support herself should she somehow happen to escape execution. The second is that if she were to die the jewels would be fitting adornments for her in her grave.[298] Thus Charikleia demonstrates both a pragmatic concern with material well- being and also a motivation to displaying her wealth, rank and beauty as her memorial even in the grave. Her concerns are strongly differentiated from those of the penitent aristocratic women of the Apocryphal Acts.

Kalasiris' subversion of the role of apostle can thus be interpreted as a subtle counterblast to an ideology whose pervasive influence threatened the stability and continuity of the aristocracy in the third and fourth centuries C.E. The narratives of

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[295] Cooper 1996 66-67
[296] Hld. 4.12
[297] Hld 4.17

the first and second century martyrs which celebrated the rejection of the family, worldly goods and even life itself in pursuit of the new faith were being devoured by fourth century aristocratic Christians who now lived in established Christian households and whose faith was now not merely tolerated, but becoming increasingly dominant. In this changed environment, in which piety was no longer tested by the risk of persecution, young women and men were nonetheless identifying with the radical attitudes of the early martyrs in their refusal of marriage, wealth and familial obligations[299]. The fourth century pagan, Heliodoros gives us the tale of a young girl of the highest birth who turns from her course of perpetual virginity and selects for herself a suitable husband and father of her children, a woman who takes great pride in her royal birth and who is anxious to be reunited with her family. She ends by embracing her family responsibilities as heir and participant in family cult. Charikleia treasures and guards the wealth entrusted to her by her family rather than squandering it on the poor and it is one of the jewels she carries which proves to be her salvation. In order to consolidate this claim that Heliodoros is consciously reacting to contemporary developments among the Christian aristocracy I will now offer a detailed comparison between the *Aithiopika* and the *Acts of Thekla* in which I hope to demonstrate that this is a text with which Heliodoros is intentionally interacting.

Thekla and Charikleia

Introduction

The *Acts of Paul and Thekla* has been dated to the Second century AD. It is included within the *Apocryphal Acts of St Paul* but also exists separately as a manuscript tradition in several languages including Greek, Coptic and Armenian, testifying to the

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[298] Hld 8.11

popularity of the story and the growth of cult around its heroine. Around 200 CE Tertullian makes the first recorded reference to the *ATh* when he condemns a certain presbyter of Asia Minor for having produced this falsified tale. The sources for this presbyter's text may go back to oral legend[300].

The fabulous nature of the account given in the *Acts* rules out the likelihood that Thekla's story has much of a basis in historical reality. The style of the narrative is that of a simple oral tale. This however is not to dismiss the possibility that there was once a charismatic Christian woman named Thekla in the area of Iconium around which these stories accrued.

What particularly concerns us here are the ways in which this short, unsophisticated Christian narrative of the second century CE shows some striking resemblances to the long, complex and pagan story of Charikleia written perhaps two centuries later. Events in the story of Charikleia sometimes so closely parallel events in the story of Thekla as to suggest that the later work has a direct intertextual link with the former. In the first part of this section, I will be demonstrating this with a detailed comparison of the two narratives.

As well as the similarity in narrative pattern, the *Aithiopika* and the *Acts of Thekla* have also the shared motif of a strong-minded, beautiful virginal heroine, rich in sacred knowledge albeit of very different kinds, who abandons her family to wander unknown territory on her personal quest. The second part of this chapter will therefore begin to examine the complex reasons of how and why a sophistic pagan writer from Emesa should be apparently be so influenced by a simple, popular Christian martyrology the subject of which was a focus of cult and pilgrimage of Seleucia.

The situation is complicated by the issue of cross fertilisation. There are strong

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[299] Cooper 1996 67

indications that such martyrological narratives owe something to the novelistic genre, which seems to have flourished around a similar era, the second century CE. We shall have to be careful then when we claim that Heliodoros, writing in the fourth century CE is taking the seemingly unlikely step of borrowing from a non-elite Christian text rather than attributing any similarities to the probability that the Christian text drew from the stock themes of Greek fiction. It is only when the parallels are markedly close and when the parallels take Heliodoros beyond the norms of pagan Greek novelistic writing, as we know it, that we can make this claim with any degree of confidence. For example, the coincidence taken in isolation that Charikleia and Thekla have to confront the unwanted sexual attentions of powerful men in the course of their journeying would not tell us much. Incidents in which beautiful young women travelling without adequate male protection are subject to attack are not only a staple of Greek fiction but would have been cause for concern in every day historical reality. One the other hand, the fact that both Thekla and Charikleia have a strong spiritual commitment to virginity is not explainable by reference to the requirements of the novelistic genre. Thekla's commitment to lifelong virginity is clearly inspired by her conversion to Christianity. How do we explain the similar initial commitment on the part of Charikleia?

As well as exploring the similarity of the two narratives, it will also be important to notice the differences and striking twists in the parallels between the two narratives as this can provide important insights as to the relationship between the two texts and to their different ideological religious and social backgrounds. An example of this might be that while both Charikleia and Thekla's families react strongly against their commitment to virginity the nature of their reactions are very different. Charikles tries

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[300] Davies 2001 7

to persuade and at worse bewitch his stepdaughter into complying with his wishes. Thekla's mother tries to have her burnt alive. The authors of the two texts clearly wish to project very different conceptions as to the likely behaviour of pagan parents when confronted with refractory offspring.

The question of the respective readerships of the two texts also remains. The *Acts of Thekla,* as has been indicated, is written in a very simple and unvarnished style, without rhetorical flourishes or abstruse literary references. Would someone like Heliodoros or a typical reader of Heliodoros have familiarised themselves with such a text? This is a crucial point; unless we are convinced that there would have been a shared readership and cultural reference between the two texts, any attempt to relate one to the other is futile.

There are however indications that simple a text as it is, the *Acts of Thekla* enjoyed a readership of among others, sophisticated theologians, clergy and well born Christian ladies in the centuries following its composition. There are references to the work in among others, Tertullian, Athanasius and Methodius, who in his *Symposium,* composed about 300 CE, makes Thekla the leader of a group of illustrious virgins who give speeches in praise of virginity[301].

It seems unlikely that the more typical pagan readers of Heliodoros would all be ignorant of the Christian theologians mentioned above. At that level of learning, the lines of communication between Christian and pagan were open[302]. Origen and Plotinus shared a teacher; the Christian bishop Synesius remained loyal to and in correspondence with his pagan, Neoplatonist teacher Hypatia. A staunch pagan such as Ammianus Marcellinus condemned the bigotry of the Emperor Julian when he

[301] Davis 2001
[302] Dodds 1965 103ff

forbade Christian teachers to teach the pagan canon[303]. Pagan and Christian polemicists alike scoured the works of the opposing side looking for weak points. Origen's *Contra Celsum* in which he responds to Celsus' attack on Christianity shows how the dialogue went back and forth even if not necessarily in friendly fashion. In that atmosphere, it seems unlikely that Heliodoros' audience would never have come across the story of Thekla. That being the case, the scene for instance, in which the virtuous Charikleia is almost burnt on a pyre, invokes the heavenly powers and is strangely unharmed by the flames would surely call to mind the parallel scene in the story of Thekla and other such stories of Christian miracle with it. Identifying allusions to a popular Christian narrative embedded in a sophisticated and very pagan novel would affect how the reader responded to and understood the text.

Section one

Both Charikleia and Thekla upset their families by rejecting the marriage approved for them and insisting on maintaining their virginity for life.

Charikleia is a priestess of Artemis and insists that she will have nothing to do with marriage.[304] We are not told that any particular person has influenced Charikleia to think in this way although it is indicated that she is in the habit of conversing with the learned and holy men who visit the Delphic sanctuary[305]. Beyond Charikles' brief exchange on the subject with Kalasiris, no other explanation is offered as to why Charikleia should reject married life childbearing and the chance to show proper gratitude and respect for her stepfather by giving him the grandchildren he craves. These are all factors, which would be traditionally considered essential elements in a satisfactory and meaningful life for a woman. There is nothing as tangible as Thekla's conversion by Paul to account for the young woman's momentous decision.

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[303] Ammianus, 22.10.7

Charikles' sorrow at Charikleia's refusal to perpetuate his family line by marrying his nephew and to give him grandchildren is such as to cause even Kalasiris, who will go on to encourage Charikleia to abandon Charikles altogether to weep with compassion for him.

> ""Do not reject my prayer; do not condemn me to live out my life without children, without comfort, without heirs, old and miserable. By the great god Apollo and by the native gods of Egypt I implore you." He wept as he made his entreaty, and I wept to hear it, Knemon, and promised to give him whatever assistance I could."
> "ἱκέτην με γινόμενον μὴ περιίδῃς μηδὲ συγχωρήσῃς ἄπαιδα καὶ ἀπαραμύθητον καὶ διαδόχων ἔρημον ἐν γήρᾳ βαρεῖ διάγειν, μὴ πρὸς Ἀπόλλωνος αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐγχωρίων σοι θεῶν. Ἐδάκρυσα τούτων ἀκούων, ὦ Κνήμων, ἐπειδὴ κἀκεῖνος οὐκ ἀδάκρυτον τὴν ἱκεσίαν προσῆγε καὶ ἐπηγγελλόμην εἴ τι δυναίμην συλλήψεσθαι." [306]

At the beginning of the *Acts of Thekla,* the heroine becomes captivated when she hears Paul's preaching on the virtues of chastity and this leads her to reject her fiancé Thamyris[307]. Thekla does not initially verbally communicate her new resolution but simply remains staring out of the window, listening to Paul, not taking any sustenance and ignoring everyone around her. Thekla's family is greatly concerned by this. Although they implore her to tell them the reason for her strange behaviour she refuses to speak and continues to stare out of the window as though in a trance like state. They are devastated by her lack of response to them.

> "And Thamyris going near, and kissing her but at the same time also being afraid of her overpowering emotion, said: Thecla, my betrothed, why dost thou sit thus? and what sort of feeling holds thee overpowered? Turn round to thy Thamyris, and be ashamed. Moreover also her mother also said the same things: Why dost thou sit thus looking down, my child and answering nothing, but like a mad woman? And they wept fearfully, Thamyris indeed for the loss of a wife, and Theocleia of a child, and the maidservants of a mistress; there was, accordingly, much confusion in the house of mourning. And while these things were thus going on, Thecla did not turn round, but kept attending earnestly to

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[304] Hld. 2.33
[305] Hld. 2.33
[306] Hld. 2.33
[307] *ATh* 7-10

the word of Paul."

"Καὶ προσελθὼν Θάμυρις, ἅμα μὲν φιλῶν αὐτήν, ἅμα δὲ καὶ φοβούμενος τὴν ἔκπληξιν αὐτῆς, εἶπεν Θέκλα ἐμοὶ μνηστευθεῖσα, τί τοιαύτη κάθησαι; καὶ ποῖόν σε πάθος κατέχει ἔκπληκτον; ἐπιστράφηθι πρὸς τὸν σὸν Θάμυριν καὶ αἰσχύνθητι. Ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτῆς τὰ αὐτὰ ἔλεγεν Τέκνον, τί τοιαύτη κάτω βλέπουσα κάθησαι, καὶ μηδὲν ἀποκρινομένη ἀλλὰ παραπλήξ; Καὶ οἱ μὲν ἔκλαιον δεινῶς, Θάμυρις μὲν γυναικὸς ἀστοχῶν, Θεοκλεία δὲ τέκνου, αἱ δὲ παιδίσκαι κυρίας· πολλὴ οὖν σύγχυσις ἦν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ πένθους. καὶ τούτων οὕτως γινομένων Θέκλα οὐκ ἀπεστράφη, ἀλλ' ἦν ἀτενίζουσα τῷ λόγῳ Παύλου."[308]

While, as we have seen, the stepfather of Charikleia and the mother of Thekla are similar in that they are both deeply perturbed and grief stricken by their daughters' refusal to play the role set out for them, a very sharp differentiation is soon apparent in the response of the two parental figures.

This grief and concern on the part of Thekla's mother is suddenly transformed into a terrible anger and vengefulness. When Thekla still remains silent and obdurate as Paul is put on trial for his teachings and the governor challenges his protégé in open court as to why she will not marry, Theokleia bursts out with a demand that her daughter be publicly burnt to deter other women from following Paul's teachings. The governor concurs with the anguished parent's wishes[309].

This seems a bizarre and perverse reaction on the part of Theokleia. Surely, Theokleia would be more likely to call for the destruction of her young daughter's corruptor rather than for the death of her own child[310]. That Paul, the wandering stranger, should merely be whipped and dismissed from Iconium while the young aristocratic woman of the city who has come under his influence should be sentenced to public

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[308] *ATh* 10

[309] *ATh* 20-21

[310] Kraemer 1980 302 gives the reason for Thekla's more severe penalty as being that as a woman's whole worth was measured by her marriagability, to refuse marriage was to set herself outside all established law. While the extreme severity of the punishment does serve to emphasise the

execution is hard to rationalise. Part of the reason for this development must be of course for the sake of the story. This is a text about the ordeals of Thekla not of Paul so a scene of quasi martyrdom must be engineered for Thekla. The disturbing detail that it should be Thekla's own mother who calls for her to be put to an agonising and ignominious end seems however to require further investigation.

Intergenerational tension and conflict is a central theme within the pagan novelistic genre. In the *Aithiopika* and in *Leukippe and Kleitophon,* the protagonists flee parental opposition to their union. The *Aithiopika* and *Daphnis and Chloe* both present us with parents who are initially prepared to abandon their children to die. Charikleia's real mother exposed her as a baby to avoid the wrath of her father. Unwittingly both Charikleia's mother and father had been about to slay her as a sacrifice to their gods. The parents of Daphnis and Chloe exposed their children to the elements and wild beasts rather than pay for their upkeep.

I would argue however, that Theokleia's impassioned demand that her daughter be burnt at the stake for her disobedience has a different narrative role from the examples of parental callousness considered above. Threats to the safety of the protagonists of the novels come primarily from barbarians and criminals whom they encounter in the course of their exile. In the end the hero and heroine are always reconciled with their own family, city and social class which will all form the basis of their identity for the remainder of their lives (with the exception of Theagenes of course, whose parents apparently never find out what became of him). There is nothing in the pagan narratives that compares to the direct and destructive animosity which Theokleia shows to her daughter Thekla. It is notable that even in the throes of rage against her daughter whom she believes to have been entertaining an unknown man in her bed

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transgressive nature of Thekla's act the fact that it is her mother and the governor of her city who order

Leukippe's mother never actually strikes her erring daughter but reserves all her violence for the luckless maidservant who has failed in her duties as chaperone[311].

The key to understanding the reaction of Theokleia to Thekla's defiance and its place in the story is the way in which Christian texts written during this era of persecution depict the faith as being at odds with the whole established order, from the family to the ruling hierarchies of the city and the Roman Empire. They were all defined as the idolatrous and persecuting enemy[312].

Thekla's Christianity thus implies alienation from her family and its values at a very fundamental level, which goes far beyond the temporary disagreements and displacements that go on between the children and parents of the pagan texts.

> "Don't think that I came to send peace on the earth. I didn't come to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's foes will be those of his own household."
> " Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν: οὐκ ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἀλλὰ μάχαιραν. ἦλθον γὰρ διχάσαι ἄνθρωπον κατὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ θυγατέρα κατὰ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτῆς καὶ νύμφην κατὰ τῆς πενθερᾶς αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οἱ οἰκιακοὶ αὐτοῦ.[313]

Thus, Theokleia as the pagan mother who is trying to force her daughter into the impurities of marriage can be representative of the powers of oppression and evil that are usually conceived of as emanating from outside the family, the city and the law in the pagan romances.

This hostile determination to reverse the traditional family hierarchy in which the parent knows what is best for the child and the child with unthinking deference fulfils the destiny set out for it by the parental will can be seen in another text of a similar

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the punishment prompts further examination.
[311] Ach Tat. 2.24-5
[312] Davies 2001:20-21.
[313] *Matthew* 10. 34-7

vintage but seemingly with a firmer basis in reality.

The *Martyrdom of Perpetua* purportedly contains extracts from the diary of Perpetua herself. The scenes in which her distraught father attempts to dissuade her from her fatal obstinacy are illustrative of not only the lack of mutual comprehension between pagan father and Christian daughter but also Perpetua's confidence that she is her father's moral superior[314]. In her father's desperation to convince Perpetua to save her own life, he reverses the traditional ascendancy of parent over child and calls her "lady" rather than daughter[315]. Perpetua seems to accept her father's anguished self-abasement as fitting, only regretting that he should be so awkward as not to rejoice in his daughter's forthcoming execution.

> "And then my father came to me from the city, worn out with anxiety. He came up to me, that he might cast me down, saying, 'Have pity my daughter, on my grey hairs. Have pity on your father, if I am worthy to be called a father by you... Have regard to your brothers, have regard to your mother and your aunt, have regard to your son, who will not be able to live after you.
> Lay aside your courage, and do not bring us all to destruction; for none of us will speak in freedom if you should suffer anything.' These things said my father in his affection, kissing my hands, and throwing himself at my feet; and with tears he called me not Daughter, but Lady. And I grieved over the grey hairs of my father, that he alone of all my family would not rejoice over my passion."
> "superuenit autem et de ciuitate pater meus, consumptus taedio, et ascendit ad me, ut me deiceret, dicens: Miserere, filia, canis meis; miserere patri, si dignus sum a te pater uocari.... aspice fratres tuos, aspice matrem tuam et materteram, aspice filium tuum qui post te uiuere non poterit. depone animos; ne uniuersos nos extermines. nemo enim nostrum libere loquetur, si tu aliquid fueris passa. haec dicebat quasi pater pro sua pietate basians mihi manus et se ad pedes meos iactans et lacrimans me iam non filiam nominabat sed dominam. et ego dolebam casum patris mei quod solus de passione mea gauisurus non esset de toto genere meo."[316]

The listing by Perpetua's father of the close family members who would be devastated by Perpetua's death and Perpetua's denial that these ties can or should impose any obligation on her to save them from grief by saving herself, can be

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[314] Perkins 1995 107

compared to the plea of Charikles quoted above[317] that he not be left to grow old bereft of grandchildren. The ascetic pagan Charikleia is like the Christian women Thekla and Perpetua in that she claims the right to live her life in accordance with abstract, individualistic principles of her own choosing rather than with the family centred ethos traditionally expected of a woman.

The lives of both Charikleia and Thekla are disrupted by powerful spiritual and emotional forces. Although as we have said, Charikleia initially refuses marriage because she is committed to remaining a virgin, this commitment is compromised when despite herself, she falls passionately in love with Theagenes, a young man visiting Delphi as part of a religious delegation from Thessaly.

Charikleia's response to being overwhelmed by the feelings she had condemned as impure is to retire to her bed and lie there feverish and sleepless[318]. Like the family of Thekla, Charikles is devastated by his stepdaughter's disorder and her refusal to speak about the nature of her problem[319].

Charikleia's languishing would be familiar to ancient readers of Heliodoros as the classic symptoms of love sickness as it had been portrayed in classical literature since Sappho. The scene also bears a close relationship to the torments of the lovesick Phaedra as is discussed in an earlier section.

Thekla's withdrawal from her family and her refusal to communicate can be compared to the behaviour of Charikleia under circumstances, which are both similar and very different. In Thekla's case, however, these familiar symptoms of withdrawal and bodily neglect herald the translation of a familiar generic topos into the development of a writing with a very different subject matter; the lovesick heroine of

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[315] Jacobs 1999 107
[316] *Passio Perpetuae* 5
[317] See 132 above.
[318] Hld 3.7

pagan narrative has become the martyr yearning for salvation and the love of her redeemer. It is striking how the language used about Thekla's strange state by her family and fiancé, could be descriptive of someone in the grip of an erotic as much as of a spiritual ecstasy; Thekla, we are told

> "...so attendeth to a stranger who teacheth deceitful and various words, that I marvel how the great modesty of the maiden is so hardly beset."
> "...οὕτως πρόσκειται ἀνδρὶ ξένῳ ἀπατηλοὺς καὶ ποικίλους λόγους διδάσκοντι, ὥστε με θαυμάζειν πῶς ἡ τοιαύτη αἰδὼς τῆς παρθένου χαλεπῶς ἐνοχλεῖται."[320]

Her mother also describes Thekla as

> "...held by a new desire and a fearful passion."
>
> "...κρατεῖται ἐπιθυμίᾳ καινῇ καὶ πάθει δεινῷ."[321]

The possibility that Thekla's devotion to the teachings of Paul might owe more to attraction to the charismatic teacher than to her reception of his message is a tension that seems latent throughout the narrative of Thekla.

Is it because Paul cannot trust himself with his beautiful young disciple that he dismisses her offer to accompany him on his missionary travels with the following words?

> "The time is ill-favoured and thou art comely: beware lest another temptation take thee, worse than the first, and thou endure it not but play the coward."
>
> Ὁ καιρὸς αἰσχρός, καὶ σὺ εὔμορφος· μὴ ἄλλος σε πειρασμὸς λήψεται χείρων τοῦ πρώτου, καὶ οὐχ ὑπομείνῃς ἀλλὰ δειλανδρήσῃς."[322]

If by this Paul meant that she would be at risk from attack from others in the course of her wanderings, his logic is hard to understand. Thekla is already an exile, disowned

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[319] Hld 18-19
[320] *ATh* 8
[321] *ATh* 9
[322] *ATh* 25

by her family and native city. One might have assumed that under the circumstances she would be safer if she attached herself to Paul's party rather than wandering alone. It is perhaps the influence of the novelistic genre which leads to this ambiguity in Thekla's relationship with Paul[323]. Like Charikleia and the other novelistic heroines, Thekla is motivated throughout her adventures by a grand passion. In her case, we need to understand this as a passion for the Christian God which is manifested by her devotion to both to physical purity and to her teacher Paul. As the man who is the instigator (however unintentionally) and companion of Thekla's perilous wanderings, Paul is pushed into the narrative role equivalent to that of the heroine's lover in the pagan Greek romances[324]. The fragile interface between the heroine's dedication to Paul and to the God of Paul is illustrated when the Lord actually takes on the physical form of Paul for Thekla's benefit so that she would not feel deserted when she failed to see the absent Paul at the scene of her martyrdom[325].

The three-way relationship of the *Acts of Thekla* in which we have Thekla's love for the Christian God with Paul occupying an ambivalent role as guide and intermediary can be seen as analogous to that between Charikleia, Theagenes and Kalasiris. There is no relationship in any of the extant romances with which Charikleia's relationship with Kalasiris can be compared; he is her advisor on matters spiritual and practical, her travelling companion, fellow priest and substitute father. Paul's relationship with Thekla is a much closer analogy to that of Charikleia and Kalasiris than any to be found in pagan fiction.

Both maidens are influenced and abetted in their flight from their families by

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[323] Cooper 1996 49. Cooper suggests that as the primary narrative purpose of the apostle is to seduce well born women's affections from their husband and family on behalf of the Christian God this may in part necessitate the emphasis on the apostle's asexuality. A similar concern clearly has a role in the presentation of the ascetic Kalasiris.

[324] Kraemer 1980 303-4

[325] *ATh* 21

wandering holy men. In order to elucidate the parallels between the role played by Kalasiris in Charikleia' adventures and that of Paul in those of Thekla, it is necessary to recapitulate in some detail the origins and nature of the influence which Kalasiris has with Charikleia.

The object of Charikleia's love is the young man Theagenes who indeed reciprocates it. It is not however Theagenes who persuades Charikleia that she should elope with him, nor is it he who engineers their escape.

The Egyptian priest and wise man Kalasiris has come to Delphi as a place of sanctuary, illicit sexual temptation in the person of the courtesan Rhodopis and evil prophecies concerning his two sons having propelled him on a life of wandering[326].

At Delphi, he quickly becomes an honoured guest, a personal prophecy being vouchsafed him from the priestess at the moment of his arrival being taken as evidence that he enjoys the particular favour of the God[327]. From then on, he has a public and respected role as cleric and scholar at the shrine where he frequently has crowds of hearers seeking to know more of the mysteries of the land of his birth[328].

It is thus that he becomes intimate with Charikles, priest of Apollo and Charikleia's stepfather who confides in him his concerns about his stepdaughter's attitude to matrimony. He asks Kalasiris to meet Charikleia in order to persuade her, if necessary with the aid of the magical powers which Charikles assumes an Egyptian sage must possess, to be more receptive to marriage and Eros - in particular to the marriage that Charikles has arranged for her with his own nephew[329].

Kalasiris is in fact already acquainted with Charikleia. He has taken part in sacrificial

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[326] Hld. 2.25
[327] Hld 2.26
[328] Hld 2.27
[329] Hld 2.28-33

rituals with her and she has come to him for religious instruction[330]. Kalasiris carries out his commission from Charikles in that he does indeed persuade Charikleia to accept that her human and womanly nature makes marriage the only tolerable choice for her[331]. In that respect Kalasiris fulfils directly the opposite narrative function of Paul, whose teachings convinced Thekla that marriage was not an acceptable option for one who wished to stand high in the favour of God. That Kalasiris convinces Charikleia that she should marry the stranger Theagenes with whom she is in love rather than the man chosen by her guardian and that furthermore she must flee her stepfather and her city in search of her true home realigns the narrative of Charikleia with that of Thekla. Paul's teachings causes Thekla to reject the fiancé approved by her mother (Thekla doesn't seem to have a father), and as a result of this she is forced to leave her city and set out upon a life of wandering.

Thus both Charikleia and Thekla are inspired by the influence of an older man, a teacher and a man of god, a stranger to their city who has attracted crowds of listeners, a mentor who has encouraged them to aim to fulfil themselves spiritually at the highest level available to them. In the case of Thekla, this means a rejection of marriage and sexuality while in the case of Charikleia it means coming to a realisation that such a rejection is not a realistic choice for a young woman. This divergence will be a critical point of discussion in the following section when we consider in what senses the two texts can be considered to be in dialogue with each other.

Thekla and Charikleia are both sentenced to be burnt on a pyre through a woman's agency. They are both immune to the flames due to supernatural forces. Thekla as we have seen[332] is sentenced to be publicly burnt on a pyre at the instigation of her mother. Once the pyre is built up, in the middle of the theatre,

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[330] Hld 2.35

Thekla ascends it of her own accord, pausing only to make the sign of the cross. The flames are not allowed to touch her for God causes an earthquake and a great cloud of rain and hail which puts out the flames and endangers everyone in the vicinity[333].

Charikleia is sentenced to burn by the Persian noblewoman Arsake, on a false charge provoked by jealousy over Theagenes. Although the execution is to take place beyond the city walls rather than in the midst of the civic theatre, crowds of curious onlookers flock to attend the spectacle so the scene is set in a similar sort of atmosphere to that of Thekla's ordeal[334]. Like Thekla, Charikleia mounts the pyre of her own accord and she too pauses first. Instead of making the sign of the cross, Charikleia raises her hands to the Sun and invokes the Sun Moon and Powers of above and below to bear witness to her innocence. She then stands in the midst of the pyre, her previous ordeals having made her eager to die. The flames do not touch her; instead, they bestow upon her a sort of glowing radiance[335].

The supernatural intervention is less violent than that of Thekla's. The crowd are not endangered by hailstones or earthquakes but convinced that her innocence has been vindicated by this miracle, they forcibly put a stop to the attempted execution and Charikleia is returned to prison[336].

Unlike in the case of Thekla, in which we are informed directly that the earthquake and the rain cloud were sent by God, the precise nature of the strange forces that saved Charikleia are a matter of debate within the text. Once Charikleia is reunited with Theagenes in prison, the pair discuss the possible causes for Charikleia's mysterious flame retardant properties. Theagenes assumes that the gods in their

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[331] Hld.4.11
[332] See above 133ff.
[333] *ATh* 22
[334] Hld.8.9
[335] Hld.8.9
[336] Hld.8.9

goodness must have intervened in order to save an innocent woman and inculpate a guilty one[337]. If "God" is substituted for "gods" this reasoning would accord well with a Christian martyrological context. Charikleia however, is more sceptical about the good intentions of the divine powers. As far as she is concerned, the gods have shown them little other than hostility in throwing them into one danger and hardship after another[338]. Theagenes chides Charikleia for her criticism of the divine powers but then they each suddenly recall a dream in which the form of the now deceased Kalasiris appears before them to offer a prophetic message[339]. His utterance to Charikleia reveals to her that she was actually saved by the magical properties of the pantarbe stone which she had about her person, concealed with the rest of her jewellery as she mounted the pyre.

Some distance from Iconium, in the shelter of a tomb, Paul prayed that Thekla be saved from the flames. At Thekla's sudden appearance at the tomb he thanks God for answering his prayer, evidently claiming some credit for the divine rescue[340].

The spiritual power of his counterpart Kalasiris seems to also to have played a nebulous role in the saving of Charikleia from the flames as his is the image which appears to deliver prophecy to Charikleia and Theagenes. Charikleia seems convinced that it was Kalasiris himself who somehow manifested himself. In this context she describes him as;

"...most godlikeKalasiris."

"ὁ Θειότατος Καλάσιρις[341]"

This would seem to suggest that Charikleia believes that it is the sanctity of Kalasiris which enables him to intervene from beyond the grave. Theagenes however more

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[337] Hld 8.10
[338] Hld 8.10
[339] Hld 8.11

cautiously describes his own vision as either Kalasiris himself or a god taking the form of Kalasiris[342]. In either case, the holy man Kalasiris is in some way the intermediary between the divine powers and Charikleia as through the workings of Fate she wears the flame repellent Pantarbe concealed about her as she goes to her fiery death[343]. In this way his role can be juxtaposed to that of Paul as he prays from a distance for the deliverance of Thekla.

There are scenes in both texts in which the heroine languishes in prison, gladly sharing the agonies of her male companion who is fettered and who endures physical chastisement. Before Thekla is brought before the Governor, along with Paul, she has voluntarily installed herself in prison with him where he lies fettered[344]. Having bribed the gatekeeper with her bracelets to be allowed to go to him, she has exchanged in a symbolical sense her bracelets for the fetters of Paul.

> "Thecla was wallowing on the ground in the place where he sat and taught her in the prison; and he ordered her too to be brought to the tribunal. And she came exulting for joy."
>
> "ἡ δὲ Θέκλα ἐκυλίετο ἐπὶ τοῦ τόπου οὗ ἐδίδασκεν ὁ Παῦλος καθήμενος ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ. ὁ δὲ ἡγεμὼν ἐκέλευσεν κἀκείνην ἀχθῆναι ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα· ἡ δὲ μετὰ χαρᾶς ἀπίει ἀγαλλιωμένη."[345]

Paul is later flogged for his teachings and expelled from the city[346].

Charikleia too rejoices in her imprisonment and imminent death simply so that she can share the fate of Theagenes. Although she is entirely innocent of the crime of murder with which she is charged, she insists that she is guilty in her desire to join Theagenes who has been imprisoned and tortured and whom Charikleia believes to

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[340] *ATh* 24
[341] Hld 8.11. I have slightly modified Morgan's translation here.
[342] Hld. 8.11
[343] Dowden 1996 274-5
[344] *ATh* 18
[345] *ATh* 20

have been killed[347]. After Arsake has failed to burn Charikleia to death, she has her returned for the night to a dungeon in company with Theagenes who has been loaded with fetters and subjected to torture[348]. This is a result of his having obstinately refused Arsake's sexual advances.

"This was something else that Arsake had devised to spite and make cruel fun of them. She thought that it would cause the young couple more pain if they were shut up in the same cell so that they could see one another in chains and being subjected to corporal punishment, for she knew that a lover feels his beloved's pain more deeply than his own. But on the contrary, this proved a great solace to them, and they were glad that they were both enduring identical hardships, for each felt that to undergo less severe punishment would have been a defeat at the other's hands."

"Τῇ μὲν γὰρ Ἀρσάκῃ καὶ τοῦτο εἰς τιμωρίαν ἐπινενόητο ὥσπερ ἐπικερτομούσῃ καὶ πλέον νομιζούσῃ τοὺς νέους ἀνιάσειν εἰ καθ' ἓν δεσμωτήριον καθειργμένοι θεαταὶ
γίνοιντο ἀλλήλων ἐν δεσμοῖς καὶ κολάσεσιν ἐξεταζομένων· ἤδει γὰρ ὡς πάθος τοῦ ἐρωμένου τὸν ἐρῶντα πλέον ἢ τὸ ἴδιον ἀλγύνει. Τοῖς δὲ ἦν παραψυχὴ μᾶλλον τὸ γινόμενον καὶ τὸ ἐν ὁμοίοις τοῖς πάθεσιν ἐξετάζεσθαι κέρδος ἐνόμιζον, εἰ ἔλαττον αὐτῶν τις κολασθήσεται νενικῆσθαι ὑπὸ θατέρου καὶ μειονεκτεῖν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν οἰόμενος.[349].

Whilst other heroes and heroines of Greek romance endure sufferings nobly, motivated by loyalty to their beloved and by personal pride, it is hard to parallel such a display of gratuitous masochism or active celebration of suffering within the genre. It is true that when Thersandros threatens to torture Leukippe, she challenges him to do his worst[350] but that is an expression of defiance; she doesn't actually delight in the prospect of torment. The expression of this kind of emotion is much closer to that uttered by those "athletes" of bodily endurance the Christian martyrs. In *Foucault's Virginity*, Goldhill picks up on the martyrological echoes resounding through

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[346] *ATh* 21
[347] Hld. 8.8
[348] Hld. 8.8
[349] Hld. 8.9
[350] Ach.Tat. 6.22

Heliodoros' description of Theagenes and Charikleia's gladly endured sufferings[351].

In order to be able to journey more safely and independently, the two heroines alter their appearance of being beautiful young women of the upper classes.

From the first, Thekla is eager to shed the image of a rich and beautiful young woman. This can be seen even when she rids herself of her bracelets and her silver mirror –the paraphernalia of feminine ornamentation, as a way of bribing first the doorkeeper to allow her out of the house and then the gaoler so that she can visit Paul in prison[352]. Her abandonment of these expensive articles symbolises her rejection of her former station in life as the privileged daughter of an aristocratic family, whose chief duty was to be attractive enough to secure a suitable spouse.

She is here ridding herself not only of the tokens of her gender but also the trappings of wealth and status as is emphasized by the detail that the mirror is a silver one (rather than bronze). It is also significant that these little articles, which hitherto she had taken for granted, are of sufficient value as to induce the doorkeeper and the gaoler to take the considerable risks inherent in disobeying their orders.

Rejection of personal wealth and an embracement of the life of poverty were essential to the chosen path of salvation of many Christians of the era. An example of this is that of Makrina a learned ascetic who ran an early convent. Her brother Gregory of Nyssa tells us that he was unable to find a robe of hers fit to bury her in as she possessed only the garment she wore[353].

There are some indications in the text that Thekla too aspired to live from hand to mouth with none of the resources she could once have taken for granted. Before she is reunited with Paul after her flight from Iconium, the Apostle and his party are fasting in a wayside tomb. There is no food to feed the children because in following Paul;

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[351] Goldhill 1995:120.

"Onesiphorus had left the things of the world"

"...κατέλιπεν γὰρ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου ὁ Ὀνησιφόρος...[354]"

Paul's solution is to sell his cloak in order to buy bread. At this point, Thekla catches up with the party and they all joyfully take part in an austere feast, strikingly similar to that which might have been consumed by Kalasiris himself;

"And they had five loaves, and herbs, and water."

"εἶχον δὲ ἄρτους πέντε καὶ λάχανα καὶ ὕδωρ[355]"

Later in the narrative, when Thekla has been adopted by the wealthy widow Tryphaena and could have lived in comfort in her now Christian household, she becomes restless and sets out again in search of Paul[356]. When she finds him, she hands over the clothing and gold Tryphaena has given her to be distributed to the poor and continues on her travels with the intention of teaching the word of God[357]. Thekla has clearly rejected not just the trappings of a nubile woman but also the privileges that go with her status in life.

Thekla's determination to shed the outward symbols of femininity is later taken to a considerable step further. Having rejoined Paul amid much rejoicing after she had miraculously escaped the pyre, Thekla offers to become Paul's travelling companion.

"I shall cut my hair and follow thee whithersoever thou goest."

"Περικαροῦμαι καὶ ἀκολουθήσω σοι ὅπου δὰν πορεύῃ.[358]"

In offering to cut her hair, Thekla is both giving up her femininity and claiming a sort of equality as an androgynous figure to whom the normal rules about women (that

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[352] *ATh* 18
[353] Gregory Nyss. *Life of Makrina* 990a
[354] *ATh* 23
[355] *ATh* 25
[356] *ATh* 40

they should stay at home and not wander around with strange men) don't apply. Paul's response

"thou art beautiful"

"σὺ εὔμορφος"[359]

-is an implicit rejection of Thekla's attempt to transcend her physicality. He persists in seeing her only as an attractive young woman who would therefore be nothing but a liability to herself and others if she were to flaunt herself abroad.

It is just after this that Thekla is indeed subjected to a sexual assault, is sentenced to death for defending herself, baptises herself, survives the arena and makes converts[360]. Having overcome these ordeals, she puts on male attire for her journey to find Paul again without asking anyone's permission. We are told that she

"...sewed the tunic so as to make a man's cloak"...

"...ῥάψασα τὸν χιτῶνα εἰς ἐπενδύτην σχήματι ἀνδρικῷ...[361]"

The fact that Thekla is now accompanied by a retinue of male and female servants[362] raises the question of whether such a measure was really required for the practical purpose of avoiding unwanted male attention in the course of her journey. The masculine chiton seems rather to serve as Thekla's statement that she no longer considers herself either a sexual being or one subject to the traditional limitations of her gender. Paul himself seems finally to acknowledge this when he bids her

"Go, and teach the word of God."

"Ὑπαγε καὶ δίδασκε τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ."[363]

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[357] *ATh* 41
[358] *ATh* 25
[359] *ATh* 25
[360] *ATh* 26-39
[361] *ATh* 40
[362] *ATh* 40
[363] *ATh* 41

This of course is in direct contradiction of the teachings of the Paul of the canonical Letters with regard to women's public speaking[364].

Women who emulated Thekla's career as preacher and as transvestite were to be a source of vexation to the fathers of the established Church for centuries to come, causing the *Acts of Thekla* to be condemned specifically by Tertullian as a bad influence.

> "But if certain Acts of Paul, which are falsely so named, claim the example of Thecla for allowing women to teach and to baptize, let men know that in Asia the presbyter who compiled that document, thinking to add of his own to Paul's reputation, was found out, and though he professed he had done it for love of Paul, was deposed from his position. How could we believe that Paul should give a female power to teach and to baptize, when he did not allow a woman even to learn by her own right? Let them keep silence, he says, and ask their husbands at home."

> "quod si quae Acta Pauli, quae perperam scripta sunt, exemplum Theclae ad licentiam mulierum docendi tinguendique defendant, sciant in Asia presbyterum qui eam scripturam construxit, quasi titulo Pauli de suo cumulans, convictum atque confessum id se amore Pauli fecisse loco decessisse. quam enim fidei proximum videtur ut is docendi et tinguendi daret feminae potestatem qui ne discere quidem constanter mulieri permisit? Taceant, inquit, et domi viros suos consulant.[365]"

Charikleia's alteration of her personal appearance on the other hand, carries no such weighty implications for her attitude to her gender or social status. Her rhetorically trained tongue, quick wits and decision making and her facility with the bow set her some way outside the traditional expectations of a woman's capabilities and level of interaction outside the women's quarters. She is never however presented as anything but attractively feminine. As self dedicated virgin priestess of Artemis, Charikleia lives in seclusion with her female attendants but sees no contradiction between her

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[364] *Corinthians* 2
[365] Tertullian *On Baptism* 3.17

untouchable status and an alluring personal appearance[366]. Charikleia never attempts to appear other than female but, on more than one occasion, she decides that the safest course of action for travelling unmolested is for her to dress as a dishevelled beggar-woman. Her actions can be compared to those of Thekla in that as a woman travelling without adequate protection she attempts to minimise the risk of assault by appearing neither sexually attractive nor in possession of wealth. Like Thekla and the other novelistic heroines, Charikleia breaks a certain gender boundary by wandering abroad rather than remaining within the household. Charikleia as an Odyssean figure shares some of the androgynous aspects of Thekla but unlike Thekla still attaches much importance to her outward identity as a beautiful young noblewoman[367].

The first time Charikleia seeks to alter her appearance is seemingly at the suggestion of Theagenes that they should escape the island of the Egyptian bandits;

"We shall disguise ourselves as beggars, vagabonds who beg for a living.

"ἐλευσόμεθα δ' οὖν ὅμως εἰς πτωχοὺς καὶ τοὺς διὰ τροφὴν ἀγύρτας ἑαυτοὺς μεταπλάσαντες."[368]

This plan however never comes to fruition. Charikleia and Theagenes are taken prisoner yet again before they have a chance to put the plan into practice[369]. Knemon's teasing response to the idea of the two in the role of ragged mendicants illustrates the difference between this practical disguise and the much more profound change signalled by Thekla's ridding herself of her valuable trinkets and feminine adornments. Knemon ironically compares his refined young friends to Odysseus in his

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[366] For example Hld. 3.4

[367] It is interesting that although the heroines of the Greek novels are often subjected to advances from unwanted admirers no blame is attached to them within the text for awakening temptation through their public appearance. This is in contrast to the guilt that was attached to women within early Christian writings for having lead men into temptation however unwillingly. A drastic example is that of Drusiana in *AJohn* 63-4 who pines away to death in sorrow at having been the object of attraction in a fellow convert.

[368] Hld. 2.19

beggar guise;

> "It seems to me that beggars like you will not ask for scraps but for swords and cauldrons!"
> "καὶ ἐμοὶ δοκεῖτε τοιοίδε ὄντες οὐκ ἀκόλους ἀλλ' ἄοράς τε καὶ λέβητας αἰτήσειν."[370]

The implication is that Theagenes and Charikleia are aristocratic to the core and will find it hard to seem convincingly otherwise.

Beggarly disguise as a means by which strangers can journey unmolested and even attract assistance, is a plan which Charikleia remembers on a later occasion. When she and Kalasiris must set out in search of the captive Theagenes, she suggests that they adopt such an appearance in response to Kalasiris' enquiry as to how she should minimise the risk of personal attack[371]. Although she besmears her face with dirt and wraps a dirty veil round her head, the transformation is very much on a surface level. Inside her beggar's wallet lie hidden her Delphic robe and garlands as well as the precious jewels and inscribed cloth that are the tokens by which she might be known to her real, queenly mother[372].

As we have discussed[373], Charikleia is always proudly aware of her status not only as virgin but also as aristocrat and as holder of the official position as priestess of Artemis at Delphi. Her radical individualism manifested by her choice to live as a celibate priestess and student of wisdom at Delphi does not extend to a rejection of the hierarchical establishment in which she was nurtured. Outward display of her status is very important to her. At the moment of her testing for virginity, Charikleia whips out her priestess regalia so that she appears in her full glory. It is that as much

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[369] Hld.5.7-8
[370] Hld. 2.19, *Odyssey* 17.222
[371] Hld. 6.9-10
[372] Hld. 6.11
[373] See 126 above.

as any inner grace which causes a bright light to emanate from her like a halo[374]. As we have seen, Knemon had reacted to the proposal of Theagenes that he and Charikleia should disguise themselves as beggars with an awkward attempt at humour. As Charikleia and Kalasiris clothe themselves in the garb of poverty, laughter again seems the appropriate if somewhat uneasy response to this transformation;

> "When they had applied the finishing touches to their charade, they teased one another a little, telling each other in jest how well the costume became them..."
> "Κἀπειδὴ τὰ τῆς ὑποκρίσεως αὐτοῖς διηκρίβωτο, μικρὰ καὶ ἐπισκώψαντες εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ ὡς πρέποι τὸ σχῆμα θάτερος θατέρῳ..."[375]

Clearly in the world of Heliodoros, shedding the trappings of social status was a matter for ridicule and discomfiture rather than being taken as a sign of virtue or holiness. When Charikleia finally catches up with Theagenes, still in her mendicant's guise, he fails to recognise his beloved and actually strikes what he believes to be an importunate young beggar woman.[376]Although there are thus clear differences in how Charikleia and Thekla employ disguise, the two texts share the theme of an upper class young lady travelling on her own business without adequate escort (initially at least in Thekla's case), who decides to render herself less conspicuous and vulnerable by the alteration of her personal appearance. If Heliodoros is referring back to Thekla in this, it is to draw attention to the differences rather than similarities between the Christian martyr and the pagan romantic heroine. If the ragged dress of Charikleia is intended to remind contemporary readers of the humility and disregard for appearances of high-born heroines of Christian literature, such as Thekla or Macrina, then mockery would seem to be the intention.

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[374] Hld 10.9
[375] Hld. 6.12

In the course of their travels, Thekla and Charikleia each meet with unwanted sexual attentions, which they evade in their different ways. As was indicated in the introduction[377], the fact that both of the young heroines are confronted by sexual predators in the course of their travels would seem to be due not only to the dependence of the *Acts of Thekla* on Greek romantic fiction for its form but also to social realism[378]. In itself it cannot be taken as evidence of a direct link between the *Acts of Thekla* and the *Aithiopika.*

Comparison between the incident in which Thekla is assaulted and then arrested by Alexander a noble of Antioch and the threats to which Charikleia is subjected in the course of the *Aithiopika* may however help to illuminate the relationship between the two texts. An examination of correspondences between the roles of Paul and Kalasiris will be useful for understanding the relationship of one character to the other.

One of the most notable points about the attack upon Thekla is that the perpetrator is a

> "...a certain Syriarch, Alexander by name"
> "συριάρχης τις Ἀλέξανδρος ὀνόματι[379]"

An elite pagan reader of one of the cities of Asia Minor, a man such as Heliodoros himself would not I think assume that the leading aristocrat of a neighbouring city would be liable to sexually assault any young women he might encounter upon the highway.

Charikleia is faced by unwelcome advances from Egyptian bandits, Cretan pirates, and a servant of the Persian royal household. Apart from the arranged marriages proposed by well meaning parents both natural and adoptive, Charikleia is not subject to such from men of her own class and country whether Greek or Ethiopian. In

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[376] Hld. 7.7
[377] See 129 above
[378] Davies 2001 33
[379] *ATh* 26

portraying her attacker as a nobleman and a near neighbour, the author of the *Acts of Thekla* is achieving the same effect as when the chief persecutor of Thekla at Iconium is the girl's own mother. In becoming a Christian and dedicating themselves to virginity, Thekla has made the whole establishment her enemy.

Apart from the status of her attacker, the scene in which Thekla is importuned by Alexander, involves much that seems familiar from the Greek romance novels. Thekla in her indignant protests announces herself not only to be

"the servant of God"
"τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δούλην[380]"

but also

"...one of the chief persons of the Iconians..."
"Ἰκονιέων εἰμὶ πρώτη[381]"

We seem very close to the scene in *Leukippe and Kleitophon* in which the heroine angrily responds to the attempts by Thersandros[382] (who believes her to be a slave) to coerce her into sex. The emphasis of her outburst is upon the fact that she is in fact a woman of freeborn status and not the mere chattel Thersandros believes her to be. Thersandros' mistake is in treating a woman of high status as though she were just a slave woman. Thekla's outraged response to someone daring to molest, specifically the first woman of the Iconians seems derived just as much from aristocratic hauteur as from Christian virtue. The sympathy of

"the women"
"αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες[383]"

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[380] *ATh* 26
[381] *ATh* 26
[382] Ach. Tat. 6.18-32 It is true that Thersandros is also an upper class Hellenistic male but he is portrayed throughout in a negative light and is also under the impression that Leukippe is his slave and thus his legitimate sexual prey.
[383] *ATh* 27

who cry out in indignation at Thekla's being sentenced to the beasts for having defended herself against a rapist, also gives the narrative a wider scope than Christian testimony. The women are not Christians. Thekla is in this instance being victimised not specifically as a Christian but as a woman who has run into difficulty through travelling with insufficient escort as protection. As such, she here has as much in common with her novelistic sisters as she has with the subjects of martyrologies.

Neither Charikleia nor Thekla are offered much help or protection from their male companions in the course of these attacks from strangers.

The role of Paul in this incident is also reminiscent of that usually played by the lovers of heroines in the romantic novel. Initially, it is he who is first approached by Alexander who attempts to buy Thekla from him. Paul's response is ambiguous.

> "I know not the woman whom thou speakest of, nor is she mine."
> "Οὐκ οἶδα τὴν γυναῖκα ἣν λέγεις, οὐδὲ ἔστιν ἐμή.[384]"

He is at least certainly refusing to pimp his young acolyte but he is not offering her anything in the way of protection or support. Thekla having in vain

> "...looked about for Paul"
> "Παῦλον ἐζήτει"

-is thus left to defend herself with the result that she is arrested and sentenced to the arena. The next thing that we hear about Paul, after Thekla has triumphed in the arena and converted the household of Queen Tryphaena is that she has heard that he is in Myra[385]. He seems to have continued on his travels without giving Thekla another thought[386].

The seemingly negative portrayal of Paul in parts of the *Acts of Thekla* is one of the most striking elements in the text. Again and again Thekla faces terrible dangers and

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[384] *ATh* 26
[385] *ATh* 40

ordeals, giving up her family and her way of life in order to be with Paul and to prove herself worthy of his acceptance as a partner in his mission. Each time until the culmination of the narrative, Paul doubts her capabilities and strength - unable to see beyond her outward appearance as a beautiful young woman. He also has a tendency to disappear when Thekla is in danger. It is true that when Thekla faces her ordeal by fire at Iconium it is not Paul's fault that he has been driven from the city and cannot be with her but it sets a precedent for this later incident when he appears to have abandoned Thekla without explanation.

The reason for this negative portrayal of Paul in the text would seem to be not that the *Acts of Thekla* emanates from an anti-Pauline tradition as such- as we have seen, the Prysbyter accused of forging the document insisted he had done so "for love of Paul[387]". The explanation would seem to be rather that, by making Paul an ineffectual protector of his young female follower, Thekla is given the best opportunity in the text to perform great feats of courage endurance and faith. When Paul is seen to continually underestimate Thekla's strength and commitment, she can be measured against his expectations the better to illustrate that the qualities of the saint are far beyond what might be expected for the average young lady. If Paul were to have put the fear of God into the Iconian judge or Alexander while Thekla stood passively by, there would be no "*Acts*" of Thekla to read. Paul's role in this regard seems closely analogous to that of the hero of the Greek romance novels whose passivity and seeming inability to save the heroine from danger allows the development of strong female leads who can look after themselves[388]. This role of ineffectual male companion is also embodied in Kalasiris.

On more than one occasion, Kalasiris is approached whilst travelling alone with

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[386] Davies 2001: 11.

Charikleia and, as her presumed father, is asked for her hand. Although he is more efficacious than Paul in that he provides advice on how Charikleia can elude her pursuers, he is unable to offer any more active assistance.

When in book five, we finally return to the opening scene of the novel and discover how the beach came to be littered with dead and dying pirates, Kalasiris confesses that he had remained out of sight while Charikleia and Theagenes launched themselves indiscriminately into the fight, Kalasiris having successfully manipulated the pirates into fighting each other[389]. Later he admits that he felt unable to do anything other than remain hidden whilst Charikleia and Theagenes are carried off by yet another band of robbers.

> "But my strength failed me of course! My age prevented me from keeping up with the fast pace the Egyptians set over the steep hill-paths..."

> "Οὐ μὴν ἐπήρκεσά γε, πόθεν; ἀπολειφθεὶς μὲν τότε τοῦ γήρως ἐμποδίσαντος ἐν τοῖς ὀρθίοις συνεκδραμεῖν τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις...[390]"

Although there is not here the seeming indifference which could be read into Paul's abrupt abandonment of Thekla at Antioch, the parallels remain. When the heroine is under attack, she cannot depend on either lover or father-figure (who in both cases is addressed by sexual predators under the assumption that their protégé is theirs to dispose of) to come to her aid but must prove her worth by saving herself.

Thekla and Charikleia both face being put to death in the context of a public display involving wild beasts. In each of the accounts, the beasts are vanquished in some way and the heroine is vindicated before a great crowd as virtuous and divinely favoured.

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[387] See 149 above.
[388] See for example, Konstan 1994.
[389] Hld. 5.32
[390] Hld. 5.33

Having survived all manner of ordeals and dangers at the hands of Arsake and various groups of bandits and pirates, Charikleia and Theagenes finally reach their ultimate destination, Ethiopia, where they hope to reunite Charikleia with her true parents the Ethiopian monarchs. This is not however the end of their troubles. The king of Ethiopia, unaware of Charikleia's identity, regards the young couple as prisoners of war and as such suitable candidates for human sacrifice to the Sun and the Moon. In this capacity, they are brought into a kind of huge pavilion where there are also many beasts that are to be sacrificed too[391]. The scene then, including as it does, the public display of innocent victims who are to be killed along with strange beasts also provided for further entertainment of the crowd, is very reminiscent of the arena in which Thekla and others like her in Christian narrative are sent to their deaths. This impression deepens, as the ceremony gets under way. As the moment for sacrifice approaches Theagenes distinguishes himself by performing great deeds of physical strength and skill.

First, Theagenes wrestles with and defeats an enraged bull[392]. This has a direct parallel with Thekla's ordeal in the arena as she is actually tied to enraged bulls but emerges victorious as the holy fire that plays about Thekla burns through the ropes that bind her so that she can make her escape[393].

Secondly, Theagenes earns glory by defeating the Ethiopian champion in a wrestling bout[394]. This recalls a scene in the *Martyrdom of Perpetua* already quoted above in which the heroine dreams before her ordeal that she wrestles with and defeats a huge black man[395]. This is a common trope of Christian symbolism in which the black man represents the Devil. If the intention is not to remind readers of the ordeals of

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[391] Hld. 10.6
[392] Hld. 10.28-9
[393] *ATh* 35
[394] Hld. 10.31-2

Christians in the arena, it is hard to find a point to Theagenes' heroic feats. He has been condemned to death and although he wins the approval of his audience by his deeds, he has done nothing to improve his situation[396]. Such gratuitous showing off in the face of death seems incongruous.

In addition to Theagenes' trials with the bull and the wrestler, the young couple are also tested by a magic griddle to prove their virginity. Those who are free of sexual impurity can stand upon the hot griddle unburned[397]. When it comes to Charikleia's turn, she leaps on the griddle wearing her priestess' robe and stands there proudly, in a haze of light, which makes her resemble a goddess rather than a mortal woman[398]. This scene can be paralleled to the one in which Thekla leaps into a pool of seals (which are imagined in the text to be terrible man eating beasts) and so baptises herself. God sends down a bolt of lightening into the pool which not only has the effect of electrocuting all the seals so that they bob dead upon the surface of the water but also of clothing Thekla in light to hide her nakedness and make her appear radiant[399]. In both the cases of Charikleia and Thekla, the crowd acclaim the virtue of the women as manifested by these signs of supernatural approval.

At the time of their respective public ordeals, the two heroines win the support of powerful and queenly mother figures who intercede for them. When Thekla is sentenced to the beasts, her response is to request that her chastity be protected throughout the time prior to her execution. She is then given into the care of a prominent woman of the city, called Tryphaena whose daughter we are told, has died[400]. There is thus immediately the suggestion that Thekla is in some way to be a

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[395] *Passio Perpetuae* 3.3
[396] Hld. 10.32
[397] Hld. 10.7-8
[398] Hld 10.9
[399] *ATh* 34
[400] *ATh* 27

replacement for Tryphaena's lost daughter while Tryphaena is a substitute mother for Thekla's murderous one[401]. This impression is reinforced when we are told that Falconilla has appeared to Tryphaena in a dream and asked her mother to take Thekla as her own daughter and for Thekla to pray for Falconilla's salvation[402].

Tryphaena exhibits grief at Thekla's fate but is initially able to do nothing to avert it. Hints of Tryphaena's power and influence are manifest however when Alexander the man who had assaulted Thekla, flees before her cries of grief when he attempts to take Thekla from her to her death[403]. At the order of the governor however, Tryphaena herself escorts Thekla to the arena[404]. After Thekla has endured and survived a series of ordeals, she is only brought from the arena because her powerful protectress has collapsed at the sight of the sufferings of her adopted daughter and both Alexander and the governor are terrified of the repercussions of having apparently killed Queen Tryphaena; a kinswoman of Caesar himself[405].

When Charikleia is brought into the pavilion where she is to be sacrificed, she looks straight at her mother Persinna who is immediately overcome with grief and remarks to her husband that the girl is the same age that her own daughter would have been had she not died[406]. Thus, both Charikleia and Thekla appear to be substitutes for dead daughters to the queenly women who must oversee their death. In the case of Charikleia of course, Persinna is in fact her real mother. Like Tryphaena, Persinna dreams of a daughter restored;

> "I dreamed I was with child and that I gave birth at the same instant: the child was a daughter, who grew in a trice to womanhood."

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[401] See however Misset-Van de Weg 1994 16-35, she argues that Tryphaena's protection of Thekla should not be interpreted as adoption but Christian form of patronage. Even if we are not to understand the relationship as adoption in any formal or legalistic sense, we can still interprete the personal relationship between them as that of substitute mother and daughter.
[402] *ATh* 28, Davies 2001 9-10
[403] *ATh* 30
[404] *ATh* 31
[405] *ATh* 36
[406] Hld. 10.7

"...κύειν τε οἰομένη καὶ τίκτειν ἅμα καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν εἶναι θυγατέρα γάμου παραχρῆμα ὡραίαν..."[407]

Throughout the preparations for the sacrifice, Persinna is overcome by grief and appeals to her husband King Hydaspes to in some way prevent Charikleia's death. Although the king too is saddened, he is adamant that the sacrifice must take place[408]. It is Charikleia herself who intervenes and states her claim that she is in fact the daughter of Persinna and Hydaspes[409] but it is when Persinna rushes up to Charikleia and embraces her in a state of prostration that Hydaspes finally acknowledges Charikleia as his child[410]. It is however the support of the crowd which is needed for Hydaspes to feel able to prevent his daughter's sacrifice rather than the intercession of Persinna herself[411]. Like the governor who fears the wrath of Caesar, Hydaspes too is under political pressures. Like Tryphaena, Persinna does not have the authority to reprieve the young woman outright but it is her dramatic expression of grief and her taking of the girl under her personal protection as a daughter which has a decisive role in persuading the man in charge to stop the girl being put to death.

Scarcely has Charikleia been reunited with her natural parents than she is confronted with her adopted parent from whom she had fled. Charikles has come searching for his errant daughter and for Theagenes, the man he sees as her abductor[412]. Charikleia implores his forgiveness for her defiance[413] and Charikles, remembering and finally understanding the prophecy made at Delphi linking the fates of Theagenes of Charikleia together seems to forgive and be reconciled to the situation[414].

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[407] Hld. 10.3
[408] Hld. 10.7, 10.9
[409] Hld. 10.10
[410] Hld. 10.16
[411] Hld. 10.17
[412] Hld. 10.34-36
[413] Hld. 10.38
[414] Hld. 10.41

The themes of adoption and of the restoration of dead daughters can be seen to be reduplicated when we remember that when Charikles adopted the young Charikleia, that too was in part to replace a natural daughter who had died prior to her wedding[415].

After Thekla has spent some time with her adopted mother, she sets out on her travels again[416] and returning to Iconium confronts her natural mother from who she had been forced to flee. Thekla makes a brief speech to her mother in which she attempts to convince her of the power of her god[417]. We are not told of any reply made by Theokleia or that she was convinced but Thekla seems to feel she has said all she had to say and continues on her journeying.

To conclude this section; I hope to have demonstrated here that there is strong evidence to suggest that in his composition of the *Aithiopika* and in the development of the character of Charikleia, Heliodoros shows himself very much aware of and influenced by the *Acts of Thekla*. It also seems likely, given that the *Acts of Thekla* was an influential and often referred to text in educated Christian circles that Heliodoros was writing for a readership for whom the story of Charikleia might well evoke that of Thekla.

In the following section, we shall start to explore some of the reasons why an elite pagan writer such as Heliodoros should choose to make use of (and subvert) a popular Christian tale. This will involve drawing out some of the ways in which the story of Charikleia is very *different* to that of Thekla; an obvious example is that of the treatment of the issue of virginity, others include attitudes to material wealth and the family. We shall also consider the implications of the currency of these two very

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[415] Hld. 2.29-33
[416] *ATh* 39-40
[417] *ATh* 43

similar yet diametrically opposed tales of independent, mobile and spiritually powerful young women in the Eastern Mediterranean of the fourth century AD.

Thekla in the Fourth Century

The *Acts of Thekla* and the other Apocryphal Acts were written around the second century CE. Heliodoros was writing well over one hundred years later. Would Thekla and her story have any interest or relevance for a fourth century pagan author and potential readership based in Asia Minor? There are several reasons why I believe this question could be answered in the affirmative.

The first of these concerns the development and expansion of a cultic site dedicated to Thekla in Seleucia. From the fourth century onwards, this site became a major centre for Christian pilgrimage[418]. Alongside this physical development of Thekla's cult came literary reworking and expansions of her legend[419].

Although extant versions of these emanate mostly from the fifth and sixth centuries, the miracles recounted in the fifth century *Life and Miracles of Saint Thekla* for example, go back to oral tradition of the fourth century[420]. Thus in the fourth century Thekla's story was still a living tradition.

A significant addition to the Thekla legend tells of the saint's adventures on her arrival at Seleucia. Upon her arrival at Seleucia, Thekla establishes herself as a hermit in a cave outside the city. She attracts a reputation as a miraculous healer. This arouses the ire of local physicians who decide that Thekla's powers derive from the favour of Artemis towards her as a virgin. In order to rob her of her power and divine favour, the physicians send drunken thugs to rape Thekla who miraculously eludes

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[418] Davies 2001: 36-39
[419] Davies 2001: 39-40
[420] Davies 2001: 41

them by disappearing into the living rock.[421] In the place where she had vanished appeared a stream with healing properties.

This addition to the original *Acts of Thekla* provides an aetiology for the basis of the Thekla cult at Seleucia[422]. In so doing the story illustrates how healing cults with a basis in Christian lore but in fact fulfilling very much the same role as their pagan counterparts were beginning to thrive just as pagan religious centres were being abandoned and forcibly closed down[423].

The story of a virgin thought to be under the protection of Artemis who through divine agency is metamorphosed into a healing spring in order to preserve her virginity from violation brings us much closer to the figure of a pagan nymph than it does to a charismatic woman preacher. One can readily imagine that recently converted and nominal Christians of the surrounding areas would not find visiting Thekla's shrine rather than a pagan cultic healing centre too much of a culture shock.

Thus for Heliodoros and other educated pagans living in Asia Minor, Thekla's cult at Seleucia might well be representative of what they experienced as a hostile incursion of an alien belief system that was placing traditional Hellenic culture under threat. Eunapius in the same breath as he bemoans the closing of the pagan temples expresses his distaste for what he sees as the morbid and servile cult of martyrs which were replacing them.

On the other hand, the subversive figure of Thekla and her story with its folkloric and novelistic elements might well have piqued the imagination of a pagan writer, the more so as by the fourth century the figure had become a somewhat controversial one in Christian circles.

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[421] *ATh* 44, Davies 2001: 43-45
[422] Davies 2001: 43-45
[423] Macmullen 1997: 12-24

In addition to Thekla cult at martyr shrines, Thekla acquired a new significance in other ways for the first post persecution generations of Christians in the fourth century. Before Constantine's Edict of Toleration, Christian readers or hearers of Thekla's ordeals at the hands of the civic authorities could share a central point of identification with their heroine. However remote the risk may have actually been for individual Christians in their day-to-day lives, technically by practising their religion and refusing to participate in civic and Imperial cult, Christians risked arrest, imprisonment and execution. In this situation by simply living as a Christian, a man or a woman could feel themselves to be exemplars of Christian faith and piety. This situation together with the comparative lack of formal organisation in the early Christian Church tended to favour a degree of perceived spiritual equality between men and women. Martyrdom was an equal opportunities route to the top of the Christian hierarchy.

For members of such a group who saw themselves at odds with wider civic society, proscribed and risking death, a heroine who showed contempt for the conventions, a refusal to bow to authority and a claim to equal to that of a male could be an appropriate role model. It was one that a Christian woman could look to even as she in fact lived quietly at home in her parents' or husband's home. Before her arrest, Perpetua had married and borne a child, her faith had not called her to any extraordinary way of life.

By the late fourth century however the situation had changed dramatically. Christians now increasingly constituted the establishment. The mainstream church had firmly stated that there was no place for women in its priesthood. To confess oneself a Christian was now a display of conformity rather than heroism. For women who wished to be acknowledged as or to understand themselves as "better than average"

Christians, asceticism became the main path left open to them[424]. State persecution was replaced by self-mortification. In particular, young aristocratic women were refusing marriage and seeking to live lives of poverty and seclusion[425].

In their desire for a life of virginity, women received much encouragement from the writings of the Church Fathers. Treatises advocating virginity poured forth from their pens. If Charikleia had been a Christian virgin in the fourth century CE rather than a pagan virgin in the sixth century BCE, she would have had no shortage of reading material with which to compile arguments with regard to the pure, incorruptible and divine nature of virginity. The figure of Thekla was central to this exhortatory literature which may actually have been aimed more at parents (who actually made decisions about their offspring's marriages) rather than the young people themselves who might well be married off before they were in their teens.

> "To call on the image of Thekla to justify a daughter's asceticism was an established commonplace by the end of the fourth century[426]."

The third century writer Methodius had placed Thekla foremost among his choir of saintly virgins. Gregory of Nyssa, in his eulogistic biography of his saintly sister Makrina, describes how a vision appeared to Makrina's mother as she was about to give birth naming the child as Thekla. This was understood as presaging Makrina's pious and virginal life[427].

Upper class Christian parents who had assumed they would marry their daughters to upper class Christian husbands now bewilderingly found themselves cast in the role of the evil pagan mother Theokleia who tried to force her daughter into unholy matrimony.

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[424] Cloke 1995: 57
[425] Cloke 1995: 51-2
[426] Cooper 1996: 70
[427] Gregory of Nyssa *Life of Makrina* 962B-C

While some parents doubtless married off their pious daughters and sons despite their protests or simply waited until maturity made marriage a more attractive prospect and they simply grew out of their "phase[428]", some faced by eloquent and determined young women armed with patristic treatises on virginity and crucially the support of relatives were forced to back down. Makrina provides a case in point. Her fiancé died when she herself was aged only twelve; she then insisted that she was now a widow and that it would be immoral for her to take a second husband. She thus got her way and lived a life of virginity. Resembling Charikles rather more than Theokleia, her parents were defeated by their precocious offspring's powers of argumentation[429]. This case would have seemed particularly bizarre to a pagan outsider. Under Augustan marriage legislation, only repealed by Constantine, women of childbearing age were actually subject to financial penalties if they failed to remarry within a given period following widowhood.

The example of Thekla may therefore have been one that would have raised an ambivalent response among well-born fourth century Christian parents.

The saint also caused unease among the Church Fathers themselves. While certain aspects of her example such as her virginity and commitment to her faith could easily be recommended to young women, other aspects of Thekla were less desirable in this more established period of Christianity. Thekla preached publicly, dressed as a man, wandered at will and presumed to baptise herself rather than wait for Paul to decide that she was worthy to receive the honour from him. When she was subjected to assault on the highway she defended herself with her fists. Fourth century women were rather being exhorted to defend their chastity by remaining indoors and out of

[428] Cloke 1995: 53
[429] Cloke 1995: 32

the sight of strange men[430]. Thekla's assertive and transgressive behaviour was worryingly close to that of the women attached to sects condemned by the Church as heretical such as the Montanists[431]. The third century writer Tertullian in his work on baptism written in response to the activities of a female "heretic" explicitly condemns the bad example of Thekla as an encouragement to women to claim the right to teach and baptise[432].

For fourth century Christians then, Thekla was a powerful and ambivalent figure. While she represented an ideal of ascetic piety and steadfastness and thus constituted a suitable role model for young Christian women, she was also worryingly self – willed and unconstrained by the limitations which fourth century Christian churchmen placed on women's religious expression.

To a pagan outsider then, Thekla and contemporary Christian responses to Thekla might have seemed to embody many of the extremes and controversies of the new faith. The worryingly anarchic Thekla with her rejection of family, property and husband was now countered by an increasingly authoritarian Church establishment which unlike pagans, denied women a fully participatory role in religious life and yet challenged them to remain secluded and sterile as an expression of religious fervour. For elite pagans such as Heliodoros, this stark choice drawn for women between marriage and motherhood or celibacy and a meaningful religious and contemplative life, would I think, have seemed needless and illogical. Married pagan women could play a full role in a civic priesthood or be initiated into mystery cults. They were proud to share in the cultural and religious life with their husbands[433]. Newborn

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[430] Cloke 1995: 28-31
[431] Cloke 1995: 43-4
[432] Tertullian *On Baptism* 1, 17, see 149 above.
[433] For example the inscription on a stele in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome commemorates the forty-year marriage of the late fourth century pagan couple Vettius Agorius Praetextatus and Fabia

babies could be handed over to wet nurses so apart from the physical debilities of pregnancy and childbirth; there was little reason why motherhood should overoccupy an aristocratic woman's time or thoughts.

Perhaps, in a re-reversal of romance, Heliodoros is rewriting Thekla with an alternative happy ending. In Heliodoros' version Thekla/ Charikleia discovers that, despite her initial conviction that perpetual virginity should be maintained in the name of religious devotion, Eros cannot in fact be denied and can be welcomed without dishonour in the context of marriage. Charikleia's independence, courage and eloquence are rewarded, not by a lonely life as a travelling penniless ascetic but with a reunion with her true family, enhanced social status, a happy marriage and a priesthood appropriate to her new proud status as married woman.

Chapter Three; Educated Women; the Pagan Tradition

Introduction

We have two main indications as to the nature and degree of Charikleia's educational attainments within the text of the *Aithiopika*.

Firstly, throughout the novel there are occasions in which Charikleia shows herself to have benefited from her learning. Secondly we have the remarks about the nature of her education and abilities mostly exchanged between Charikles and Kalasiris in book two of the novel.

How and to what Effect Does Charikleia Display her Rhetorical and Philosophical Accomplishments?

In this section I will be focusing on two separate incidents.

The first is a passage that we have already encountered more than once and occurs in Book One in which Charikleia uses her rhetorical skills to manipulate the bandit Thyamis. In this section I will be looking at this scene specifically with regard to the questions raised by the way in which Charikleia is seen to deliberately manipulate assumptions about the timidity and simplicity of young girls in order to achieve her ends.

The second incident occurs in Book Ten and is the episode in which Charikleia leaps down off the griddle to throw herself at the feet of her first foster father Sisimithres and then utters a plea for justice, and disputes the legality of her own sacrifice with her unwitting father the king of Ethiopia with the assurance of an advocate.

The first full account of who Charikleia and Theagenes actually are comes to the reader from Charikleia herself and is entirely fallacious. Thus we first really get to experience Charikleia as a sophist in action although it is only later that this will be

made explicit to the reader who does not yet know that Charikleia is extemporising but to whom the claim that Theagenes is her brother will not ring quite true.

Charikleia begins her speech with much stress upon the bashfulness she feels as a young unmarried woman being called upon to speak for herself before a crowd of men. She also states that normally it would be more appropriate for her "brother" Theagenes to speak for her[434].

Charikleia is here echoeing a sentiment which would have seemed familiar to Heliodoros' readers. Greek literature contains many anecdotes which make it clear that for a man in power to command a woman to speak for herself would not be regarded as a generous extension of the privilege of free speech. Instead it would be seen as a bullying and insulting tactic by which a tyrant could not only demonstrate the extent of his power by this inappropriate familiarity with another man's womenfolk but also, by dealing with a woman without the support of her male protector, exploit a woman's assumed weakness to gain the advantage even further.

A couple of alternative examples of female heroism may bring both Thyamis' insolence and the unexpected nature of Charikleia's wit and presence of mind into focus.

The first story comes from Iamblichos' *Life of Pythagoras*, a work which we will consider in more detail later on. As an example of the steadfastness and self control of the disciples of Pythagoras, Iamblichos relates the tale of Myllias and his wife Timycha. Dionysios, the tyrant of Syracuse, being fascinated by the Pythagoreans and their mysteries, attempted to win their friendship only to be rebuffed. Piqued, Dionysios sent out a band of soldiers to ambush them as they were passing through Tarentum and take prisoners.

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[434] Hld. 1.21-2

The Pythagoreans fled from the soldiers' attack, but chanced to run up against a field of beans. Mindful of Pythagoras' prohibition against beans, they would not cross the field but stood and fought to the death with sticks and stones.

Returning disconsolately, having failed to capture any Pythagoreans alive, the soldiers' luck changed when they ran into Myllias and Timycha who had been bringing up the rear, delayed by Timycha's advanced stage of pregnancy. After the couple had rejected the tyrant's overtures of friendship, Dionysios finally offered to release them if only they would explain the prohibition against beans which their comrades would rather die than transgress. Myllias retorted that he too would prefer to die than reveal this secret.

> "Astonished at this answer, Dionysius ordered him forcibly removed, and Timycha tortured, for he thought that a pregnant woman, deprived of her husband, would weaken before the torments, and easily tell him all he wanted to know. The heroic woman however, with her teeth bit her tongue until it was separated, and spat it out at the tyrant, thus demonstrating that the offending member should be entirely cut off, even if her female nature vanquished by the torments, should be compelled to disclose something that should be reserved in silence."
> "καταπλαγέντος δὲ τοῦ Διονυσίου καὶ μεταστῆσαι κελεύσαντος αὐτὸν σὺν βίᾳ, βασάνους δὲ ἐπιφέρειν τῇ Τιμύχᾳ προστάττοντος (ἐνόμιζε γὰρ ἅτε γυναῖκά τε οὖσαν καὶ ἔπογκον ἐρήμην τε τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ῥᾳδίως τοῦτο ἐκλαλήσειν φόβῳ τῶν βασάνων), ἡ γενναία συμβρύξασα ἐπὶ τῆς γλώσσης τοὺς ὀδόντας καὶ ἀποκόψασα αὐτὴν προσέπτυσε τῷ τυράννῳ, ἐμφαίνουσα ὅτι, εἰ καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν βασάνων τὸ θῆλυ αὐτῆς νικηθὲν συναναγκασθείη τῶν ἐχεμυθουμένων τι ἀνακαλύψαι, τὸ μὴν ὑπηρετῆσον ἐκποδὼν ὑπ' αὐτῆς περικέκοπται."[435]

Though Dionysios is far more brutal than Thyamis, we note that Timycha, despite her courage and her Pythagorean education, does not trust herself to speak. Rather than using her tongue as a weapon, Timycha expels it as a possible traitor, in league with her weak female nature. In this, she is concurring with Dionysios' assumption that

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[435] Iamblichus *Life of Pythagoras* 31

female speech, unmediated through the male, can only be a source of weakness to be exploited by those with the power to command it.

This idea is similarly expressed in an anecdote reported by Plutarch in his *Virtues in Women.* The tyrant of Elis, under threat from a rebel force, held the rebel's wives as hostages and threatened them with torture and death unless they would write to their husbands urging them to withdraw. The spokeswoman among the wives, Megisto, sneered at the tyrant for trying to influence the actions of men by getting at them through their wives rather than addressing the men directly.

> "If you were a sensible man, you would not be talking to women about husbands, but you would send to them, as to those having authority over us, finding better words to say to them than those by which you tricked us."
>
> 'εἰ μὲν ἦς ἀνὴρ φρόνιμος, οὐκ ἂν διελέγου γυναιξὶ περὶ ἀνδρῶν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἐκείνους ἂν ὡς κυρίους ἡμῶν ἔπεμπες, ἀμείνονας λόγους εὑρὼν ἢ δι' ὧν ἡμᾶς ἐξηπάτησας[436].

These examples suggest that Thyamis' request to Charikleia to speak on her own behalf was perhaps not as fair-minded as it may appear to the modern reader. By forcing what he saw as the weaker party of the couple to act as representative he expected to gain the advantage. Charikleia in her turn took advantage of that expectation.

Charikleia's show of disarming guilelesness is rendered particularly piquant when one notes that she has adopted the standard sophist's technique of looking at the ground meditatively before speaking and also by beginning her speech with the time-honoured gesture of apologising for her inadequacies as a speaker. A young girl's unfitness to speak before men has become itself a topos to be exploited by Charikleia the rhetor.

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[436] Plutarch *Virtues in Women* 252 B

When the reader comes to Kalasiris' account of Charikleia in the following book it will be found of course that these protestations are entirely disingenuous; Charikleia is not only a trained rhetor, she is also in the habit of conversing with men[437]. Charikleia's affectation of timidity and inexperience as a speaker is evidently intended to have the advantage of convincing her listeners that her speech must be entirely guileless as she would surely lack the presence of mind to be speaking artfully. Heliodoros thus shows us Charikleia consciously manipulating and debunking a stereotype about women to gain her ends.

The question could however be raised as to whether Charikleia's artful and deceptive speech might simply be understood as a narrative device on the part of Heliodoros rather than to be taken as indicative of Charikleia's exceptional cleverness. The first time reader is not at this stage aware that Charikleia's account is an artful fabrication and thus, following as it does the distraction of the Knemon episode, Charikleia's speech increases the reader's bafflement and suspense about who the main protagonists actually are.

Tongue in cheek, Heliodoros has no qualms about furthering his plot by not only causing an Athenian slave-woman to die in a cave in Egypt to be coincidentally discovered by her exiled former master but also by furnishing her with a letter she purportedly wrote herself, helpfully filling in gaps in the narrative[438]. Sixth century Athenian slave women certainly could not as a rule compose extended prose narratives. Are we to find it equally laughable that a sixth century upper class Hellenic maiden is able to come up with an extempore oration while under pressure from a lustful bandit? If that were to be the last we heard of Charikleia's powers of eloquence and how she attained them we might be justified in giving an affirmative.

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[437] Hld 2.33

As we shall see however, Charikleia's eloquence remains a consistent characteristic throughout the novel and one for which we are offered some explanatory background. Charikleia, in her capacity for deceptive speech is of course also conforming to another classical stereotype about women; that they are extremely skilled, brazen and practised liars who excel at talking their way out of difficult situations on the spur of the moment[439]. This however is generally used negatively with regard to the idea of married women showing remarkable powers of deceit and effrontery in bringing about and getting away with adulterous liaisons. Charikleia, by contrast, is deliberately flaunting and mocking the prescriptions for proper maidenly conduct in order to preserve her chastity and to keep faith with her fiancé. Had she conformed to the conventions of proper maidenly behaviour, by refusing to speak intelligently for herself, she may have forfeited the most essential requirement for a proper maiden. That Theagenes' bewildered incomprehension of the motivations for Charikleia's disarming speech is placed before us very noticeably seems intended to remind us how potentially disastrous it would have been if Charikleia's male "protector" had been allowed to speak for her as convention dictated.

This illustrates a paradox that lay at the heart of post-classical Greco-Roman thought about the appropriate behaviour for women. It is well illustrated by Plutarch's *Virtues in Women,* a collection of anecdotes about women who have distinguished themselves by their courage and wisdom. On the one hand, the ideal was for women to have no voice outside the household, but to be content to let their men-folk speak for them, maintaining an essentially passive role outside their specific household concerns. On the other hand, the good woman was also ideally ready to defend her chastity with her life and to demonstrate steadfast loyalty to her family and even her polis. If it should

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[438] Hld. 2.5-10

ever become necessary to fulfil the second requirement, the ideal woman must find herself capable of eloquence, shrewdness, courage, deceit and even a capacity for violence.

In order for a woman to fulfil both these criteria it would be necessary for her to consciously limit herself in everyday life so as to remain within the accepted limits of female participation in public life even though she might be fully capable of an executive role[440]. This tension is manifest in Plutarch's account of Aretaphila of Cyrene. Having been instrumental in overthrowing the tyranny of Nikokrates, she was offered a place in government by the grateful restored male polity. Aretaphila however professes herself willing to return to her place in the women's quarters now that freedom has been restored to the polis[441]. If we accept the boundaries illustrated by Plutarch in his discussion of heroic women, it seems we must confront the idea that Charikleia's fiancé is failing to live up to his role as male protector, thus obliging Charikleia to put aside womanly reticence and act on her own account.

This paradox will be investigated further in our discussion of women's role and education in Plutarch. For now, it can be noted that Heliodoros has chosen to draw our attention to the fact that his heroine preserves her chastity through her trained skill as a speaker and through capitalising on the fact that she is able to behave in ways assumed to be beyond a young girl. It is also made clear that Charikleia is better able to handle this situation than her male lover would have been. The presentation of a heroine who can look after herself without intervention from the hero is of course in accordance with the conventions of the Greek novel as we know it. What is unusual is that we see the heroine saving the situation, not because she is bereft of her lover's protection, as with Anthia or Leukippe, who only display their courage and ingenuity

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[439] E.g. Eur. *Hipp.* 640-644

in their lovers' absence, but actually in her lover's presence in a situation in which it is clear that she has the ability to do so and he does not.

The second example of Charikleia's unmaidenly confidence in her powers of rhetoric comes in Book Ten when Charikleia leaps forward to address her father in order to forestall imminent sacrifice.

She begins, not by an emotional appeal to Hydaspes to spare his young daughter in the style of Iphigeneia;

> "...my tears
> Are my one magic; I'll use them, for I can weep.
> The suppliant garland which I twine about your knees
> Is my own body, which my mother bore to you.
> Don't kill me, so young! It is good to see the light;
> Don't make me gaze at darkness in the world below."

> "δάκρυα παρέξω: ταῦτα γὰρ δυναίμεθ' ἄν.
> ἱκετηρίαν δὲ γόνασιν ἐξάπτω σέθεν
> τὸ σῶμα τοὐμόν, ὅπερ ἔτικτεν ἥδε σοι,
> μή μ' ἀπολέσῃς ἄωρον: ἡδὺ γὰρ τὸ φῶς
> βλέπειν: τὰ δ' ὑπὸ γῆς μή μ' ἰδεῖν ἀναγκάσῃς."[442]

As the scene of imminent sacrifice of daughter by father would recall for Heliodoros' readers this Euripidean scene, the contrast of Charikleia's words to those of Iphigeneia would be particularly notable. Instead of a desperate plea for pity, Charikleia instead insists upon her right as a suppliant to subject her kingly father to a legalistic cross-examination in the course of which she establishes that if she were Hydaspes' daughter he had no legal right to sacrifice her. Her opening words make a very different impression to those of Euripides' heroine in her parallel situation.

> "All-wise ones," she said, "wait a moment. I have an action to bring, a suit to plea against those who hold sovereign power, and I am told that you alone have judicial authority over such people. For me it is a question of life and death, and

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[440] See McNamara 1990 160
[441] Plutarch *Virtues in Women* 19
[442] Eur. *IA* 1215-1219

you must decide it. I shall demonstrate to you that it is neither possible nor proper for me to be sacrificed to the gods.""

"Ὦ σοφώτατοι ἔλεγε μικρὸν ἐπιμείνατε· δίκη γάρ μοι καὶ κρίσις πρόκειται πρὸς τοὺς βασιλεύοντας, ὑμᾶς δὲ μόνους καὶ τοῖς τοσούτοις δικάζειν πυνθάνομαι. Καὶ τὸν περὶ ψυχῆς ἀγῶνά μοι διαιτήσατε· σφαγιασθῆναι γάρ με θεοῖς οὔτε δυνατὸν οὔτε δίκαιον εἶναι μαθήσεσθε." [443]

Finally, Charikleia produces the band which retells her story with the air of a lawyer producing conclusive evidence. Persinna's words are read from the band just as a witness statement was formally read out in a Greek court[444].

There is perhaps an element of humour in the way that Charikleia is shown as not content simply to produce the tokens which are proof of her identity and make herself known to her father in a touching emotional scene. Instead, she resolutely remains in control of events by bringing forth the revelation regarding her identity as though she were a lawyer in a courtroom, not a young girl about to have her throat cut by her own father. There is also irony in Hydaspes' remark that if Charikleia were to be allowed to speak, she would only bring forth a string of tales in order to buy time[445]. This is exactly what Charikleia and Kalasiris have in fact been doing throughout the course of their adventures. It is only now that the truth is about to finally be told.

As in the Thyamis episode at the beginning of the novel, Theagenes once again shows himself baffled at the subtle machinations of Charikleia, unable to comprehend why she does not hastily announce the truth at the first sight of her father. Charikleia then carefully explains to him why the best plan is to wait until Persinna is present to corroborate the evidence of the band and the jewellery rather than to blurt out the truth the moment the pair are brought before Hydaspes[446].

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[443] Hld. 10. 10.
[444] Hld. 10.11-12
[445] Hld. 10.10
[446] Hld. 9.24

These factors suggest that Heliodoros was intent upon portraying the triumph and ascendancy of an intelligent woman who has benefited from a liberal education.

How and Why Was Charikleia Educated?

The passage which alludes most directly to Charikleia's education comes from that which was central to our discussion of Charikleia's virginity; the passage in which Charikles discusses his stepdaughter with Kalasiris in Book two and bemoans his inability to sway her from her strange decision;

> "But the worst part is that I am, as the saying goes, hoist with my own petard: she makes great play with that subtlety in argument whose various forms I taught her as a basis for choosing the best way of life."
>
> "Οὔτε γὰρ θεραπεύων οὔτε ἐπαγγελλόμενος οὔτε λογισμοὺς ἀνακινῶν πεῖσαι δεδύνημαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ χαλεπώτατον τοῖς ἐμοῖς, τὸ τοῦ λόγου, κατ' ἐμοῦ κέχρηται πτεροῖς καὶ τὴν ἐκ λόγων πολυπειρίαν, ἣν ποικίλην ἐδιδαξάμην πρὸς κατασκευὴν τοῦ τὸν ἄριστον ἡρῆσθαι βίον"[447]

This passage raises several central questions about Charikles' educational programme for his adopted daughter.

The first question concerns how we are to interpret the statement that Charikles taught his daughter the intricacies of *logos.* The word is of course notorious for its wide range of application and nuance. In this passage "λόγων πολυπειρίαν" has been translated as "subtlety in argument". This certainly makes sense both in the immediate context – Charikleia has spoken so well that her stepfather has no answer to make – and in the wider context of Greek education in which rhetoric played a central role. We could question however whether we need to understand this as Charikleia having received formal training in rhetoric. We could for example try to interpret the words

[447] Hld 2.33

in the sense that Charikleia has simply been taught a degree of reasoning and logic. This would allow for Charikleia's education to involve the cultivation of the powers of reason and the ability to make moral choices without the implication that she was also being equipped for the public demonstration of these capabilities evoked by the phrase "subtlety in argument". Charikleia's rhetorical skill which we have seen is manifested throughout the novel suggests however that we are to take the statement that Charikles was defeated by Charikleia's skill with words which he herself had taught her as signifying that he did in fact give his adopted daughter some training in rhetoric. This raises the question of why Charikles would think that training a young person in the arts of speech would equip them to find the best way of life. We can further enquire more specifically why training in rhetoric could be seen as beneficial to a female child who according to tradition would spend her life under the direction of a male head of household and would not be encouraged to be vocal outside the *oikos*. What in fact did Charikles mean when he claims that he taught Charikleia skill in words in order that she might choose the best way of life?

How Could Learning Rhetoric Help You to Lead a Better Life?

To answer this question, we will need to briefly explore the debate about the merits and dangers of educating young men in rhetoric which took place in fourth century Athens. We will then go on to look at the ideas developed by the theorists of the fourth and fifth centuries as regarding women specifically. These ideas were being developed hundreds of years before Heliodoros' time and within a very different socio-political context; rhetoric had a much more decorative function within the context of the later Roman Empire than it did in democratic Athens. Nonetheless, the works of Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon were essential to the development of Greek thought throughout the intervening centuries and the first and last of these three at

least would be a fundamental part of an advanced Hellenic education in the fourth century CE as much as in the intervening period.

Initially, rhetorical education arose in the emergent democracies of Athens and Sicily in order to equip citizens to speak effectively for themselves in the lawcourts and the Assembly. This teaching was carried out by professionals (sophists) who worked for a fee and often travelled from city to city.

There was unease amongst many thinkers about the concept that a man could, for a fee, be taught how to win an argument, as this suggested that important issues could be settled by the victory of the speaker with superior arguing skills and better teaching rather than by the one who was actually in the right. This anxiety concerning the perceived amorality of teachers of rhetoric is evidenced for example in Aristophanes *Clouds*[448] and throughout the works of Plato[449]. Rhetoric was condemned as "making the best argument appear the worst".

Meanwhile, the teaching of rhetoric continued to flourish and one of its leading exponents was, like Plato, a former student of Sokrates, Isokrates. Isokrates founded a school in Chios and formulated a theory of education which, while it had rhetoric as its basis, claimed to equip its students with far more than competent speechmaking. Denying the contention that learning rhetoric encouraged students to exploit the skill to pursue their own advantage regardless of morality, Isokrates claimed that through practised debate on moral and political issues his students became not only persuasive but also wise and good.

> "For this it is which has laid down laws concerning things just and unjust, and things honourable and base; and if it were not for these ordinances we should not be able to live with one another. It is by this also that we confute the bad and extol the good. Through this we educate the ignorant and appraise the wise; for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound

[448] E.g. Aristophanes *Clouds* 111-118
[449] E.g. Plato *Gorgias* 463a-465d

understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul. With this faculty we both contend against others on matters which are open to dispute and seek light for ourselves on things which are unknown; for the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts; and, while we call eloquent those who are able to speak before a crowd, we regard as sage those who most skilfully debate their problems in their own minds. And, if there is need to speak in brief summary of this power, we shall find that none of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide, and is most employed by those who have the most wisdom."

"οὗτος γὰρ περὶ τῶν δικαίων καὶ τῶν ἀδίκων καὶ τῶν καλῶν καὶ τῶν αἰσχρῶν ἐνομοθέτησεν, ὧν μὴ διαταχθέντων οὐκ ἂν οἷοί τ' ἦμεν οἰκεῖν μετ' ἀλλήλων. τούτῳ καὶ τοὺς κακοὺς ἐξελέγχομεν καὶ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἐγκωμιάζομεν. διὰ τούτου τοὺς τ' ἀνοήτους παιδεύομεν καὶ τοὺς φρονίμους δοκιμάζομεν: τὸ γὰρ λέγειν ὡς δεῖ τοῦ φρονεῖν εὖ μέγιστον σημεῖον ποιούμεθα, καὶ λόγος ἀληθὴς καὶ νόμιμος καὶ δίκαιος ψυχῆς ἀγαθῆς καὶ πιστῆς εἴδωλόν ἐστι. μετὰ τούτου καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀμφισβητησίμων ἀγωνιζόμεθα καὶ περὶ τῶν ἀγνοουμένων σκοπούμεθα: ταῖς γὰρ πίστεσιν, αἷς τοὺς ἄλλους λέγοντες πείθομεν, ταῖς αὐταῖς ταύταις βουλευόμενοι χρώμεθα, καὶ ῥητορικοὺς μὲν καλοῦμεν τοὺς ἐν τῷ πλήθει λέγειν δυναμένους, εὐβούλους δὲ νομίζομεν οἵτινες ἂν αὐτοὶ πρὸς αὑτοὺς ἄριστα περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων διαλεχθῶσιν. εἰ δὲ δεῖ συλλήβδην περὶ τῆς δυνάμεως ταύτης εἰπεῖν, οὐδὲν τῶν φρονίμως πραττομένων εὑρήσομεν ἀλόγως γιγνόμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἔργων καὶ τῶν διανοημάτων ἁπάντων ἡγεμόνα λόγον ὄντα, καὶ μάλιστα χρωμένους αὐτῷ τοὺς πλεῖστον νοῦν ἔχοντας."[450]

This passage can assist our understanding of how an education based on *logos* could equip a young person both to construct their own rationale about the best way of life and also to skilfully defend their theories against critics. Charikleia has used the power of discourse both to inwardly deliberate on what was best for her and then to defend her choice in dispute with another. She has taken advantage of her rhetorical education in the way seemingly envisaged by Isokrates.

It is perhaps worth remembering that although Charikleia herself abandons her dedication to lifelong celibacy as untenable due to her love for Theagenes, her

premise that virginity is the ideal state is never actually defeated in argument. Kalasiris concedes that never to be touched by Eros may be fortunate but as this has occurred in Charikleia's case it remains to make the best of it[451].

Greek Ideology and Women's Education - Why Teach a Girl *Logos*?

Isokrates' educational methods and theory triumphed and rhetoric became the basis of higher education in the Greco-Roman world even after Roman Imperial rule took away much of its original force as a political tool. Evidence that this belief that a rhetorical education was expected to contain a central element of morality can be found for example in Julian's rescript banning Christians from employment as teachers. He argues that the personal beliefs of sophists are particularly relevant;

> "For these claim to teach , in addition to other things, not only the use of words, but morals also, and they assert that political philosophy is their peculiar field."
>
> "βούλονται γὰρ πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις οὐ λέξεων μόνον, ἠθῶν δὲ εἶναι διδάσκαλοι, καὶ τὸ κατὰ σφᾶς εἶναί φασι τὴν πολιτικὴν φιλοσοφίαν."[452]

Philostratos, writing much closer to Heliodoros' own time, defends and redefines sophistic as "philosophic rhetoric".[453]

If we can accept that, rather anachronistically, the supposedly sixth century Charikles is teaching his daughter rhetoric on the enduring educational principles laid down by Isokrates, we can understand why he thought this would turn out a well rounded, intelligent and moral human being. This does however leave an important point of contention open. Throughout his speech, Isokrates makes it clear that the education he provides is to equip young men to participate in a democratic state – as lawyers, statesmen and generals. How and why then, could a rhetorical education be seen as

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[450] Isokrates *Antidosis* 255-257
[451] Hld. 4.10
[452] Julian, *Epistle 36*

beneficial to a girl who had no part in the running of the polis, was expected to devote herself to the role of wife and mother under the benevolent dictatorship of her husband and for whom the use of speech at all outside the household and perhaps women's festivals was generally frowned upon? If we remember that in Pericles' famous funeral oration as reported by Thoukydides, women are told that their chief glory lies in their anonymity, we can further appreciate the oddness of teaching a woman *logos*[454].

The question can be divided into two parts; firstly, to what extent were women thought capable of benefiting from an academic education and secondly, supposing they were capable of grasping what they were taught; what were they supposed to do with it?

The first part of this question leads us to an essential division in Greek thought about women and their moral and intellectual capabilities. This debate is summarised in an early passage of Aristotle's *Politics* in which he explicitly contradicts Plato's contention that virtue is the same for all, both men and women. This refers to Plato's claim in the *Republic* that women share the same nature and capacities with the only difference being that women's capacities are generally inferior to those of men[455]. In other words, although it may be assumed for example that a woman will not be able to reason as well as a man that does not mean that she does not participate in reason or that she should not use reason to the best of her ability. In Plato's ideal state as drawn in the *Republic*, this would mean that superior women should be allowed to participate in ruling the state. No Greco-Roman society ever seriously contemplated granting women anything like equal political rights and opportunities, with the partial exception of those Hellenistic states that allowed women to reign as queen.

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[453] Philostratos, *Lives of the Sophists*; 1.1

Nonetheless, those who concurred with Plato that the nature and capacities of women were similar to those of men would not consider offering girls an education comparable to that of boys an entirely fruitless effort. The question of how girls were to benefit or use this education given their exclusion from debate and decision making would however still remain. We will see the use of Platonic ideas about women in the area of education developed by writers such as Plutarch and Musonius Rufus.

It was in opposition to Plato's ideas about women possessing a share of *logos* which was, while generally smaller, of an identical kind to that possessed by men, that Aristotle contended that it was not appropriate or worthwhile for a woman to even aspire to exercise her reason and moral virtue in the same way as a man. Instead, she should limit herself to the virtues requisite for her subordinate position in the household. It was not just a question of women reasoning less well, women had no business trying to reason at all, their role was to obey.

> "Hence the ruler ought to have moral virtue in perfection, for his function, taken absolutely, demands a master artificer, and rational principle is such an artificer; the subjects, on the other hand, require only that measure of virtue which is proper to each of them. Clearly, then, moral virtue belongs to all of them; but the temperance of a man and of a woman, or the courage and justice of a man and of a woman, are not, as Socrates maintained, the same; the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying. And this holds of all other virtues, as will be more clearly seen if we look at them in detail, for those who say generally that virtue consists in a good disposition of the soul, or in doing rightly, or the like, only deceive themselves."

> "διὸ τὸν μὲν ἄρχοντα τελέαν ἔχειν δεῖ τὴν ἠθικὴν ἀρετήν τὸ γὰρ ἔργον ἐστὶν ἁπλῶς τοῦ ἀρχιτέκτονος, ὁ δὲ λόγος ἀρχιτέκτων, τῶν δ' ἄλλων ἕκαστον ὅσον ἐπιβάλλει αὐτοῖς. ὥστε φανερὸν ὅτι ἔστιν ἠθικὴ ἀρετὴ τῶν εἰρημένων πάντων, καὶ οὐχ ἡ αὐτὴ σωφροσύνη γυναικὸς καὶ ἀνδρός, οὐδ' ἀνδρεία καὶ δικαιοσύνη, καθάπερ ᾤετο Σωκράτης, ἀλλ' ἡ μὲν ἀρχικὴ ἀνδρεία ἡ δ' ὑπηρετική, ὁμοίως δ' ἔχει καὶ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας. δῆλον δὲ τοῦτο καὶ κατὰ μέρος μᾶλλον ἐπισκοποῦσιν· καθόλου γὰρ οἱ λέγοντες ἐξαπατῶσιν ἑαυτοὺς ὅτι τὸ εὖ ἔχειν τὴν ψυχὴν ἀρετή, ἢ τὸ ὀρθοπραγεῖν, ἤ τι

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[454] Thoukydides 2.45.2
[455] Plato, *Republic* 5.5-6

τῶν τοιούτων·[456]"

As an example of a virtue suitable for a woman but not for a man Aristotle then approvingly refers to that same quotation from Sophocles' *Ajax* to which Charikleia also seems to allude to when she demurs at Thyamis' demand that she speak for herself;

> "Woman, silence graces woman."
> "γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἡ σιγὴ φέρει.." [457]

Those who, like Aristotle, thought that women were not required or capable of exercising their reason or their voices would presumably see it as pointless and undesirable for them to develop their faculties for reason and debate through advanced education. From Hellenistic times onwards however, it seems to have been the Platonic conception of women's capabilities which was most popular with those Greek thinkers who considered the issue of the education of women.

Given then, that some, though not all thinkers acknowledged that women were capable and worthy of absorbing some level of higher education despite having neither the ability nor the opportunity to utilise it in the assembly or lawcourts as men would, we must now consider how and why educating women could be seen as beneficial.

Xenophon's *Oikonomikos* and Plutarch's *Advice on Marriage*

Xenophon's *Oikonomikos* written in the fourth century had a vital role in the development of theoretical writing about women and education in the later centuries of the Greco-Roman world. Xenophon is not concerned with providing elite women with an education comparable to that on offer to elite men. In comparison with the

[456] Aristotle 1260a 17-28, see also 1259b, 1259b20
[457] Aristotle, 1260a24, Soph. *Ajax* 293

high-mindedness of the Platonic tradition, his aims in promoting the partial enlightenment of women seem somewhat prosaic; if women are taught to go about their household duties in a rational manner, the prosperity of the household will increase. The idealised wife of Ischomachos earns the highest praise for expressing an earnest desire to look after her own property. This all seems far from the exalted and spiritualised word of Charikleia. Xenophon's engagement however with the questions of the inherent teachablity of women, the benefits of teaching women and of the dangers of neglecting their education introduces and develops themes which will be reworked throughout the Hellenistic period. These themes will be seen to be of importance in our understanding of the characterisation of Charikleia and the other women of the *Aithiopika*.

Plutarch's *Advice on Marriage* was written much closer to Heliodoros' own time at the turn of the first century CE. As Heliodoros uses material which appears to have been lifted line by line from Plutarch[458], we can perhaps assume that he had some knowledge of the earlier writer. Plutarch's didactic treatise was strongly influenced by the work of Xenophon and lays emphasis on the same key issue; of the duty of a husband to instruct his wife and the benefits of fulfilling and the dangers of neglecting this duty. There are however great differences between the social world of Pollianus and Eurydice and that of Ischomachos and his wife, as one would expect considering the very different ages in which the respective two works were composed. An immediately obvious difference is of course that Eurydice is referred to by her own name.

Xenophon's discussion of the "partnership" between man and wife could sound as much like a business venture as a personal relationship with the household as a joint

enterprise. Plutarch, on the other hand, is here much less interested in such practicalities as household items being laid out in an efficient manner or of slave-women doubling their value but instead is concerned with marriage as an emotional and social bond between two people.

In Plutarch's world, unlike that of classical Athens, married women did not lead a largely separate life within the household but socialised with her husband among mixed groups of friends[459]. Sokrates' assumption in Xenophon's *Oikonomikos* that a man would rarely converse with his wife could not be made so easily in post Hellenistic society. This being the case, a great disparity in the levels of polite education and culture between upper class men and upper class women would be problematic to a greater extent than would be the case in Xenophon's day. Pollianus is not being exhorted to teach his wife how to control the servants or arrange utensils but instead he is to offer her a digest of his own tertiary education. Unlike Ischomachos' wife, Eurydice does not come to her husband from a state of secluded ignorance but, like her groom, has already received some teaching from Plutarch. Despite these differences, we will see that Xenophon and Plutarch address issues relating to the education of women in very similar ways.

Much of the *Oikonomikos* is Sokrates' report of his conversation with a certain Ischomachos. The man was universally renowned as a καλός τε κἀγαθὸς and Sokrates is keen to learn the secret of his good reputation[460]. Ischomachos reveals that his success in life lies partly in the fact that he is able to leave all household matters to his wife[461]. He then goes on to explain how, through his teaching, his wife was transformed from an almost entirely ignorant child of fourteen, a *tabula rasa*, into a

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[458] Hld. 3.7-8, the account of the workings of the evil eye is very close to that given by Plutarch in *Table Talk* 680c, Dickie 1991

[459] McNamara 1990 151-2

responsible manager of their estate[462]. In the course of this account, Xenophon reveals much about his ideas about the nature of women. On the one hand, he positively illustrates the benefits to a husband of educating his wife and on the other he invokes the spectre of the dangers and follies of women who are allowed to go their own way without such guidance. In so doing he offers that curious mixture of misogynist and pro-female thinking, echoes of which will be encountered in the *Aithiopika*.

Before Sokrates' reported talk with Ischomachos, the dialogue had opened with Sokrates discussing estate-management with Kritoboulos, soon the discussion leads to the potentialities of wives as partners in estate-management.

Kritoboulos confesses that although his wife manages much important business in the household, she came to him knowing nothing and as Sokrates suspected, Kritoboulos himself rarely engages her in conversation[463]. This introduction to the subject of a wife's education suggests that Xenophon is assuming that most of his readership would similarly leave household affairs to ignorant women to whom they would have no interest in offering any kind of education.

Of course, the assumption that a wife who spends her life largely within the *oikos* and whose husband neglects to teach her must therefore know nothing negates the fact that normally, of course, women's knowledge about managing the household and other matters would have been transmitted to them from other women. The question of how Kritoboulos' neglected wife actually does manage her duties is never really addressed although the implication is there that all cannot be fully satisfactory at least in comparison with the likes of Ischomachos. This is one of the ambivalent attitudes which will become more apparent as we consider Greek thought on the education of

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[460] Xen. *Oec.* 6.12-17
[461] Xen. *Oec.* 7.3
[462] Xen. *Oec.* 7.5-10.13
[463] Xen. *Oec.* 5.12-13

women. On the one hand there is the implied compliment that women are actually capable of benefiting from reasoned discourse with a responsible male; on the other hand, there is the assumption that anything emanating from women without male influence must necessarily be valueless and suspect[464]. Plutarch summarises the idea that a woman can only be right-minded and rational thinking under male supervision very neatly with his assimilation of the mind of a woman left to itself without male guidance to a womb which produces fibroid tumours rather than children[465].

Although Plutarch seems to have a relatively high opinion of women's mental and moral capabilities, as evidenced in his assumption of their potential to benefit from higher education, at the same time he can warn that women are liable to conceive

> "...many strange and evil schemes and feelings on their own."
> "...αὐταὶ καθ' αὑτὰς ἄτοπα πολλὰ καὶ φαῦλα βουλεύματα καὶ πάθη κυοῦσι."[466]

The capacity of other women to be a positive force in educating a young wife is also severely devalued. Plutarch notes the conversation and advice of female friends as being a bad influence on women and having a deleterious effect on marriage[467]. He does however go on to acknowledge that a woman who has benefited from a proper (male directed) education can be a positive influence on another woman when he recommends to Eurydice that she read a treatise written by his own wife against excessive ornamentation[468].

Ischomachos claims that by engaging his ignorant child-wife in dialogue he was able to mould her into an efficient household manager to whom he could delegate many responsible tasks, thus freeing him up to perform the duties expected of a καλός τε

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[464] McNamara 1990 154
[465] Plutarch *Advice On Marriage* 48
[466] Plutarch *Advice On Marriage* 48
[467] Plutarch *AdviceOn Marriage* 40

κἀγαθὸς. Before Ischomachos can open dialogue with his new wife however, he has to wait until she is sufficiently "tamed" – χειροήθης[469]. The concept of a woman as a wild, inchoate being who needs the guidance of a male teacher to become fully humanised will be an important one in subsequent discussions of the education of women.

Eventually, the woman is at a stage where she is capable of engaging in discussion. From Ischomachos' account we learn that his young wife is initially incredulous that she can be of any active assistance to her husband having been taught by her mother that her only duty is εἶναι σωφρονεῖν[470]. In this context we can perhaps best translate σωφροσύνη as "self restraint" as she does not seem to think that anything active is involved in its practice. It could be taken as a wife's basic duty to be chaste and generally well behaved. This would be consistent with her seeing her role as primarily that of bearing her husband legitimate heirs. Ischomachos begins by explaining to his wife that basic differences exist between men and women which mean that women are best fitted for indoor work while men have been equipped with the courage and hardihood to engage with life outside the *oikos*[471]. He goes on however, to say that men and women share some key virtues and abilities. These are memory, concern and self control. Ischomachos acknowledges that it is perfectly possible for a woman to be superior to a man with regard to these traits[472]. Thus Xenophon shows himself to be partially in agreement with Plato that certain virtues can be aspired to identically by both sexes although he suggests that courage belongs

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[468] Plutarch *Advice On Marriage* 48
[469] Xen. *Oec.* 7.10
[470] Xen. *Oec.* 7.14
[471] Xen. *Oec.* 7.20-25
[472] Xen. *Oec.* 7.25-28

more to the male than the female[473]. Xenophon does not make it clear whether he considers reason itself to be equally shared between men and women.

Rather than imagining a utopia in which the best men and women would use their superior virtues in identical activities, Xenophon suggests that while men and women can possess some important mental faculties in equal measure, they should deploy them in separate areas of life. While Ischomachos' abilities and expertise enable him to play his role as a prominent citizen of democratic Athens, his wife's faculties including her learned use of rational thinking, will allow her to function as the equivalent of a magistrate as she superintends and disciplines the slaves[474].

Sokrates, as Ischomachos' interlocutor is represented as surprised and impressed on hearing of how Ischomachos' wife responded so positively to her husband's appeals to her reason and good sense. Finally he pays Ischomachos' wife the compliment (in this context) of saying that she had "a masculine mind"[475].

Consideration of how the woman came to deserve that compliment is illustrative of a pervasively low opinion of women in their unreconstructed state. Ischomachos' wife had brushed aside his concern that she might resent being delegated harder tasks than those entrusted to slaves with the remark that it was natural for a good woman to care for her property as it would be natural to care for her children[476]. If being capable of expressing the idea that one should be glad to take trouble and responsibility over one's own household suggests that one has a masculine mind, what does that make a feminine mind?

Ischomachos uses the simile of the queen bee to inspire his self-deprecating wife with a sense of the honour and importance of the position of a wife who fully realises her

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[473] Xen. *Oec.* 7.25
[474] Xen. *Oec.* 9.15-17
[475] Xen. *Oec.* 10.1
[476] Xen. *Oec.* 9.19

vocation as ruler and nurturer of her household[477]. In comparing a good wife to a bee, Xenophon is evoking for his readers a well-known poem by the archaic poet Semonides. This poem on the subject of women depicts various types of women which are likened to different animals. Throughout the poem the majority of women are dismissed and abused as either lazy or too much of a busybody, stupid or cunning, filthy or excessively fastidious. Only the bee woman receives any praise[478]. Like Xenophon, Semonides sees the woman who resembles the industrious bee as bringing prosperity and harmony to her husband's household. By his evocation and praise of the bee-woman therefore, Xenophon is also by implication invoking those other kinds of women who make up the majority with all their shortcomings and deficiencies.

Clearly Xenophon's contemporaries could simultaneously consider women in their natural state to be idle and profoundly lacking in any sense of responsibility or initiative while at the same time leaving important household business to their care. Beneath the positive affirmations that a woman can develop into a rational and productive being if guided and educated by a responsible male can be detected a misogynistic fear of what a woman would be like if left without male supervision.

Despite her induction into the world of male *logos*, femininity does threaten to raise its ugly head in Ischomachos' wife when she seeks to make herself attractive to him through the means of cosmetics and platform shoes[479]. The use of cosmetics encapsulates much of what was to be feared from unreconstructed femaleness. Vanity, deceit, frivolousness and the suggestion of *pharmaka*- the use of potions and magic to exercise sexual power or to poison -were all faults and dangers long perceived as inherent in womankind. Plutarch explicitly warns Eurydice of the dangers of

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[477] Xen. *Oec.* 7.17
[478] Semonides fr.7W.
[479] Xen. *Oec.* 10.2-3

attempting to control one's husband through the use of potions[480]. The story of Deianeira, the wife of Heracles who, through her foolish attempt to win back her husband's love by smearing a potion on his tunic, brought about his agony and death, encapsulates much of the anxieties of women and *pharmaka*. After Ischomachos' appeals to her reason, however, his wife never succumbs to the temptation to put on make-up or platform shoes again[481].

Ischomachos acquiesces in Sokrates' compliment to his wife's faculties, adding in confirmation that in fact she obeys him in everything[482]. Ischomachos' wife would seem to have a qualified species of masculine mind. A male citizen whose highest accomplishment was to be able to comprehend another man's reasoning sufficiently to absorb and obey it would not be highly rated within the culture of democratic Athens. Xenophon envisages a household hierarchy in which all are governed by the dictates of reason. The husband teaches his wife, together they teach those slaves they can trust with a supervisory role who in turn instruct the slaves under their charge[483].

Although the practical concerns for property and household management seem far from the exalted world of the *Aithiopika*, Xenophon's *Oikonomikos* offers us a useful starting point for understanding why Charikles thought immersing his stepdaughter for whom he envisaged an honourable career as wife and mother in the intricacies of logos was a good idea.

Firstly and most obviously, Xenophon brought forward the concept that if a young woman is instructed via reasoned discourse with a responsible male this will equip her to better fulfil her role as wife and mistress of her husband's household. The education of women was thus established as being for the benefit of the whole

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[480] Plutarch *Advice On Marriage* 5
[481] Xen. *Oec.* 10.9
[482] Xen. *Oec.* 10.1
[483] Xen. *Oec.* 9.11-13

household rather than aimed at providing the woman with the kind of individualistic personal fulfilment such as we saw in the withdrawal of early Christian women in their personal quest for salvation. Charikles, by encouraging his foster-daughter to become proficient in debate was hoping that she would draw reasoned and moral conclusions about how to best fulfil her role as wife and mother and it was in that sense that he intended her to choose the best way of life. He was not expecting her to reach the conclusion that marriage itself was not the best option for her.

Secondary, and implicit to the concept that an educated woman is a well behaved woman, is the fear that left to themselves without male instruction, women are likely to take to bad ways. As we saw, even Ischomachos' wife had to be reasoned out of her vain and foolish predilection for cosmetics. Plutarch makes this point much more explicitly when he lists the undesirable behaviours that women once introduced to the world of rationality will desist from. These include dancing, witchcraft and superstition born of ignorance[484].

Charikleia, surrounded as she is by worthy and priestly male advisers is generally free from the stereotypical weaknesses of women. The same cannot be said for the *Aithiopika's* notable villainesses who have given the novel its reputation for misogyny. Neither Arsake nor Demainete have responsible and virtuous men in their lives to offer them guidance or supervision.

Demainete's husband is depicted as besotted and foolish[485]. In the austere moral world of the *Aithiopika*, his decision to remarry seems itself to have stigmatised him as a man led by his desires rather than sense or morality. Arsake's husband is absent from the scene altogether, leaving her effectively in charge[486]. Both women have slave women as their chief advisers and confidantes and both women embody some of

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[484] Plutarch *Advice On Marriage* 48

the most prevalent fears of Greco-Roman imaginings of women at their worst. Demainete, as her name perhaps suggests, has a particularly fragile grip on *logos*.

At every level Demainete perverts Xenophon's ideal household hierarchy based on reason and *sophrosune*. Not only is she completely lacking in self-control herself, but instead of being a good example to and instructor of her maid servant, she depends on her slave's cunning and deceit to facilitate her adulteries. First attempting to seduce her stepson, she then tries to have him killed, before finally encompassing the destruction of her own slave, Demainete tears her family apart. She is the antithesis of the wife as nurturer, protector and bringer of order to the household as envisaged by Xenophon.

Arsake, at first sight, appears to have command of the rationality and self-possession which Demainete lacks. As the wife of the Satrap Oroondates, her consent to the proposed resistance of Thyamis' march on Memphis is solicited as a matter of form[487]. However, instead of merely agreeing to what had effectively already been decided, Arsake assesses and takes control of the situation and by reaching an agreement with Thyamis to settle the question of his brother's usurpation of the priesthood through single combat, not only avoids a battle but also resolves the situation to her own satisfaction[488]. Arsake, despite having clearly received some education fitting her for command, is, like Demainete, lacking in *sophrosune*. She gives herself up to sexual passions and when she is thwarted, falls into a state of near madness, attempting to poison her rival and then to have her executed through bringing unjust charges against her. In the end, Arsake's lack of *sophrosune* leads her to a miserable death. Like Demainete, Arsake operated free of spousal control.

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[485] Hld. 1.9
[486] Hld. 7.1
[487] Hld. 7.1
[488] Hld. 7.3-5

Oroondates is physically absent throughout the episode in which Charikleia and Theagenes are Arsake's prisoners. We are also told that Oroondates was reluctant to pursue rumours of her misbehaviour as she was the sister of the Great King and Oroondates feared to displease him[489]. Arsake instead of enjoying the sobering company of her husband, lives surrounded by fawning slaves, in particular an elderly female slave Cybele, her chief confidant and assistant in her amours. Clearly the case of Arsake suggests that an educated woman is not necessarily a virtuous one. The danger of a wife remaining outside her husband's control due to her higher social status was very much a concern of Plutarch and other writers[490].

In addition to the two prominent examples of Demainete and Arsake, we are offered a further example of typically female misbehaviour on the part of the old village woman who indulges in necromancy and despite being motivated only by concern for her missing son is considered to have deserved her violent end. Through the corpse, the opinion is expressed that the woman's deed is all the more culpable as furnishing a bad example to the innocent Charikleia who observes the magic from a point of concealment. Again, as in the tradition of pedagogic writing about women, there is the concern that a young woman might be corrupted by contact from other women. It is notable that Charikleia herself was tempted to consult the speaking corpse in order to gain information about Theagenes but was successfully restrained by Kalasiris[491]. Persinna and Nausikleia, the only morally unobjectionable women in the novel other than Charikleia are both demonstrably subject to male authority. Persinna is forced to expose her daughter through fear of her husband's anger, while Nausikleia is married to Knemon in accordance with her father's wishes.

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[489] Hld. 7.2
[490] E.g. Plutarch. *Advice on Marriage* 14, *Eroticos* 7
[491] Hld. 6.15-16

Both Xenophon and Plutarch in their writings about the education of women establish some key points and assumptions which can be applied to the character and education of Charikleia. Firstly, both Xenophon and Plutarch stress the importance of educating a woman in order that she behave sensibly and morally. Women are seen by both writers as passive consumers of *logos*. While they can benefit from their husband's teachings, they are not expected to be independent thinkers themselves but to live better lives through absorbing and following the principles set out for them.

This rationale for female education and its limitations is framed most explicitly by Musonius Rufus, a Roman Stoic philosopher of the first century C.E. much of whose philosophical and ethical teaching was concerned with women and the family. We can also see here the suspicion of rhetoric in general which later philosophers inherited from the Platonic tradition.

> "If someone asks me, which doctrine requires such an education, I would answer him that without philosophy no man and no woman either can be well educated. I do not mean to say that women need to have clarity with or facility in argument, because they will use philosophy as women use it. But I do not recommend these skills particularly in men. My point is that women ought to be good and noble in their characters, and that philosophy is nothing other than the training for that nobility."
> "ἂν δέ τις ἐρωτᾷ με, τίς ἐπιστήμη τῆς παιδείας ταύτης ἐπιστατεῖ, λέξω πρὸς αὐτὸν ὅτι φιλοσοφίας ἄνευ ὥσπερ ἀνὴρ οὐκ ἂν οὐδείς, οὕτως οὐδ' ἂν γυνὴ παιδευθείη ὀρθῶς. καὶ οὐ τοῦτο βούλομαι λέγειν, ὅτι τρανότητα περὶ λόγους καὶ δεινότητά τινα περιττὴν χρὴ προσεῖναι ταῖς γυναιξίν, εἴπερ φιλοσοφήσουσιν ὡς γυναῖκες· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπ' ἀνδρῶν ἐγὼ πάνυ τι τοῦτο ἐπαινῶ· ἀλλ' ὅτι ἤθους χρηστότητα καὶ καλοκἀγαθίαν τρόπου κτητέον ταῖς γυναιξίν· ἐπειδὴ καὶ φιλοσοφία καλοκἀγαθίας ἐστὶν ἐπιτήδευσις καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον.[492]"

Thus Charikles can be understood to have educated his stepdaughter through rational discourse with the intention of moulding her into a capable, moral and companionable

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[492] Musonius Rufus,

partner for her future husband. He was not expecting her to take the lessons he had given her in rational thinking and come up with divergent ideas of her own. The aim was to educate women so that they would behave in a rational manner i.e. would adhere to the conventions of the male ruling elite, rather than irrationally i.e. in a way in which the male elite disapproved. These writers considered that some knowledge of philosophy could make women into better wives and mothers. It was not intended to encourage them to think about whether being wives and mothers was what they wanted.

On the other hand, Charikles could congratulate himself on the education of Charikleia, when her good sense and chastity is compared to the irrational and depraved behaviour of the other women of the *Aithiopika*, who, rather than profiting from the learning and governance of suitable men, are aided and abetted in their folly and misdeeds by slave women. To that extent, Heliodoros would seem to be upholding the view that, without male influence and instruction, women are at risk of becoming unbalanced and depraved harpies.

As to the puzzling question of whether Charikles instructed his stepdaughter specifically in rhetoric rather than simply in reasoned discourse, while we have examples from the *Aithiopika* itself which demonstrate that Charikleia is a trained speaker, we can find little in our sources which would seem to recommend such a course of education for a girl. There is the playful allusion to Ischomachos' wife holding court within her home [493] and there is Plutarch's programmatic recommendation that Persuasion should be present within marriage in order that the couple should negotiate issues through persuasion rather than through quarrelling[494]. It seems however that we shall have to turn to the sources which discuss those

[493] Xen. *Oec.* 11.25

exceptional individual women who were regarded as philosophers in their own right rather than these more general recommendations for female education in order to find instances of girls trained in rhetoric.

In What Sense Did Charikles Intend Charikleia to Choose the Best Way of Life?

By educating Charikleia through reasoned discussion to enable her to make the right decisions about how to live her life Charikles obviously did not intend his stepdaughter to make a choice from a range of divergent lifestyles but rather to aspire to the one he had already decided was best. This is indicated by the fact that he had taken it for granted that Charikleia would fall in with his wishes and accept the marriage arranged for her and was shocked and aghast when it transpired that she had ideas of her own.

Although, as he admits, he is unable to muster an adequate argument against Charikleia's mysterious apology for virginity, he is clearly not prepared to accept the rightness of her case or even that she has the right to make this choice for herself. Though, at least at this stage, he does not feel he can force Charikleia to marry against her will, he does not scruple to press Kalasiris to answer her objections if not with words then by simply overriding her will with magic[495].

> "Induce her whether by word or deed to acknowledge her own nature. Make her realise that she is a woman now. It is something you could do with no difficulty if you set your mind to it, for she is not shy of men of learning- in fact she has passed most of her virgin life in their company..."
> "πεῖσον ἢ λόγοις ἢ ἔργοις γνωρίσαι τὴν ἑαυτῆς φύσιν καὶ ὅτι γυνὴ γέγονεν εἰδέναι. Βουλομένῳ δέ σοι τὸ πρᾶγμα ῥᾴδιον, οὔτε γὰρ ἀπρόσμικτος ἐκείνη πρὸς τοὺς λογίους τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀλλὰ τὸ πλεῖστον τούτοις συνόμιλος ἐπαρθενεύθη... [496]

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[494] Plutarch *Advice on Marriage* Preface 137

[495] Winkler 1999 321-5 contrasts the violence implicit in the magic with which Charikles wishes Kalasiris to compel his stepdaughter to be willing to marry and the discussion whereby Kalasiris helps Charikleia to make up her own mind.

[496] Hld. 2.33

There is some irony in the fact that one of the key weaknesses that education was supposed to mitigate in women was the propensity to turn to magic in order to gain their ends. Charikles being unable to defeat his stepdaughter in reasoned discourse has, in his helplessness, turned to a quack holy man just like a supersitious woman. Later Kalasiris indicates that Charikleia had already made herself known to him on a quest for religious instruction[497], thus amplifying the impression that Charikleia was not merely accustomed to being in the presence of the learned men that thronged Delphi but actively associated with them for the purposes of furthering her education. While we may reasonably deduce then, that the priest Charikles intended his daughter's education to bring about her moral advancement, we are still left with the puzzle of why the arts of speech should have played such a central role in her curriculum. Rhetoric was the prized and vital tool for civic life – that arena encompassing politics and law from which women were most emphatically excluded. The strangeness of teaching the arts of speech to a girl is very well illustrated within the text itself when Charikleia, who is indicating reluctance to speak for herself and is playing upon the assumption that a woman would be an inexperienced and unconfident speaker and thus less capable of artful duplicity remarks sententiously;

"I think it proper for a woman to be silent"
"...πρέπειν γὰρ οἶμαι γυναικὶ μὲν σιγὴν" [498]

The idea that women should be deemed incapable of sophisticated speech was also enshrined in such an authority as Aristotle, who, in his *Poetics* criticises Euripides for allowing his female character Melanippe to deliver a complicated and abstract argument[499].

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[497] Hld. 2.35
[498] Hld. 1.21
[499] *Poetics* 54a. As the play in question is not extant we are unable to examine this example further.

Why does Heliodoros make Charikles provide his daughter with an education appropriate for a lawyer or a statesman? A simple and speculative explanation on one level might be that Charikles provides his stepdaughter with a boy's education merely as the whim of a man with no son of his own. This would not however explain why Heliodoros chooses to lay such stress on his heroine's articulacy and exulted level of learning. Although as we shall see, Charikleia uses her rhetorical skill to good effect throughout the novel, we have already noted in our opening section that other novelistic heroines such as Anthia are able to talk their way out of difficult situations with no other preparation than their native wit. This is a question I will attempt to answer in the sections that follow.

In addition to the rhetorical element to Charikleia's education, it is also suggested that she received teachings in religious and other matters as we inferred above from her association with the learned men at Delphi and more specifically with her approach to Kalasiris to learn religious lore. As Charikleia is a dedicated acolyte at the centre of the Hellenic religious world, there is nothing particularly surprising about this. What is interesting on the other hand is that again this is a choice Heliodoros has made in presenting his heroine. What associations did Heliodoros intend to evoke for his readers in his presentation of a pious and learned priestess as his romantic heroine?

I will be looking for reflections of Charikleia as an educated woman in the writings of the classical past with which Heliodoros could have been expected to have been familiar, as well as in the discourse about women's education and potential around his own time. We will also be looking at women philosophers such as Hypatia and the women of the Academy of Athens in the fifth century in so far as despite being somewhat after Heliodoros' time, continuity in the discourse surrounding learned pagan women can be observed, thus making them valid points of comparison.

Representations of Learned Women

In this section I will be comparing the figure of Charikleia as a notably learned and intelligent woman with other representations of notably educated and clever women whether historical or fictional in Greek literature. In doing so I hope to build up a picture of the literary expectations which Heliodoros' first readers would have brought to their reading of Charikleia the virginal sophist and to consider how Heliodoros can be seen to deliberately evoke and manipulate these associations.

This section will be divided into several parts each to examine different facets of Charikleia's persona. These facets will inevitably overlap at different points.

The first part will look at the tradition of the priestess as learned woman from the obscure allusions to Aristokleia the putative teacher of Pythagoras to Plutarch's very real priestly colleague and dedicatee Kleia.

We shall then go on to examine the role of the learned woman within her family, addressing the recurrent theme of women as successors and preservers of the teachings of their philosopher fathers and husbands and the more general role of the learned woman within her houshold. Closely related to this will be the question of the woman as individualist, one who uses her learning and philosophy to make independent decisions and to choose her own way of life for herself. Accounts of such women can be found only in rare instances in pagan Greek literature, the story of Charikleia being one of them. The biographical tradition of the philosophers will furnish us with a couple more examples based however loosely on real life. We shall see how their stories might have prepared learned pagan readers to receive Heliodoros' independent minded heroine.

Throughout this chapter, we shall also be constantly referring back to the Christian virgins and ideologues of the previous chapter. In this way we will be assessing the

alternatives of self definition and choice which the narratives and ideologies of contemporary Christianity and paganism offered to the small elite of women whose high level of education could open up the possibility of personal aspiration towards philosophical and spiritual excellence. Christian writers such as Gregory of Nyssa taught that it was only by refusing the role of wife and mother and withdrawing from the world that a woman could obtain spiritual fulfilment at the highest level. The stories of Thekla and of Makrina represent attempts at fulfilling this ideal. Where did this leave pagan women, for whom such an option was not generally acknowledged?

The Learned Woman as Priestess

In our search for models which may have shaped Heliodoros' construction of Charikleia as a learned and eloquent priestess and a student of philosophy, a good starting point would seem to be with the Pythagorean tradition.

There are several reasons for this choice. Firstly, whether we are to interpret the *Aithiopika* as "Neoplatonist propaganda" or to see its allusions to the Pythagorean/Platonist tradition as merely "philosophical décor" it is evident that the *Aithiopika* shares many themes in common with the writings of the Neoplatonists and others who looked to the Pythagorean tradition for inspiration[500].

An obvious example as we have seen is the depiction of Kalasiris; the vegetarian Egyptian "miracle working" sage who eschews animal sacrifice. His prototypes can be traced to the Pythagorean sage and wonder worker Apollonius of Tyana as portrayed in the biography of the third century writer Philostratos and to Pythagoras himself.

Other indications include the location of religious wisdom in the non-Greek world of Egyptian priests and Ethiopian gymnosophists. This reflects not only the fabled visits

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[500] See 61-65 above.

of Apollonius and Pythagoras to distant lands in order to learn wisdom but also the preoccupations of Heliodoros' closer contemporaries, Neoplatonic writers such as Iamblichus and Porphyrios who used the personae of Egyptian priests as the most suitable vehicles of theological debate[501].

Iamblichus and Porphyrios in fact are responsible for two of our most important sources for the life of Pythagoras, writing biographies in the second-fourth century C.E which drew on the work of earlier writers now lost. This includes Antonius Diogenes' novel *Wonders Beyond Thule* which contains extensive digressions upon Pythagoras and features the mythical Zalmoxis, a Thracian shaman, traditionally believed to be the former slave and disciple of Pythagoras as a character.

The biographer Diogenes Laertius writing in the 3rd century lacks the hagiographic tone of the Neoplatonist writers, deriding the sage's bean-eating prohibitions and vegetarianism as foolish eccentricities[502]. Nonetheless he expects his readers to be interested in much the same narrative material.

It seems a reasonable proposition given this indication of the literary tastes of the third and fourth century elite that Heliodoros expected his novel to attract this readership which enjoyed reading of the travels of Apollonius[503] or Pythagoras[504] to far off lands to learn the wisdom of Brahmins, Chaldeans and Egyptians, and of mystic utterances and of magic. Of course the depiction of Kalasiris and his exploits is a far from straightforward or disingenuous reflection of the tradition of the Pythagorean thaumaturge or of the Egyptian priest full of arcane wisdom. These are stereotypes which Kalasiris himself self-consciously embodies and takes advantage of in his

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[501] Iamblichos, *On the Mysteries*
[502] Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Pythagoras* 44-45
[503] Philostratos, *Life of Apollonius* 1.18
[504] Diogenes Laertius, *Life of Pythagoras* 2-3

dealings with others though his trickery and deceit are with benevolent and godly intention.

If Kalasiris is drawn from the literary type of the Pythagorean man can we hypothesise that aspects of Charikleia's characterisation may owe something to "Pythagorean woman"?

This possibility is expressed by Sandy quoting Gffecken;

> "Or consider the portrayal of his [Kalasiris'] protégée Charikleia. It includes the virtually formulaic assertion of the heroine's incomparable beauty that is found in other romances (2.33). But she is also credited with intelligence and has mastered her new language so well that she is able to overcome her foster-father in debates (ibid.). Furthermore she has kept the company of learned men (ibid.). These qualities so unexpected in a romance of adventure, may well take their impetus from the fact that "the company of women in the shared pursuit of philosophy was characteristic of the Neoplatonists, who followed the Pythagorean traditions and liked to see women in their midst."[505]

It is this insight and its implications that I wish to explore in more detail in the following sections which will trace the literary depiction of learned women both historical and otherwise from stories about Pythagoras through the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions up to Heliodoros' own time and even beyond.

Aristokleia of Delphi and Diotima of Mantinea

> "Aristoxenus asserts that Pythagoras derived the greater part of his ethical doctrines from Themistokleia, the priestess at Delphi. Ion of Chios in his Triagmi says that he wrote some poems and attributed them to Orpheus"
> "φησὶ δὲ καὶ Ἀριστόξενος τὰ πλεῖστα τῶν ἠθικῶν δογμάτων λαβεῖν τὸν Πυθαγόραν παρὰ Θεμιστοκλείας τῆς ἐν Δελφοῖς. Ἴων δὲ ὁ Χῖος ἐν τοῖς Τριαγμοῖς φησιν αὐτὸν ἔνια ποιήσαντα ἀνενεγκεῖν εἰς Ὀρφέα"[506].

> "For as he had learned from the Magi, who call God Horomazda, God's body is like light, and his soul is like truth. He taught much else, which he claimed to have learned from Aristokleia at Delphi."

[505] Sandy 1982.167
[506] Diogenes Laertius 8.8

"ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς παρὰ τῶν μάγων ἐπυνθάνετο, ὃν Ὡρομάζην καλοῦσιν ἐκεῖνοι, ἐοικέναι τὸ μὲν σῶμα φωτί, τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν ἀληθείᾳ. καὶ ἄλλ'ἄττα ἐπαίδευεν ὅσα παρὰ Ἀριστοκλείας τῆς ἐν Δελφοῖς ἔλεγεν ἀκηκοέναι[507].

Aristoxenus of Tarentum was a writer and philosopher of the fourth century B.C.E[508]. We can therefore trace the tradition that Pythagoras was taught by a woman called Themistokleia at least as far back as that period. Porphyrios, although he too refers to Aristoxenus, seems in this particular quotation to be drawing on Antonius Diogenes' *Wonders Beyond Thule,* a novel which has been dated roughly between the first and second centuries C.E[509].

The Pythagorean element to *Wonders Beyond Thule* is of course also interesting from the point of view of our understanding of the initial reception of the *Aithiopika.* Our assumptions about the expectations which Heliodoros' first readers might have brought to the novel are affected by the knowledge that a romantic novel could be seen as offering appropriate source material for a "serious" biography of Pythagoras . Novels were not necessarily sources purely of entertainment. They might also be treated as valid sources of information and instruction for those of a philosophical disposition.

We can thus establish that there was more than one tradition going back several centuries stating that the great sage and founder of philosophy Pythagoras was taught to a large extent by a woman who was a priestess at Delphi though there is no agreement as to her name. Beyond this there is little that is concrete. Both writers are content to make this bald and somewhat startling statement without subjecting it to comment or speculation. It is not absolutely clear whether these writers themselves

[507] Porphyrios *Life of Pythagoras* 41
[508] Morrison 1956 141 for reliability of Aristoxenus
[509] Sandy, 1989: 775, Bowie 2002: 47-63.

know or expect their readers to know who Aristokleia/ Themistokleia was or whether they were merely passing on the remnants of a tradition as they found it.

Notably though, both writers in their seemingly casual allusion to the priestess then go on to assert or mention a link of Pythagoras with another venerable or esoteric source of wisdom. Diogenes Laertius tells us in the same breath both that Pythagoras was supposed to have learned from Themistokleia and the mocking detail that he was also said to have falsely attributed his own poem to Orpheus. Porphyrios alludes to Aristokleia, having just mentioned Pythagoras' pupilage with the mages of Persia.

These parallels would suggest that Aristokleia or Themistokleia, or whatever name lurked behind the two, could be categorised like Orpheus or Zoroaster as a marginal and mysterious though nonetheless impressive sounding source of wisdom. Whether the priestess had any greater basis in reality than the godly musician is another question and one with which we cannot overly concern ourselves here. What we are left with is, it seems, the remnants of an old tradition of a great priestess so famed for her wisdom that the followers of the father of all philosophers were once anxious to associate him with her.

It is clearly interesting for our purposes that in Neopythagorean literature of the third to fourth centuries, literature which clearly had considerable impact on the creation of the thought-world of the *Aithiopika*, a tradition existed which ascribed not only the expected mantic powers but also great wisdom and learning to a priestess of Delphi. Like Charikleia, this priestess also enjoyed the conversation of wise men visiting from afar. That the teacher of Pythagoras has been ascribed differing names but each ending in –kleia can only make the Charikleia- Aristokleia/ Themistokleia association more readily apparent.

For Heliodoros' readers then, the mention of a learned priestess called Charikleia living at Delphi may well have struck a chord. It would have invoked the world of Pythagoras with its austere values, mysticism and prominent educated and virtuous women. It would also remind them of Aristokleia as a paradigm of the priestess as a learned and virtuous woman, whose office allowed her the access to the public, male dominated world in which it was possible to meet, learn from and even teach strangers visiting from around the known world. As a public official, priestesses had access to a milieu to which the respectable woman would not generally have been admitted.

Diotima in many ways plays an analogous role to Aristokleia. She is a wise priestess from whom Plato in the *Symposium* claims that Sokrates derived much learning.

There is much debate as to the historicity or otherwise of Diotima[510]. For our purposes, regarding the role of Diotima in shaping Heliodoros' conception of a learned and vocal priestess, it is perhaps useful to be aware that in later Greek writers such as Lucian and Aristides in the second century C.E and Proclus in the fifth, Diotima is alluded to with the apparent assumption that she was a genuine historical figure[511]. One may thus reasonably presume that Heliodoros would have had a similar belief.

Whether Plato was in fact portraying an actual person in the *Symposium* or whether Diotima is a fictional creation, his decision to present her in the *Symposium* as a formative influence on his great teacher Sokrates was a creative and deliberate act. Could the knowledge that the great proto- philosopher Pythagoras from whom Plato saw his doctrines as developing was also said to have been taught by a wise Priestess

[510] Waithe 1987: Chapter 6 for detailed discussion of the issues surrounding the debate.
[511] Waithe 1987: 105-6

have played any part in ascribing to the priestess Diotima a crucial role in Sokrates' development?

The tradition of the wisdom of priestesses such as Diotima and Aristokleia provides Heliodoros with a venerable literary and quasi-historical background for presenting the priestess in her sanctuary as an impressive source of wisdom and a woman who constituted an important public personage who could appropriately engage in religious and philosophical discussions with men who visited her shrine.

How far is this idea of the priestess as a woman renowned for her wisdom and able to act as teacher to any passing stranger who visits her sanctuary borne out beyond the representations of Diotima and Aristokleia we have just been examining?

The idea that a priestess might be expected to possess any special wisdom or moral qualities beyond the basic requirements of chastity and general respectability is antithetical to our usual impression of the nature of the Greco-Roman pagan priesthood for men and women.

> "Life-long celibacy is scarcely ever found. From time to time dietary fasts are observed, but real asceticism develops only in protest against the civilisation of the polis and its priesthood...As for other requirements, the priest should above all be a worthy representative of the community. This means that he should possess full citizenship and also that he must be free from any physical defect. The mutilated and the crippled are excluded. Otherwise in contrast to more responsible positions, it is true that anyone can be a priest."[512]

This passage conveys an impression of pagan priests, whether male or female, as well born citizens who dutifully carried out their appointed roles with no particular religious fervour or any kind of special knowledge. This pervasive representation of the Greco-Roman priesthood as being detached from any particular degree of piety, moral commitment or religious knowledge is somewhat at odds with the portrayal of officially appointed priestesses such as Charikleia, Themistokleia or Diotima as being

revered sources of religious or even philosophical instruction. Sneers from Augustine for example[513] that no-one ever received moral instruction from visiting a pagan temple (as opposed to a Christian church where sermons were preached) help to deepen the impression that the work of a pagan priest consisted in merely carrying out ritual with no theological or moral content. Are we to understand the representations of these pious and learned female clerics as imaginative aberrations on the part of their chroniclers or does their portrayal reflect a deeper tradition in both literary representation and historical reality?

There are hints in the literature from Plato onwards that the shadowy figures of the priestess-teachers Aristokleia and Diotima reflected a wider historical reality that priestesses were sometimes not merely the enactors of necessary ritual or the conduits of a god in prophecy but could be expected to be wise and learned individuals.

In the *Meno*, Sokrates states that he has learnt truths concerning the immortality of the soul through converse with priests both male and female.

> "SOCRATES; I have heard from men and women who understand the truths of religion...Those who tell it are priests and priestesses of the sort who make it their business to be able to account for the functions which they perform."
>
> ἔγωγε: ἀκήκοα γὰρ ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν σοφῶν περὶ τὰ θεῖα πράγματα--οἱ μὲν λέγοντές εἰσι τῶν ἱερέων τε καὶ τῶν ἱερειῶν ὅσοις μεμέληκε περὶ ὧν μεταχειρίζονται λόγον οἵοις τ' εἶναι διδόναι[514]

One can perhaps assume in this context that Plato would not have invented such a group of wise and pious clerics for his own purposes. It is interesting that he twice stresses that female priests are to be included in the number from whom one may derive instruction.

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[512] Burkert; 1985 98

[513] *Civitate Dei*; 2.6
"Let us be told in what places those divine precepts are regularly proclaimed in the hearing of the people assembled for worship. We on our part can point to churches set up for this very purpose wherever the Christian religion is spread."

Another fifth century representation of a priestess who sees her duty and dedication to the gods as demanding more from her than the performance of ritual is to be found in the character of Theonoe in Euripides' *Helen*. The Egyptian prophetess Theonoe, a granddaughter of Nereus and sister of the king of Egypt, declares that her own religious convictions and sense of morality have resolved her to come to the aid of the stranded Helen and Menelaus even at the price of deceiving and angering her own brother the Egyptian king Theoclymenus[515].

A later example, however doubtful as to its historical authenticity, again suggests that a priestess might invest her office with a personal pious and ethical commitment. Plutarch tells us that Alkibiades having fallen foul of the city of Athens, all the civic priests and priestesses were ordered to curse his name. A certain Theano supposedly refused to execute this decree as she considered it her office to dispense blessings not curses[516].

Plutarch himself dedicates among other works a specialist religious treatise *On Isis and Osiris* to a priestess named Kleia whom he states to be a person with particular interest in studies of a theological nature[517].

While Theonoe obviously and Theano very possibly are fictional creations, their examples set a further literary precedent for how a holder of the office of priestess could set a moral standard and make her opinions felt in ways that were not available to respectable women through other channels.

It seems then, that even in classical Athens, so notoriously repressive of women's voices, a respectable woman (as opposed to an hetaira) might not only be accepted as receiving an advanced education but also be allowed with perfect propriety to share

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[514] Plato, *Meno* 81 a-b. See also Waithe 1987: 102.
[515] Euripides' *Helen*- 1000-1005
[516] Plutarch, *Alkibiades*; 22, Sourvinou-Inwood 1988 for discussion of origins of this anecdote.
[517] Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 28

her learning with strange men. Clearly, the public nature of the duties of a priestess (although as we have seen it could give rise to fear of abduction or contamination particularly in the case of virgins) in general meant that the holder of the office was to some extent exempt from the usual restrictions on women with regard to social interaction outside the family.

Thus priestesses, regardless of their marital status, could, like the individual women philosophers we will go on to consider, be regarded to some degree as a special case among women. The conventions we discussed earlier[518] which discouraged women from engaging in public speech or of putting their opinions forward would not fully apply in the case of women who had an important representative role in a public cult which attracted many visitors and seekers after wisdom.

As a wise and learned priestess, a sharer of learning with passing strangers and one whose piety led her to make a decision which defied authority Charikleia was not without precedent.

The Learned Woman and the Family

In this section we will consider the pagan woman philosopher in the context of the relationship between her vocation to a life of learning and contemplation and her personal and familial relations.

In the process I will be drawing principally on the genre of short *lives* of philosophers including the various lives of Pythagoras, the comprehensive work by Diogenes Laertius and the biographical writings of Philostratos and Eunapius. We will thus be making use of sources which on the one hand have their roots in the classical past as these writers draw on a wealth of earlier sources now lost to us and also to a

[518] See 171-4, 184-6 above.

perspective much closer to Heliodoros' own era as these writers were active from the third century onwards.

Although there are only two occasions in which women are allowed discrete entries to themselves (and we shall be focusing on these in greater detail later on) the biographies are peppered with tantalising allusions to women who were considered to be heirs, followers or even teachers of the male philosophers and deemed worthy of brief mention. These allusions will thus offer us an insight into pagan perspectives on the place and status of female philosophers within the household and society as a whole. This will have important implications for our understanding of Charikleia and the choices she makes and the destiny which ultimately impels her. Are we for example expected to understand her initial intention to live a life of virginal seclusion as her attempt to secure "a room of one's own" for herself as an essential to her continued pursuit of religious and other learning? Conversely are we to see her capitulation to Eros and marriage as an abandonment of a life of mindful contemplation for the cares of this world? This would have been an early Christian perspective on the matter.

We shall begin our survey with a return to the Pythagorean biographical tradition. All our sources accord women a prominent place as family members and partakers in the learning of the great sage. Most notable of these women is Theano. A series of quotations regarding Theano and other women close to Pythagoras in the later biographical tradition are revealing as to the assumptions made about female philosophers and their relationships to their male colleagues. They illustrate a pattern to which most of the biographical writings about female philosophers in the Hellenic pagan tradition conform and to which we can find parallels in the formation of Charikleia.

"Crotonian wives came to Deino, the wife of the Pythagorean Brontinus who was a wise and splendid woman, the author of the maxim that "It is proper for women to sacrifice on the same day they have risen from the embraces of their husbands." which some ascribe to Pythagoras' wife Theano - and entreated her to persuade Pythagoras to discourse to them on their continence as due to their husbands."

"πρὸς Δεινὼ γὰρ τὴν Βροντίνου γυναῖκα, τῶν Πυθαγορείων ἑνός, οὖσαν σοφήν τε καὶ περιττὴν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ περίβλεπτον ῥῆμα, τὸ ψυχήν, ἧς ἐστὶ τὸ τὴν γυναῖκα δεῖν θύειν αὐθημερὸν ἀνισταμένην ἀπὸ τοῦ ἑαυτῆς ἀνδρός, ὅ τινες εἰς Θεανὼ ἀναφέρουσι, πρὸς δὴ ταύτην παρελθούσας τὰς τῶν Κροτωνιατῶν γυναῖκας παρακαλέσαι περὶ τοῦ συμπεῖσαι τὸν Πυθαγόραν διαλεχθῆναι περὶ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὰς σωφροσύνης τοῖς ἀνδράσιν αὐτῶν."[519]

"Pythagoras' acknowledged successor was Aristaeus...he carried on the school, educated Pythagoras' children and married Theano."

"Διάδοχος δὲ πρὸς πάντων ὁμολογεῖται Πυθαγόρου γεγονέναι Ἀρισταῖος ... καὶ οὐ μόνον τῆς σχολῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς παιδοτροφίας καὶ τοῦ Θεανοῦς γάμου κατηξιώθη..." [520]

"It is said that by Theano, a Cretan, the daughter of Pythonax, Pythagoras had a son Telauges and a daughter Myia to whom some add Arignota whose Pythagorean writings are still extant."

"... ἄλλοι δ'ἐκ Θεανοῦς τῆς Πυθώνακτος τὸ γένος Κρήσσης υἱὸν Τηλαύγη Πυθαγόρου ἀναγράφουσι καὶ θυγατέρα Μυῖαν, οἳ δὲ καὶ Ἀριγνώτην· ὧν καὶ συγγράμματα Πυθαγόρεια σώζεσθαι.[521]"

"Pythagoras had a wife whose name was Theano, the daughter of Brontinus of Croton. Some say she was the wife of Brontinus and only Pythagoras' pupil."

"Ἦν δὲ τῷ Πυθαγόρᾳ καὶ γυνή, Θεανὼ ὄνομα, Βροντίνου τοῦ Κροτωνιάτου θυγάτηρ· οἱ δέ, γυναῖκα μὲν εἶναι Βροντίνου, μαθήτριαν δὲ Πυθαγόρου.[522]"

"Theano it was said was not only his [Pythagoras'] disciple but one of his daughters."

"Καὶ ἡ Θεανὼ δὲ λέγεται οὐ μαθητρία μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ μία τῶν θυγατέρων αὐτοῦ εἶναι.[523]"

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[519] Iamblichus, *Pythagoras*.27
[520] Iamblichus, *Pythagoras*.37
[521] Porphyrios, *Pythagoras*.4
[522] Diogenes Laertius 8.42

These quotations suggest that while there was certainly a prominent woman philosopher by the name of Theano who was close to Pythagoras, our later biographers have inherited contradictory traditions as to her identity and precise relationship with the sage[524].

For Mary Ellen Waithe, the contradictions are resolved simply by assuming that Theano must have been the daughter of Brontinus who became the wife of Pythagoras[525] and this is one reasonable interpretation of the evidence. If that were simply the case, however, from whence would come a tradition that Theano was actually the wife of Brontinus which was so persistent that Iamblichus considers that Theano the wife of Brontinus of Metapontum must simply be a second philosopher called Theano who was also very close to Pythagoras?

Our two final quotes may present a solution to the confusion. Their implication is that Theano was indeed very close to Pythagoras but in the relationship of pupil to teacher. Could it be that some writers, aware of Theano's close association with Pythagoras, yet unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the concept of a purely "professional" rather than familial or sexual relationship between a man and a woman, could only make decent sense of their relationship by turning it into one of husband and wife? In the Photius source, Theano's discipleship to Pythagoras leads to claims that she was in fact his daugher.

The suggestion that familial relationships are being randomly ascribed to female followers of Pythagoras is confirmed by the ready identification by Porphyrios's

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[523] Anonymous *Life* of Pythagoras preserved in Photius 249 32-3. I have modified Guthrie's translation here.

[524] See Phillip 1959: 185-194 for discussion of the interrelationship of the various *Lives* of Pythagoras.

[525] Waithe 1987: 12.

source of the two female philosophers (whose separate existence outside this source is confirmed by the survival of works ascribed to them) as Pythagoras' daughters.

Whatever the truth of the matter regarding Theano's identity, what these passages also illustrate very clearly is how closely bound up with familial attachments the transmission of philosophy was seen to be. This applies to men as well as to women as we see from the fact that Iamblichus associated Aristaeus' succession as head of Pythagoras' school with his marriage to his widow.

There is also the strong suggestion that for Pythagorean women at least, there was no contradiction between being a married woman and a mother and also being concerned with study of the highest philosophical and spiritual matters. The quotation ascribed above to Theano and echoed throughout the Pythagorean biographical sources; that women receive no pollution from marital sex while betrayal of the marriage bed is an unforgivable sin, reinforces the impression that for the Pythagoreans, marriage was central to the life of a pious and virtuous woman. Theano is said here to have arranged a lecture to the women of Croton from the great philosopher in the hope that it would inspire women to be more faithful wives.

The confusion around the identity of Theano as to whether she was Pythagoras' daughter or wife suggests that it was accepted that women could be dedicated philosophers first under the tutelage of their fathers and then in partnership with their husbands. Theano's marriage to Aristaeus in conjunction with his taking over of Pythagoras' school would have made sense in that Aristaeus could prove his loyalty to his late master by ensuring that the sage's widow and their children would not be left without male protection. Another consideration may well have been that Theano with her years as a philosopher at Pythagoras' side would probably have proved a valuable aide in the running of the school. This function for women of providing

continuity of the philosophical tradition as laid down by their husbands and fathers is well illustrated in Porphyrios's description of how the writings of Pythagoras survived the violent dissolution of their sect.

> "Each man made his own collection of written authorities and his own memories, leaving them wherever he happened to die, charging their wives, sons and daughters to preserve them within their families. This mandate of transmission within each family was obeyed for a long time."
> "...ὑπομνήματα κεφαλαιώδη συνταξάμενοι τά τε τῶν πρεσβυτέρων συγγράμματα καὶ ὧν διεμέμνηντο συναγαγόντες κατέλιπεν ἕκαστος οὗπερ ἐτύγχανε τελευτῶν, ἐπισκήψαντες υἱοῖς ἢ θυγατράσιν ἢ γυναιξὶ μηδενὶ δοῦναι τῶν ἐκτὸς τῆς οἰκίας· αἱ δὲ μέχρι πολλοῦ χρόνου τοῦτο διετήρησαν ἐκ διαδοχῆς τὴν αὐτὴν ἐντολὴν διαγγέλλουσαι τοῖς ἀπογόνοις"[526].

There is also the report that Pythagoras' daughter Damo (another daughter!), being entrusted by him with his commentaries with instructions to divulge them to no one outside the household, would never sell them even though she might have made her fortune by doing so as she thought loyalty to her father's wishes more important than worldly goods[527]. This tale was told within the context of reproaching another, male follower of Pythagoras for failing to preserve the secrets of the sect by openly teaching them. Even a woman had shown more loyalty and hardihood than he.

This idealised role for women as transmitters of an intellectual and cultural heritage might seem particularly attractive to late third and fourth century pagans whose own traditions were beginning to be rivalled by the emerging Christian hegemony. It is interesting that we can see the patterns of Pythagorean family life as described in the later biographical tradition being echoed within the philosophical/ family circle of Porphyrios and Plotinus some thousand years later. Just as Iamblichus tells us that Aristaeus married Pythagoras' widow, we learn that Porphyrios too married the

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[526] Porphyrios, *Pythagoras*.58
[527] Diogenes Laertius 8.22

widow of a fellow philosopher both because he considered that he owed it to his colleague to protect his widow and also because her own philosophical leanings meant that the two should be congenial partners[528]. A further indication of this pattern is to be found in Marinus' *Life* of Proclus when he mentions that Proclus refused to marry despite an eminent fellow philosopher Olypiodorus offering him the hand of his daughter who also had philosophical inclinations.[529]

Porphyrios, in his *Life* of Plotinus, mentions that women were members of Plotinus' circle and that among these could be included Amphikleia the wife of Iamblichus' son Ariston[530].

For women, their careers as philosophers seem inextricably bound up with their familial relations. Of all the female philosophers we shall look at, we shall find only the barest mention of women philosophers who were not also reported to have had philosopher fathers, husbands or sons. This will include even the two otherwise exceptional "individualist" women Hipparchia and Sosipatra.

In many cases this representation reflects historical reality, but the assumption of a familial or spousal relationship may also be employed simply to make sense of a woman's role in a man's world. The primary means by which a woman could present herself and be acceptably presented as a philosopher in the pagan Greek world was either in the context of her priestly identity or by having a philosophical career firmly linked to that of a husband or close male relative[531]. This is a pattern which we can see repeated from Theano to Asklepigeneia of Athens.

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[528] Porphyrios, *To Marcella* 3

[529] Marinus of Samaria *Proclus or on Happiness* 9,17

[530] Porphyrios, *Life of Plotinus*.9

[531] A further example of a learned woman active within the context of the scholarly world of the male members of her family may be found in Pamphila of Epidauros, a first century historian. *Suda* mentions that her works were ascribed to her husband, the grammarian Soteridas but also to her husband, Socratidas.

One interesting example, taken from Diogenes Laertius, is that of Arete, the daughter of Aristippus, a follower of Sokrates and the founder of the Cyrenaic school. We are told that he gave this daughter the best advice, warning her to avoid excess[532] and a letter to Arete is also listed among his works[533]. Arete is then noted by Diogenes as one of Aristippus' disciples without differentiation as one in a list which includes male successors[534]. Diogenes then adds that Arete's pupil was her son also called Aristippus who was hence known as "mother-taught" without, as far as one can tell, there being any sneer in the soubriquet[535]. It is not made clear whether the extent of Arete's philosophical career consisted in teaching her own son or whether she had a more public role. No works are ascribed to her.

Diogenes' treatment of Arete offers intriguing insights into how a woman could receive a degree of acceptance and recognition in her own right as a philosopher within Greek pagan culture. In making her son her pupil and thus serving as a point of continuity in the Cyrenaic school, Arete was able to be respected as a philosopher at the same time as fulfilling the roles of wife and mother. Far from marriage and childrearing being regarded as a bar to intellectual fulfilment, Diogenes presents Arete's life as not only embodying the pagan ideal of the virtuous woman as being devoted to the interests of her family but also as that of a philosopher who had an important role in the development of a philosophical school.

Aristippus was notorious for having exposed his own son with the casual defence that phlegm and fleas could also be described as partaking of his physical substance and he should have no hesitation about throwing them from him[536]. While we may guess that (if the story is true) the son in question was not a legitimate heir, an encounter

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[532] Diogenes Laertius 2.72
[533] Diogenes Laertius 2.84
[534] Diogenes Laertius 2.86
[535] *Ibid.*

with a courtesan who claimed that he was the father of her child is mentioned just before this) it is notable that having allegedly thrown away his son he was prepared to make his daughter his philosophical heir. It is also interesting that Diogenes sees nothing odd in this.

This tradition of women as inheritors and prominent exponents of philosophy and theurgy continues beyond the time of Heliodoros into the fifth century. Hypatia of Alexandria took over leadership of the school of Alexandria following the death of her father, Theron. She was a noted teacher of mathematics and Neoplatonic philosophy until her horrific death at the hands of a Christian mob in 415[537].

Asklepigeneia of Athens had a prominent role in the School of Athens and is credited with teaching the famous fifth century Neoplatonist Proclus theurgic lore which her father the philosopher Plutarch had imparted to her alone before his death[538].

The complex details of Charikleia's family life and associations reflect this intermingling of the personal and the philosophical with regard to women. The learned Charikleia is supervised and instructed by more than one wise and venerable gentleman who fulfill a quasi-paternal role. Charikles, like Aristippus, gives his (adopted) daughter the best education and she follows him in his priestly career at his sanctuary at Delphi. In this environment, protected and legitimised both by her priestly office and her stepfather's presence, Charikleia is able to spend her time in learned disputes with men without in any way compromising her status as a respectable young woman. Charikles had hoped to give his stepdaughter in marriage to his nephew, a young man whom he stressed plaintively to Kalasiris was also possessed if not with wisdom, then at least with a degree of skill and charm in

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[536] Diogenes Laertius 2.81

[537] See Dzielska 1995 for a useful account of Hypatia and later treatment of her story.

[538] Marinus of Samaria, *Proclus or on Happiness* 28, Dodds 1947: 59.

speaking.[539] This suggests that Charikles had considered it important that his refined stepdaughter should be found a husband whose own level of education would seem to offer a degree of compatibility. He evidently expected that the young woman to whom he had given an advanced education would be fulfilled and happy as wife and mother. It is questionable whether once she no longer held the office of virgin priestess of Artemis she would have the same liberty to act as a public figure at the Delphic sanctuary. There were however, plenty of alternative priesthoods open to married women through which her status could have been maintained (this of course is what she finally does in fact, although this takes place in Ethiopia rather than Delphi). Even if Charikleia had not insisted on going her own way, first in refusing marriage and then in marrying Theagenes she would probably still have qualified as a very respectable pagan ideal of a learned woman.

When Charikleia does finally elope with Theagenes, with Kalasiris as chaperon, she acquires yet another "virtual father". The paternal nature of Kalasiris' relationship to Charikleia is stressed throughout. Throughout their adventures Kalasiris describes himself as Charikleia's father when dealing with outsiders. He ascribes to himself the feelings of a father for his children with regard to both Charikleia and Theagenes and it is as a lost father that they mourn him when he dies. The emphasis on the presentation of Kalasiris as a substitute father for Charikleia is obviously motivated to a great extent by the issue of propriety. If Charikleia was not in some sense to be understood as a sort of daughter to Kalasiris, the priest's reasons for absconding with and intervening in the personal lives of a young couple with whom he had no formal relationship could otherwise seem decidedly murky. We remember Paul's discomfort when the beautiful young Thekla offered enthusiastically to be his constant

[539] Hld. 2.33.4-4

companion. Similarly, it was assumed that if the ascetic sage Pythagoras was known to be closely associated with a female philosopher, she should be best understood as having a close familial relationship to him.

It seems then that elite pagan society could be open to and approving of the idea of individual women being noted for their wisdom and learning and even having a career in philosophy alongside men. They were expected to do so however within the household and civic roles through which a good woman was expected to live her life whether she was learned or otherwise. A woman might be given a full education by her philosopher father, married to one of his fellow philosophers and pass the accumulated wisdom of the philosophical family onto their children. As in the cases of Arete, Hypatia or Asklepigeneia, she might take over her father's school as we know that Hypatia at least did on a formal basis.

A pagan woman might also put her learning at the disposal of the city or of a religious sanctuary. The necessity of fulfilling her civic function as priestess would negate the usual proprieties about social intercourse with men from outside the family. It appears, as we have seen, that some priestesses as well as priests would have gained a reputation as individuals who would not merely carry out the ritual actions required of their positions but immerse themselves in theology as well as other learning. They would thus be worth being cultivated by any lovers of learning who might visit her temple or sanctuary.

It would not then, in general, have seemed particularly logical to pagans that a woman's devotion to philosophy would lead her to turn against her father's teachings or to withdraw from a woman's traditional roles of marriage and childrearing. The idea that a woman, even an exceptionally wise woman, should cultivate her soul in

isolation for the sake of it was alien as was the idea of a woman philosopher deserting her family in order to go about fulfilling her own personal destiny.

The rare examples of women who do appear to have involved themselves in philosophy independently of their families include Lastheneia of Mantinea and Axiotheia of Phillus who seem to have attended Plato's lectures on their own initiative[540]. Axiotheia was said to have worn men's clothes[541]. Diogenes' allusion to Axiotheia's transgressive choice of dress (whatever lay behind the tradition) serves to suggest that there was something odd or ridiculous in her behaviour in attending a philosophy lecture, sitting amongst strange men. This impression is enhanced by the mention of the two women which occurs a little later in which Diogenes records that they also attended the lectures of Plato's successor, Speusippus, and that Speusippus was taunted on account of the feminine component of his audience[542]. It is interesting that the two women were admitted to the lectures at all. Neither Theano nor Arete whose philosophical activities were centred around their husbands and fathers are made to seem at all transgressive or ridiculous.

For pagans then, learned and exceptional women had a respected place – in the home. Where then does this leave the wise and defiant Charikleia? Legitimising her actions, which might appear to resemble the anti- family values mentality of a contemporary Christian are of course the power of destiny and the will of the gods. Charikleia is not really deserting and defying her father because Charikles is not her real father. Instead she is intent on making her way across the known world to become the dutiful daughter of her real father, something which would have seemed impossible had she obediently accepted her stepfather's choice of husband before she had chanced to meet Theagenes or Kalasiris. By remaining under the care of Kalasiris throughout

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[540] Diogenes Laertius 3.46

most of her flight she is maintaining proper behaviour for an educated and pious young woman by acting in concert with one who is both a priestly colleague and one in *loco parentis*. At the end of the novel, she fulfils both civic and familial functions simultaneously by both marrying with her parents blessing while accepting the office of priestess of the Moon which is reserved for married women. Thus Charikleia's theological leanings will find fulfilment in the context of marriage and motherhood as she will doubtless go on to learn much from the gymnosophists and be a respectable source of wisdom herself in the role of priestess. Finally therefore, Charikleia can be seen to embody the ideal of the learned woman in Hellenic literature even though she goes about it in a very individual way. It is to examples of other women whose remarkable status as philosophers allowed them to choose their lives with an unusual degree of independence though without rejecting family life that we shall now turn.

The Learned Woman As Individualist; Hipparchia and Sosipatra

The biographies of philosophers composed by Diogenes Laertius in the third century and by Eunapius in the fourth century C.E each admit one woman to their roll of illustrious men.

In this section we will examine both what was so remarkable individually about each of these women and what aspects of their lives and personalities form a common theme with each other and with representations of the remarkable women we have discussed previously. This will provide us with an idea of how the remarkable and brilliant women who were judged to some extent by the rules usually applied to men were constituted and understood within both the emergent Christian literature and by the increasingly self consciously pagan elite reading public of the third and fourth

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[541] ibid
[542] Diogenes Laertius 4.2

centuries C.E. In this way we shall enhance our understanding of the characterisation and composition of Charikleia.

Hipparchia was the sister of Metrokles, a follower of the famous Cynic, Krates. She became devoted not only to the teachings of Cynicism but also to her brother's teacher. Hipparchia therefore insisted on marrying Krates, threatening suicide if she was refused. As Krates, according to the dictates of Cynicism, had disposed of all his worldly possessions and scorned common conventions and niceties in his daily life, Hipparchia's parents were naturally anxious to dissuade her from her infatuation and enlisted the help of Krates himself in doing so. Having exhausted all other methods of dissuasion, Krates stripped off his clothes in front of her, and agreed to marry her if she would take him just as she found him and share all aspects of his life. Hipparchia gladly assented. From then onward Hipparchia became well known for appearing at symposia in company with her husband (in flagrant defiance of the rule that symposia were not for wives) and engaging in debate on equal terms with men. One man whom she had worsted in debate was so enraged by this, that he physically assaulted her and taunted her with the suggestion that she would be better employed at women's tasks than in philosophy. Hipparchia is said to have retorted that she did well to spend her time acquiring an education rather than at the loom. Diogenes tells us that similar anecdotes of Hipparchia's sayings and doings became common currency much as the reports of the often outrageous Diogenes the Cynic were savoured[543].

Hipparchia's story as related by Diogenes Laertius in the third century C.E contains notable resonances with narratives other than the philosophical biography. This is perhaps inevitable, as the genre was developed primarily to describe the life and works of great *men.* Diogenes' biographies of male philosophers often begin with a

[543] Diogenes Laertius 6.96-98

discussion of the subject's ancestry and may make passing reference to their wives or children if there is a particular reason for doing so (for example in the case of Pythagoras's wife Theano that she was a noted philosopher in her own right). Generally, however, the focus is on the philosopher's notable sayings and doings not the details of their personal relationships. The life of Hipparchia by contrast, is shaped throughout by reference to the identity of her brother, her husband and her parents reactions to her choice of husband. These relationships and tensions form the backbone of Diogenes' account of Hipparchia in a way that is unparalleled and unimaginable in the biography of a male philosopher. In fact, the emphases of Hipparchia's biography have more in common with the romantic novel or the Christian martyrology.

On the one hand her story can be summarised as follows; Hipparchia falls in love, defies her parents, faces death, refuses unwanted suitors and accepts hardship and strangeness into her previously protected life with the result that she is able to spend her life with the man she loves.

Her story could also be told like this; Hipparchia becomes entranced by a teacher who propounds a new and radical way of life. Defying her parents, rejecting her wealthy suitors and showing that she cares nothing for the material considerations or conventions of this world she shows herself worthy of following her teacher and becomes a keen proselyte of his doctrine.

Hipparchia's story as told by Diogenes Laertius thus follows pre-existing narrative patterns used for telling and interpreting stories about women who like Leukippe or Thekla make decisions determining how they will live their lives, rather than simply complying with their parents' wishes as was conventionally expected of women. Thus in adapting a sub-genre developed for eulogising wise men; the philosophical

biography, for a female protagonist, Diogenes has found it necessary to draw on other genres. The novel and the martyrology address a woman's struggle for self assertion within the context of estrangement from the family home and fulfilment of her partly chosen, partly fated destiny whether it be martyrdom, virginal solitude or marriage to the man of her choice.

Sosipatra

Winkler in a brief footnote[544] describes Sosipatra as a "Charikleian heroine". The story of Sosipatra as told by Eunapius is both stranger and more complex than that of Hipparchia. As Eunapius is our only source for Sosipatra we must make of the fantastical elements to his tale what we can. Eunapius immediately draws attention to the unusualness of writing about a woman in the same generic context as that of male philosophers as he begins by explaining that this woman is so famous that she deserves to be spoken of at length despite this being a work about wise *men*[545]. Sosipatra was born of a wealthy family near Ephesos and was noted as a child of exceeding beauty and decorum. Her course of life was changed by the arrival of two mysterious strangers who, being received graciously by her father, offer to educate her themselves with the promise that she should be left with a mind not like a woman's or any human being's[546]. For five years the girl was inducted into all manner of arcane religious mysteries and then was presented to her father, whom she impressed with her display of mantic powers. The mysterious strangers then presented Sosipatra with garments of initiation, powerful symbols and a chest of books. They then vanished "to the Western Ocean". It was concluded that they must have been benevolent visitors from the spirit world.

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[544] Winkler 1982: 323 Swain 1999.
[545] Eunapius 4.66
[546] Eunapius 4.67

So impressed was Sosipatra's father by the change wrought in her by the spirits' initiations that he allowed her to live as she wanted and did not exercise any control upon her[547]. Clearly her advanced level of knowledge meant that she was accepted as being beyond the restrictions normal not only for her gender but also her years. She was ten years old at the time the mysterious old men left her. Later on she decided to marry and chose Eustathius as the only man worthy of her. Delicately, her decision was conveyed in the form of a prophecy in which it was also made clear that Eustathius was without doubt his wife's spiritual inferior[548]. As Winkler suggests, this manifest superiority of wife over husband is also evident in the depiction of Charikleia and Theagenes. Following the death of her husband after only five years of marriage, Sosipatra returned home where she had a close though seemingly platonic relationship with yet another philosopher, Aedesius who looked after her and educated her sons of whom she had three. She also held a chair of philosophy at Pergamum said to rival that of Aedesius. Sosipatra seems to have dedicated herself to celibacy, following the death of her husband. Finding herself besotted by her kinsman Philometor, this is treated as a case of magical possession and she calls upon Maximus, one of the disciples of Aedesius, to ritually free her from this infatuation. Sosipatra's apparent helplessness in this matter is counteracted by the additional detail that she was able to report back to Maximus every detail of the rites he had privately carried out to undo the effects of Philometor's love spell as though she had been present. Maximus accordingly went away with his awe for Sosipatra and her powers greatly enhanced rather than diminished by the incident.

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[547] Eunapius; 469
[548] Eunapius; 469

Eunapius' account of the life of Sosipatra's son Antoninus, a philosopher who continued the philosophical and pagan legacy of both his parents in the face of aggressive Christianisation, follows on from the account of his mother.

This mysterious biographical sketch shares many elements notable in the depiction of both Hipparchia and Charikleia. To begin with the aforementioned similarities between the depiction of Sosipatra and that of our heroine, an obvious starting point is the strange childhood happenings which altered the course of the girls' lives forever.

At five and seven respectively, Sosipatra and Charikleia, two notably beautiful and remarkable little girls are placed in the care of wise and holy men who have come from a mysterious land. The picture is more complicated of course in Charikleia's case; her life is dominated by the care of three holy men in total, all coming from different lands, Sisimithres from her native Ethiopia, the Greek Charikles and the Egyptian Kalasiris. Sosipatra is handed by her father to two entirely otherworldly old men who disappear beyond the Western Ocean. Like Sisimithres and Charikleia, the home of these divine beings is a place of virtue and wisdom at the ends of the earth. Both girls are entrusted with mysterious texts, ritual raiment and jewellery as a reminder of their connection to their otherworldly home. The two girls each receive an education involving an intimate knowledge of ritual and other matters pertaining to the divine. While Charikleia, the fictional heroine, is not credited with the mantic and intellectual powers supposedly gifted to the historical Sosipatra, she grows up so wise and eloquent that her stepfather despairs of persuading her to do his bidding rather than follow her own chosen way of life. Charikles is less gracious however than Sosipatra's father who is humbly only too aware of his daughter's superiority to attempt or wish to interfere with her conduct. Like Charikleia and Hipparchia, Sosipatra's superior quality of mind and soul entitles her to choose her own husband,

also a distinguished philosopher. Despite her vaunted superiority, it is notable that even Sosipatra never operates entirely without male assistance. After her husband's death, a fellow philosopher, Aedesius, takes responsibility for her and for the upbringing of her children just as we are told Aristaeus took care of Pythagoras' widow Theano and her children or as the aged Porphyrios took on Marcella and her many daughters, following the death of a colleague. Exceptionally, in Sosipatra's case, the relationship between herself and Aedesius in her widowhood is clearly not that of marriage. Whether this was due to a religious or ethical objection to remarriage or perhaps because Aedesius himself was not free to remarry is not made clear. Despite this evident determination to live a life of celibacy and despite possessing a mind that is greater than any woman's, Sosipatra is temporarily overcome by the powers of erotic magic. This brings us back to traditional tropes in narratives about women. With similarities to the case of Diogenes' account of Hipparchia, our biographer seems to be combining themes common to pagan "hagiography" with those of romance and tragedy in order to fit the female subject. Like Plotinus or Apollonius of Tyana, Sosipatra suffers a magical assault against which she triumphs[549] (though not without masculine assistance). Like a novelistic heroine or like Phaidra or Thekla, Sosipatra also struggles in the grip of a passion which has come upon her through supernatural means. Like a romantic heroine, Sosipatra also has a struggle to free herself from an aggressive attempt on her chastity.

While there is little we can do to uncover the truth behind this strange portrait of a female clairvoyant, philosopher and theologian brought up by spirit beings, we can ask ourselves why Eunapios chose to devote space to this strange story of a remarkable woman in his account of famous men. In doing so, we may also uncover

[549] Porphyrios *Life of Plotinus* 10

some of the cultural, literary and historical trends which lay behind the creation of the "wise and beautiful" Charikleia.

To gain a fuller understanding of the legacy and significance of Sosipatra we shall turn to Eunapius' discussion of her son, the philosopher Antoninus. In the prophecy with which Sosipatra announced her forthcoming marriage to her worthy though lesser husband, she also predicted that she should have three children who, while they would fail to win earthly happiness would however be rich in the happiness which the gods bestow[550]. While Eunapius reports these words, he is clearly in only partial agreement with them, for he dismisses two of Sosipatra's sons as philosophers of a mercenary type, interested only in cashing in on the credentials lent by the names of their illustrious parents. Antoninus on the other hand was clearly favoured by Eunapius as he is named as the only one whose life bore out the truth of his mother's prophecy. Antoninus, he goes on to relate, made his home in Egypt where he devoted himself to religious rituals and became the centre of a group of young men devoted to philosophy and the practice of pagan religion[551]. Like his mother, Antoninus was apparently gifted with clairvoyance, for he predicted that after his death, the temples of Serapis would be closed and a great gloom would fall upon the earth[552]. Eunapius provides the interpretation of this prediction in language which makes it clear he is expressing a very personal anguish at the desecration of temples during Theodosius' reign and the setting up of martyrs' tombs in their stead. Juxtaposed to Eunapius' portrait of the gloomy, villainous and servile monks from whom his religious and intellectual world felt under threat stand the devout, temple dwelling figure of Antoninus and his sane and wholesome students. Behind the figure of Antoninus

[550] Eunapius 469
[551] Eunapius 470-1
[552] Eunapius 471

stands that of his remarkable and otherworldly mother for whom thanks to her uncanny preceptors;

> "...ever on her lips were the works of the poets, philosophers, and orators; and those works that others comprehend but incompletely and dimly and then only by hard work and painful drudgery, she could expound with careless ease, serenely and painlessly and with her light swift touch would make their meaning clear."
>
> "τά τε τῶν ποιητῶν βιβλία διὰ στόματος εἶχε καὶ φιλοσόφων καὶ ῥητόρων, καὶ ὅσα γε τοῖς πεπονηκόσι καὶ τεταλαιπωρημένοις μόλις ὑπῆρχε καὶ ἀμυδρῶς εἰδέναι, ταῦτα ἐκείνη μετ' ὀλιγωρίας ἔφραζεν, εὐκόλως καὶ ἀλύπως εἰς τὸ σαφὲς ἐπιτρέχουσα."[553]

In other words, Sosipatra embodied the whole literary, theological and philosophical culture which for Eunapius was under threat. Just as wives and daughters were given the credit for carrying on the Pythagorean tradition after the disastrous dissolution of their sect so now again a woman was seen as playing a vital role in the preservation and transmission of knowledge and learning. Sosipatra means saviour of her father. A supremely beautiful, learned and virtuous woman made a fine metaphor for the threatened classical culture and the hope that it would nurture future generations. The figure of Charikleia like the text of the *Aithiopika* itself could be understood as representative of that hope.

Conclusion

We have seen that many important elements of Charikleia are to be found in Diogenes representation of Hipparchia the philosopher. Her rebellion against her parents similarly combines the personal and ideological. Hipparchia fell in love simultaneously with Krates and his teachings in a comparable way to both Thekla's irresistible attraction to Paul's message and to her yearning to be with and be accepted by the man himself. Charikleia refuses the arranged marriage made for her by her

[553] Eunapius 469

stepfather on the ideological grounds that virginity is the best way of life and then shifts with strange seamlessness to the personal argument that she will marry only the man she has chosen for herself.

Hipparchia and Thekla have much in common in their stories with the heroines of Greek romantic fiction but with the difference that they have a personal fixity of purpose and direction whereas the romantic heroines with the exception of Charikleia are much more under the sway of events. While Kallirhoe or Anthia remain steadfast in their loyalty to their husbands, they had initially been helpless in the face of their passion and it had been up to their parents to bring them together. Similarly, Chloe bumbles along with Daphnis in the guise of an innocent peasant child until their respective parents decide to bring about their marriage. Leukippe is an exception in that she defies her mother to elope with Kleitophon but she is impelled by shame and anger and in effect an impossible situation because she had been almost caught by her mother with Kleitophon in her bed. We are not made privy to the reasons why Leukippe had agreed to the tryst in the first place. She does not however seem to have been impelled by the conviction that she was right to make these choices for herself. At the end of the novel, it transpires that the marriage of Kleitophon and Leukippe had gained parental sanction in their absence in any case.

It is only in Charikleia's case that both her biological and adoptive parents come to accept her choice of lover as valid rather than the husband they had selected for her themselves. This suggests that Charikleia, like Thekla, Hipparchia or Sosipatra, has been admitted to an elite group of women who through their commitment to a greater cause and through an outside guide is exempted from the rules normally pertaining to their sex and allowed to make the kind of personal life choices usually reserved for men.

The role of the outside guide is important for understanding this category of women as all our examples; Thekla, Hipparchia, Sosipatra and Charikleia are inspired and lead by charismatic wise men from outside the family circle. There is also a sense in which they all seem to be in thrall to a mysterious higher power. Hipparchia devotes herself to philosophy; Charikleia is guided by Kalasiris not only to her marriage with Theagenes but to her divinely led mission to Ethiopia to take her place as its queen and to bring to an end the ritual of human sacrifice. Sosipatra is enlightened by unknown men who seem to be gods in disguise and becomes a great mystic and exponent of the secrets of the cosmos. Her mind, we are told, has become greater than that of a woman's. Thus, although these women are allowed extraordinary license to make their own choices and to move away from the control of their families, the impact of this is lessened in terms of any acceptance of female self-determination because the women's choice finally involves rejecting one kind of male guardian for another. In the case of our pagan examples it also means rejecting one family for another of their own choice, so that the essential premise that a woman however remarkable and intelligent, can best fulfil herself within the context of household and husband, not as an isolated individual, remains unchallenged.

Finally, it seems that it is within the context of family that the figure of the learned woman gains especial significance and power in situations where learning itself is under threat. According to Porphyrios, women played a vital role as transmitters of Pythagorean lore after the sect had been violently repressed. For Eunapius, the prophetic figure of Sosipatra and the legacy she left to her son and his followers gains special poignancy and stature when pagan culture and learning itself seemed under threat as the Christian monks forcibly closed the temples at the close of the fourth century. It is in this context in which women were valued as vital transmitters of

learning from father to son or husband that the reader may first have rejoiced in the marriage of the learned Charikleia.

In this respect the fictional figure of Charikleia was eclipsed down the centuries by the historical and legendary figure of Hypatia [554] the austere and brilliant mathematician and Neoplatonist scholar who in 415 was horribly murdered by a gang of monks. The brutal murder of a wise virgin devoted to metaphysics was too Christian a story to be abandoned to the pagans. From the eighth century comes our earliest source on a certain Catherine of Alexandria[555], a most learned Christian virgin who not only was horribly tortured as a result of her professed Christianity and her refusal to marry the king of Alexandria but she also managed to defeat fifty pagan sophists in religious debate. As her cult developed, she became the patron of scholars, craftsmen and young women. Hers is said to be one of the voices which inspired Jeanne d'Arc.

[554] See above 221.
[555] Dzielska 1995 12 for conections between Hypatia and Catherine of Alexandria

Conclusion

We have looked at three different aspects of Charikleia in some detail: we have considered her as romantic heroine, as virgin and as sophist. The interrelations between these three aspects have, I think, provided a reflection of some of the central preoccupations of the world in which it was written.

As self-proclaimed dedicated virgin who drove her putative parent to despair through her intransigence, Charikleia can be seen to imitate the ascetic heroines of Christian fiction and polemic. The gesture of these women in refusing marriage, motherhood, social status and obligations to family represented a profound rejection of the traditional values of the Hellenic city.

Eros, aided by Kalasiris intervenes. Realising that her love for Theagenes is ineluctable and that in order to marry him, she must avoid the marriage arranged for her, Charikleia is thus transformed from a Christian ascetic heroine into a romantic pagan heroine. That she discovers herself to be an exiled Ethiopian princess renews a proper interest in family and social status. The story however retains some of the new ingredients of Christian fiction. Charikleia does not simply return home like the other novelistic heroines, this home is an otherworldly and virtuous kingdom at the other ends of the earth. Her rebellion against her stepfather's choice of husband means that her acceptance of marriage in principle does not become mere conformity but still involves a degree of individualistic self – assertion. Thus Heliodoros can be seen to negotiate a restatement of elite pagan civic values while drawing from Christian fiction what might be the additional attractions of religious mysticism and rebellion.

This becomes further apparent if we perceive the extent to which the elements of Heliodoros' tale echo those of Thekla, perhaps the most resonant and formidable of early Christian heroines. Charikleia is as courageous, committed and eloquent as

Thekla, unlike Thekla however, her reward at the end of her adventures is not to spend her life in contemplation in a cave but to inherit the throne of Ethiopia with her husband by her side. From the perspective of the Christian polemicists of the third and fourth centuries, who produced innumerable treatises on the merits of virginity, this would mean that Charikleia had sacrificed any chance a woman might have not to be wholly given over to the crass material cares of this world. Church fathers such as Gregory of Nyssa or Jerome represented celibacy and solitude as essential to any meaningful life of the mind or spirit. For pagans of the Pythagorean tradition, married women seem to have been expected to share the intellectual and cultural heritage of their fathers and husbands. They also had a valued role as bequeathers of knowledge and culture to the next generation. As priestesses, upper class married women could play a full part in the religious life of the city. Charikleia in her new roles as married woman, priestess of the Moon and heir-apparent to the throne of Ethiopia appears to epitomise the height of a woman's aspirations in the pagan world both materially and in terms of personal fulfilment. She even has the band of gymnosophists to replace the intellectual coterie she left behind at Delphi.

Had the scope of this study allowed, I would like to have explored further the possibilities inherent in Queen Charikleia. There are strong echoes of Julia Domna the intellectual Emesan queen who surrounded herself with Hellenic philosophers and sophists but also maintained her connection with the Emesan sun-cult, the multilingual Cleopatra; a complex mixture of defiant Hellenism and the cultural other. There is also the figure of Zenobia of Palmyra another brilliant and learned queen who in the third century occupied Heliodoros' home of Emesa. She too in her vaunted learning combined the height of Hellenistic civilisation with a strong sense of otherness and marginality.

Finally, I cannot help but see the question of what would constitute the best life for Charikleia being re-echoed in the present time in the concern much bruited in the media of late, that Western women are deferring or neglecting childbearing in pursuit of their own careers and interests. This note of anxiety has an eerily familiar ring about it.

> "To be almost ridiculously sweeping: baby boomers and their offspring have shifted emphasis from the communal to the individual, from the future to the present, from virtue to personal satisfaction. Increasingly secular, we pledge allegiance to lower-case gods of our private devising. We are less concerned with leading a good life than the good life. We are less likely than our predecessors to ask ourselves whether we serve a greater social purpose; we are more likely to ask if we are happy... We give little thought to the perpetuation of lineage, culture or nation; we take our heritage for granted.[556]"

Charikleia was a woman who had it all.

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[556] Lionel Shriver, *The Guardian* 09, 17, 2005

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