

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Cross-Language Communication in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*

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in Classics

by

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation analyzes why Heliodorus pays so much attention to foreign languages in the *Aethiopica* and how his description of these linguistic phenomena colors the work. It demonstrates that Heliodorus is very careful to attribute linguistic abilities to characters in a sensible way that is in line with real-world expectations. Characters never speak a mutual language merely because it would be convenient for the author if they could. Language also helps aid the author's characterization. Heliodorus draws upon long-standing cultural attitudes towards multilingual individuals to make his religious priests more authoritative and trustworthy and his conniving merchants even less so. Female characters with multiple languages are seen as sexually suspect, while Charikleia, the novel's heroine, preserves both her chastity and her status as a monolingual Greek speaker. Nonverbal communication is as problematic to interpret as the dreams and oracles in the novel, but spoken language doesn't present any hermeneutic problems; speech is either understood or not understood, but never misunderstood. The final book of the novel demonstrates both the limits of speech and the power of the human voice to transcend

spoken language.

Heliodorus' treatment of language in the novel is, as other scholars have suggested, both based on a desire for realism and an emphasis on interpretive processes, but this is not the whole story. The attribution of specific linguistic abilities to specific characters also communicates to the reader a wealth of information about those characters. Because this information is derived from the reader's expectations about language in the real world, an analysis of linguistic phenomena in the novel opens up two kinds of information. Our understanding of the novel will be better if we take into account the author's treatment of language, and the novel itself may present tantalizing glimpses into the attitudes toward language present in the culture of the author and the novel's first readers.

The dissertation of Robert William Groves is approved.

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2012

Dedicated to  
My great-grandmother and academic muse,  
Martha Rosner

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## Introduction: Heliodorus and his Worlds

*About the tongues when divers with me wrangle,  
And count our English but a mingle mangle,  
I tell them, all are such; and in conclusion  
Will grow so more by curse of first Confusion.  
The Latine, Greeke, and Hebrew are not free;  
Though what their borrow'd words are know not wee;  
Because their neighbour tongues we never knew;  
Nor what they keepe of old; nor what have new:  
But count that language good, which can expresse  
The more of sense, in doubtfull speech the lesse;  
--William Lisle, *The Faire Aethiopian**

These lines are the opening couplets of *The Faire Aethiopian*, English poet and antiquarian William Lisle's 1631 verse translation of the ancient Greek novel known as the "Aethiopica" by Heliodorus of Emesa. The lines (and those that follow) stand to justify his conversion of the Greek prose of the original into rhyming English poetry with both an appeal to the superfluous bounty of language and the license afforded other poets. Lisle's appeals to the "mingle mangle" of tongues and the reference to Babel suit both his own situation and that of his text. Lisle, who also went by "L'isle," addresses his work to England's Charles I and his French wife, Henrietta Maria. Both receive dedicatory epigrams, Charles a Latin elegiac couplet, and Henrietta a rhyming French alexandrine, before another Latin elegiac hoping that "the lilies of Gaul flourish together with British roses."<sup>1</sup> This multilingual dedication to the multinational and

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1 *Ad regem: prospera conservent Carolum tibi Fata Minorem;/ Tu Britonum Carolus denique Magnus eris.* ("To the King: May the fates be favorable and protect young Charles for you. You will truly be the Britons' Charles the Great.")

*A la Reine: Tant des perfections Je Chanteray sans cesse;/ Oule Roy est Patron, la Reine est Patronesse.* ("To the Queen: Thy rare endowments ever will I sing;/ For Queene is Patronesse where Patron King." translation by Lisle himself in lines 43 and 44 of his poem.)

*Dum rotat astra polus, dum fixa est terra, Britannis/Gallica florescant Lilia juncta Rosis.* ("So long as the pole turns the stars and the earth stays in its place, may the lilies of Gaul flourish together with British Roses.")

All translations throughout this dissertation are my own, except where noted.

multilingual royal couple is born out in the plot of the *Aethiopica* itself, which sees Greeks, Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Persians finding ways to communicate across and despite the language barriers that often separate them. Lisle does not specifically call attention to the fact that translation itself is often at stake in Heliodorus' novel but his opening nevertheless draws our focus to both the differences between languages and the fundamental and shared purpose of all languages, the successful expression of sense.

The focus of this dissertation is the abundant and remarkable presence of cross-linguistic encounters in the *Aethiopica*. In the novel's opening scene, its heroine delivers a dramatic speech in which she begs the Egyptian bandits who have captured her to put her out of her misery.<sup>2</sup> The narrator picks up: “This was her tragic monologue, but the bandits couldn't understand any of what she said...” (Ἡ μὲν ταῦτα ἐπετραγῶδει, οἱ δὲ οὐδὲν συνιέναι τῶν λεγομένων). The bandits, being Egyptian, do not speak Greek, unlike the reader and the heroine, and thus the language barrier between Chairkleia and the bandits is thrust surprisingly to the surface.<sup>3</sup> It is a common convention of literature that characters can communicate despite language barriers and this is especially true for Ancient Greek literature.<sup>4</sup> Heliodorus' break with that convention, then, is all the more surprising and in need of explanation. This dissertation wrestles with the question of why Heliodorus incorporates cross-language phenomena into his novel in such a dramatic way and points out some of the effects these phenomena have on both his novel and its characters.<sup>5</sup>

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2 *Aethiopica* 1.3.1-2. See below, p. 135.

3 The surprising part is the linguistic element, not the confrontation of Greeks and Barbarians, which are a staple piece of the genre. See Stephens (2008).

4 I will return to the subject in my first chapter. Colvin (1999) ch. 2 provides an excellent survey of the instances when pre-Aristophanic authors acknowledge and treat the language barrier. While there are, in fact, quite a few times when these authors refer to the existence of other languages, it is quite rare that the other languages are allowed to complicate the plot or threaten characters with incomprehension.

5 I use the term “novel” to refer to works like Heliodorus' (and those of Longus, Achilles Tatius, Chariton, and Xenophon of Ephesus, at least). The term is much contested, in part because the ancient literary theory does not seem to have agreed upon a clear term for these works, though certainly general terms like σύνταγμα (composition), διήγησις (narrative) and πλάσμα (creation) could be used to fill the void. The history of ancient novel scholarship begins with Rhode (1876) and is developed in the books by Whitmarsh (2008a), Schmelling

Before I lay out in more detail the shape of the chapters to come, I will briefly introduce the novelist and his novel, and what we can say about their context.

### ***On the Author and his Text***

The final words of Heliodorus' novel give us both its name and his. As a coda to the events of the plot proper, the author signs off:

Τοιόνδε πέρας ἔσχε τὸ σύνταγμα τῶν περὶ Θεαγένην καὶ Χαρίκλειαν Αἰθιοπικῶν· ὁ συνέταξεν ἀνὴρ Φοῖνιξ Ἐμισσηνός, τῶν ἀφ' Ἡλίου γένος, Θεοδοσίου παῖς Ἡλιόδωρος.<sup>6</sup> (*Aethiopica* 10.41.4)

This is the end of the book on the Ethiopian story of Theagenes and Charikleia. A Phoenician man from Emesa composed it, a descendent of Helios, Son of Theodosius, Heliodorus.<sup>7</sup>

We know little of the author beyond his sign-off here but scholars have made valiant attempts to help build upon this small amount of information. The author's claim to the city of Emesa places him in Syria, a location confirmed by his use of the term Φοῖνιξ (Phoenician) for himself.<sup>8</sup> It is likewise tempting, and I think right, to connect Heliodorus' claim about his descent from the sun with the solar religion centred in Emesa, especially in the light of the role that sun gods play in the novel itself. Likewise, even the name Heliodorus may be the Greek version of the Syrian name “Abdshamash” (Servant of the Sun).<sup>9</sup> This is the limit of what we can say with confidence about Heliodorus. Later writers claim to provide additional information about the author, namely that he wrote the novel in his youth, became a Christian bishop in Thessaly during the reign of Theodosius the Great, imposed celibacy on his priests, and later stepped down from office when

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(1996), Hägg (1983), Heiserman (1977), and Weinreich (1960). The articles by Whitmarsh (2008b), Smith (2006), Swain (1999), and Bowie and Harrison (1993) are valuable snapshots of the state of scholarship.

6 I follow the text of Rattenbury and Lumb (1960) except where noted.

7 In choosing how to transliterate names of the authors and characters of the novels (including Heliodorus') I follow the conventions used in B.P. Reardon's *Collected Ancient Greek Novels* (2008) which is proving itself the standard English editions of the texts. Thus, Heliodorus, not Heliodoros; Kalasiris, not Calasiris; Knemon not Cnemo.

8 Emesa was the capital of the Roman province of Phoinike Libanesia and “Phoenician” is clearly an ethnonym meant to connect contemporary Syrians with the glorious past regardless of the specifics of culture or language. See Morgan (1996) p. 417.

9 Whitmarsh (2012) p. 110 bases the suggestion on an Athenian inscription (KAI<sup>3</sup> 53) in which a different Heliodorus is thus rendered.

given the choice between doing so or denouncing his novel.<sup>10</sup> There are several reasons why this information should be treated circumspectly: even the earliest sources stand at some remove from the probable dates of the author; the sources gain specificity as they gain distance from the author; and Byzantine readers and authors would have liked to reclaim Heliodorus by connecting him with a Christian figure of the same name. That said, the claims are not preposterous and should probably be held to be unlikely but possible unless other evidence supports or contradicts them.<sup>11</sup>

The identity of Heliodorus is bound up too with the question of when the work was composed. Two main schools of thought have developed, one positing a date of the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, in the period of the Roman Empire often called the “Second Sophistic” and another the mid to late 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> The case for the latter, more popular with most scholars, is based heavily on the similarities between Heliodorus' depiction of the siege of Syene and Julian's depiction of the siege of Nisbis by the Parthians in 350. Morgan combines this primary piece of evidence with linguistic and religious comparanda in suggesting a date between 350 and 375 CE.<sup>13</sup> The earlier date, in contrast, is based heavily on the prominence of both Emesan letters and Solar worship in the third century. Bowie, for example, suggests that he remains unconvinced by the siege-based date and suggests 230 as a good *terminus a quo*.<sup>14</sup> The debate is unlikely to be

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10 The church father Socrates (5<sup>th</sup> century CE) is the first of these sources, followed by Photius' *Bibliotheca* (9<sup>th</sup> century), Georgius Cedrenus (11<sup>th</sup> century), and Nicephorus Callistus (15<sup>th</sup> century). See Sandy (1982) p. 3-4 for a good account of the evidence.

11 Thus, for example, although I am far from convinced that our Heliodorus was a Christian, I note at a few points the ways in which a Christian background might add nuance to our understanding of Heliodorus' work.

12 Greek Literature experienced a kind of renaissance during the Roman Empire, particularly in the Second Sophistic, and Heliodorus shares much with other authors of the mid and late Empire. On the literature of the period, Whitmarsh (2004), Goldhill (2001), Swain (1998), Morgan and Stoneman (1994), and Reardon (1971) are invaluable.

13 Morgan (1996) p.417-9, a date which corresponds to Bargheer's (1999) estimate of the reign of Julian (355-363 CE).

14 Bowie (1985), reprinted in Swain (1999) p. 56. Bowie (2008) provides a good summary of all three possible dates and takes an agnostic position as to the correct one.

convincingly settled, barring revolutionary papyrological discoveries, and thus scholars of Heliodorus are forced to proceed with a century and a half of possible uncertainty. In the pages to come I have avoided arguments which depend on one date or another and have instead endeavoured to be sure that my arguments are equally compelling regardless of where one stands on the question.

The title Heliodorus gave his novel seems to be τὰ περὶ Θεαγένην καὶ Χαρίκλειαν Αἰθιοπικά (The Ethiopian Story about Theagenes and Charikleia).<sup>15</sup> Later sources refer to it both as τὰ Αἰθιοπικά and as Χαρίκλεια, both of which are supported by comparison with the titles of other ancient Greek novels.<sup>16</sup> Whitmarsh argues persuasively that the τὰ περὶ (boy's name) καὶ (girl's name), or *vice versa* formula is the most convincing candidate for the ancient convention.<sup>17</sup> I have, however, opted to follow the modern convention of calling the work by the name it generally goes by in English-language texts, the *Aethiopica*.

The story of the *Aethiopica* is complicated and convoluted and the novel is populated with a large cast of richly drawn characters. The already complicated plot is made still more complex by the author's decision to open the novel *in medias res* and reveal the early parts of the story in flashback-like internal narratives, and even narratives within narratives.<sup>18</sup> In short, the story follows Charikleia, an Ethiopian princess, born white to black parents through a trick of optics, and raised abroad in Greece.<sup>19</sup> Having met and fallen in love with Theagenes, the two are

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<sup>15</sup> *Aethiopica* 10.41.4, see above, page 3.

<sup>16</sup> See Whitmarsh (2005) p. 592-4 and 596-8. and Morgan (1996) p. 421-2.

<sup>17</sup> Whitmarsh (2005) p. 601 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Feuillatre (1966) is a very helpful and quite thorough starting point for work on the novel.

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that Heliodorus's "Ethiopia" does not refer to the modern nation of Ethiopia, but rather the ancient civilization to the south of Egypt, most commonly called Nubia, after the Egyptian name, the land of *nb* (gold), or Kush, after an indigenous name. The boundary between Egypt and Ethiopia is a matter of dispute within the novel but traditionally is drawn at the first cataract of the Nile, and thus Heliodorus' "Aethiopia" corresponds largely with what is now Northern Sudan. Tomas Hägg (1996) p. 195 refers to Heliodorus' land as "Aithiopia" and its people as "Aithiopians" in order to contrast with the modern terms. While I see much value in this convention, I have opted to keep the more conventional spelling for ease of reading.

whisked from Delphi by the Egyptian priest Kalasiris who has been tasked with finding the girl and restoring her to her kingdom. The events of the novel proper begin when Kalasiris, Theagenes and Charikleia are shipwrecked at the mouth of the Nile, and follow the three as they make their way south along the Nile through the entire length of Egypt until the arrival, recognition, and salvation of Charikleia and Theagenes in Ethiopia. Like the protagonists of every Greek novel, the supernaturally good looks of both Theagenes and Charikleia jeopardize not only their safety and autonomy but also their vows of chastity and fidelity towards each other.

The world in which the *Aethiopica* unfolds, then, is mostly Egypt and Ethiopia, both of which have long histories of associations in Greek literature.<sup>20</sup> While in Heliodorus' own time, Egypt had been under the control of Greeks (or Greco-Macedonians) and Greek-speaking Romans for hundreds of years, the author sets his novel before the conquest of Greece, around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>21</sup> Heliodorus makes no effort to nail down a specific year, but rather depicts a kind of romantically imagined past, near the height of Greek civilization. This means that while there are Phoenicians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Persians, there are no Romans and the protagonists are forced to travel through a *barbarian* land in the strictest sense of that word, that is, a place where the speech of the locals is incomprehensible.

Besides Greek, the novelist refers explicitly to the Egyptian, Ethiopian, and Persian languages.<sup>22</sup> There is no reason to believe that Heliodorus actually knew any of these languages

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20 Egypt is most famously imagined as an anti-Greece, where Greek customs are backwards, on which see Hartog (1988). Vasunia (2001) is dedicated solely to the representation of Egypt in Greek literature of the classical period. Ethiopia, on the other hand, stood most emphatically as the limits of the earth, the furthest place one could get from Greece and was imagined as being in different directions (principally south and east, but also west!) by different thinkers. See Romm (1994) on Ethiopia and Romm (2008) on travel in the novels more generally.

21 The dramatic date of the novel is chiefly established by the fact that Persians control Egypt, which suggests a date between 525 and 402 BCE.

22 Although there are many possible examples, I list here an example of the verb for speaking each language. Egyptian: *Aethiopica* 1.30.7 (αἰγυπτιαίζων); Ethiopian: *Aethiopica* 10.39.1 (αιθιοπιζων); Persian: *Aethiopica*

at all, and in some cases it is not exactly clear what historical language should be associated with the languages he names. Persian, for example, might reasonably refer to either Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the Persian empire, or to a form of Persian. Heliodorus shows no interest in differentiating the two or in reflecting in any way the linguistic specifics of whatever language it is. The native language of a Persian character is simply Persian. In a similar vein, the historical Meroitic script and the language associated with it seem a good candidate for the “Ethiopian” language of the novel, but there is little reason to think that Heliodorus had any detailed knowledge about that language or that he would have cared if he did.<sup>23</sup> The Egyptian language was familiar enough in Greek literature that there is no question of its referent, though Heliodorus shows no signs of awareness of the complicated relationships between different kinds of Egyptian writing and the versions of spoken language they encoded.<sup>24</sup>

Modern ideas of multiculturalism and globalism have spawned a recent interest in multilingualism in antiquity. Given our inability to speak with native speakers, written sources become the greatest pieces of evidence for understanding bilingual (and multilingual) phenomena on the ground.<sup>25</sup> While literary sources do contain some telling anecdotes or references to bilingual phenomena,<sup>26</sup> most work has depended on multilingual inscriptions (the

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8.17.2 (περσίζοντα).

23 See Török (1997) p. 53-67 on the writings of the civilizations around Meroe. The possible exception to this rule, dealt with in chapter three, focuses on the Ethiopian hieroglyphic text written by the queen of Ethiopia and read by the Egyptian Kalasiris. We cannot know whether Heliodorus knew that Meroitic script was derived from Egyptian hieroglyphs or if he merely invented a script valuable for the interpretive economy of his novel and, in doing so, stumbled upon the truth.

24 Thus, the demotic script which would have been a relatively new invention at the novel's dramatic date would have been significantly closer to the spoken language of the everyday Egyptians encountered by Charikleia and Theagenes, but the famous hieroglyphs wrote a language which was all but fossilized. See Depauw (1997).

25 Bilingualism itself is not unproblematic term. It can denote fluency in two languages but often denotes varying abilities with two or more languages, from full fluency, to the barest knowledge of a few vocabulary words. Hoffman (1991) p. 16-17 gives an excellent list which suggests the range of the term. Multilingualism is equally problematic. Diglossia, based on one of the Greek words for multilingualism, refers to situations in which two languages are maintained but are kept strictly separate, with one for some uses, and the other for others.

26 The most significant work has been done on Herodotus, whose penchant for foreign terms and claims of foreign travel have suggested the possibility of some measure of multilingualism. See. Munson (2005), Campos Daroca (1992), Harrison (1998), Hartog (1988), and Armayor (1978). The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite houses a small

most famous of which is the Rosetta stone) and documentary papyri (particularly bilingual archives) which the dry sands of Egypt preserve in greater numbers than other locales.<sup>27</sup> Some of these archives allow us to track the same individual using different names and participating in different societies in different languages.<sup>28</sup> Despite the wealth of information yielded by these documentary sources, Heliodorus' picture of multilingualism in Egypt relies less on the specifics of Persian Egypt and more on the general tendencies of his day. Some of the tendencies evident in his text are supported by the Egyptian evidence, while others perhaps fill in some lacunae in our understanding of real world bilingualism.

Although Heliodorus' novel gives an important part to foreign languages and their speakers, it is important to note that at no point does the foreign tongue come before the reader's eyes. A good example is the Persian Eunuch, Bagoas, who has a loose grip on Greek—why he knows it at all is something of a mystery—but whose speech is perfectly grammatical.<sup>29</sup> Greek literature as a whole avoids the broken speech of foreigners familiar to modern movie and television audiences, and Heliodorus is no exception to this trend. The fact that old comedy breaks with this rule and puts foreign babble on stage suggests why more serious genres left it out: It could be both funny and undignified.<sup>30</sup> Heliodorus' references to foreign languages always come from an assertion by a narratorial voice, either the voice of the author/narrator at the highest level of the story or of one of the several internal narrators, who help explain the events which lead up to the beginning of the novel proper.

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passage that features Greek literature's first serious handling of linguistic issues. See Richardson (2010) and Faulkner (2008).

27 See Adams (2003), Adams, Janse, et al. (2002), Fewster (2002). Some scholars have also suggested Egypt as a place of origin for the Greek novel, on which see Rutherford (2000) and (1997). On the relationship between Egyptian reality and the Greek imagination, see Nimis (2004), Vasunia (2001), and Smith (1928).

28 See Clarysse and Thompson (2009), Bagnall and Freier (2006).

29 *Aethiopica* 8.13.3. see below, p. 55.

30 A good example of comedy's use of foreign speech for a laugh is the character of Pseudo-Artabas in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, see below, p. 76.

## ***Scholarly Approaches to Languages in Heliodorus***

While the subject of foreign languages in Heliodorus' novel have not been front and center in scholarship on the *Aethiopica*, four articles have made significant contributions to the discussion and I would like to turn my attention to these articles now. All four of the articles have much to commend them and make valuable contributions to the understanding of these phenomena. All four must, however, in their own ways be amended. Two of these four articles came to press in 1982, both of which drew attention to the role of foreign languages and the language barrier, and both of which are landmarks in Heliodoran studies: J.R. Morgan's "History, Romance, and Realism in the Aithiopika of Heliodoros" and J.J. Winkler's "The Mendacity of Kalasiris and the Narrative Strategy of Heliodorus' Aithiopika."<sup>31</sup> The two articles take diametrically opposite approaches to major features of the novel in general and both see the language barrier as a strong piece of evidence in support of their viewpoint. Later responses focused on the presence of linguistic phenomena in the *Aethiopica* include Suzanne Saïd's 1994 "Les langues du roman grec" and Niall Slater's 2005 "And There's Another Country." These four articles represent the most prominent points of view on the features of the novel under consideration in this dissertation and I turn now to address each in turn before turning to my own arguments.

Winkler's article lays out the ways in which Heliodorus' novel highlights hermeneutics and interpretation and suggests that the *Aethiopica* ushers the reader towards a postmodern awareness of the processes of reading, inferring and understanding through which the reader of the novel constructs his (or her) experience.<sup>32</sup> There is much to recommend this reading and

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31 Winkler (1982), p. 297-8 especially. Morgan (1982) p.258-60.

32 Morgan (1994)'s piece in Morgan and Stoneman (1994) uses Winkler's ideas to suggest that Heliodorus' novel is "Narrative as Riddle," and in particular draws attention to the ways in which the interpretive processes in the novel mimic real life attempts at making sense of our experiences.

indeed I hope that my fourth chapter on nonverbal communication adds further weight to Winkler's already quite persuasive argument. Heliodorus does pay remarkable attention to not only the nonverbal cues through which characters interpret each others' actions but also dreams, oracles, and prophecies. It seems undeniable that the careful reader will notice Heliodorus' emphasis on the ways in which meaning is constructed in the novel. In discussing the problem of language and communication in the novel, Winkler suggests that naturalism is a tempting explanation but finds two chief problems: 1.) the author uses language to “underscore the cross-purposes, complication and dénouements of his plot,” and 2.) he “cultivates scenes in which a dim and partial awareness of foreign language is displayed.”<sup>33</sup> The first of these seems true, and there is no better or more convincing example than the failure of the bandits to understand Charikleia's speech at 1.3.2, as Winkler rightly points out.<sup>34</sup> The second point, however, needs to be qualified.

One significant problem with Winkler's suggestion that Heliodorus accumulates moments of “dim and partial awareness” of foreign languages is that Heliodorus broadly ignores a major subset of the category Winkler describes. It is true that there are a range of abilities in speaking foreign languages in the *Aethiopica*.<sup>35</sup> Thermouthis only knows one word of Greek (Thisbe!); Thyamis, Sisimithres and Bagoas do not speak Greek fluently, though the terms used to express this seem to show that some are better at it than others. But these all deal with the production of foreign speech, whereas the phenomenon most similar to Winkler's concerns is the understanding and interpretation of foreign speech. If language is to be included among dreams, oracles, and literary texts as utterances in need of careful and learned explication, then we would expect Heliodorus to include in his novel some attention to the ways in which language can be

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33 Winkler (1982) p. 297.

34 Winkler (1982) p. 296.

35 My first chapter surveys the range of linguistic abilities and behaviors in the novel.

misunderstood, just as he does with oracles, dreams, prophecies, and nonverbal behavior.<sup>36</sup> Instead, Heliodorus only ever provides two options for words spoken: complete failure to communicate through words (as in the novel's opening scene) or perfect comprehension despite any inelegancies in the production of the speech.<sup>37</sup> Despite Theagenes' lack of familiarity with Egyptian, he deftly answers the correct question.<sup>38</sup> Despite Sisimithres fumbling Greek, Charikles understands what Sisimithres wants and is able to comply. The interpreters throughout the novel (Knemon, most familiarly) never misinterpret as they serve their function. Everyone who has experience communicating in a foreign language knows of the myriad ways in which an exchange across the language barrier can fail: one can answer the wrong question, respond with a non-sequitur, misunderstand an idiom, or not hear a negation, just to name a few of the many possible problems. And there is no reason to believe that such exchanges were any less problematic in antiquity. The absence of all of these (and anything similar) in the novel suggests that Heliodorus' primary concern cannot have been to highlight the ways in which spoken communication mirrors other interpretive processes. This stands in marked contrast to Heliodorus' treatment of nonverbal communication which, as I argued in my fourth chapter, is terribly problematic in the novel and occupies the liminal space between comprehended verbal communication and incomprehensible non-communication.

J.R. Morgan takes a quite different approach to Heliodorus, though not one completely irreconcilable with Winkler's. Morgan lays out the ways in which Heliodorus' narratorial voice is fashioned into what he calls the "historiographical pose."<sup>39</sup> Heliodorus expresses uncertainty about certain events and refers to things, people, and places familiar from reality and the writings

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36 See also Bartsch (1989).

37 Thus, for example, Thyamis at 1.4.2 needs both words and gestures to construct his understanding, but he does arrive at the correct understanding.

38 *Aethiopica* 8.17.3.

39 Morgan (1982) p. 223, 227 ff.

of historians like Herodotus and thereby creates the illusion that he is a historian, not a novelist and that his text is not merely a story, but is in fact the narration of a real journey made by real people. Morgan includes Heliodorus' attention to foreign languages as part of his general concern for "naturalistic detail."<sup>40</sup> Morgan explicitly refutes Winkler's attempt to explain the linguistic detail by arguing that while Heliodorus does sometimes use the language barrier to effect tension and delay the plot, he does not do so consistently. Rather, Morgan says, "Any homogeneity lies in the substance of the motif rather than in the uses to which it is put, but the consistency with which that substance recurs in appropriate situations argues strongly for an awareness on the author's part of the requirements of naturalism."<sup>41</sup> As I hope to make clear in my first chapter, whatever else Heliodorus may be doing with the language barrier, his use of language is largely realistic (or naturalistic) and given the wide spread nature of the evidence, must reflect the author's decision to effect a naturalistic setting.

Moreover, although Ethiopia long had the reputation for being at the ends of the earth and thereby well outside the realm of normal Hellenism, Heliodorus' Meroe is perhaps closer to the historical record than modern readers might suspect. One king of Nubia during the Hellenistic period, Arkamaniqo (called Ergamenes in the Greek sources), seems to have had a Greek philosophical education.<sup>42</sup> Archeologists working on the ancient city of Meroe have discovered several inscriptions in Greek, most of which seem to have been erected in the third and fourth centuries CE by the kings of Axum who conquered the areas.<sup>43</sup> The Axumites are given special prominence during Hydaspes' reception of embassies at 10.27.1 ff, a fact which may reflect an

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40 Morgan (1982) p. 258-60.

41 Morgan (1982) p. 260.

42 Hägg (2000) p. 202, also reprinted in Hägg (2004) p. 354.

43 These inscriptions include Eide *et al.* (1994) *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum III* no. 285, 286, and 317 among others. Tomas Hägg (2000) is of great value in approaching the connection between Ethiopian reality and Heliodorus' representation. Also valuable are Hägg (1982) and (1991). Lonis (1992) is somewhat less historical but still provides a valuable overview of Heliodorus' treatment of Ethiopia and the Ethiopians.

anachronistic understanding of how important the kingdom would become. Clearly some portion of Axumite society was able to write Greek in order to compose the inscriptions, and the inscriptions themselves testify to a readership capable in Greek as well (whether these be local elites, dignitaries or generals from Roman Egypt, or tourists and traders). If Heliodorus is familiar enough with current events to nod at the presence of Axum, it should not be terribly surprising if he also knew something about the presence of Greek in their kingdom.<sup>44</sup> It is also plausible that both Heliodorus and the historical record converge on the presence of Greek because of the importance of Greek as the language in which diplomacy with the Roman Empire would be conducted in general. That is, Heliodorus may have guessed right because he understood the general principle which underlay the historical phenomenon.<sup>45</sup>

Morgan is also right, however, to point out that there are moments where the inclusion of linguistic details is detrimental to the cause of naturalism, and thus other (or additional) explanations must be sought. Principal among these are the remarkable cases of revelatory feats of understanding made by the Ethiopian crowd at the novel's end and the presence of Greek ability among characters like Arsake and Thyamis, whose linguistic abilities are neither required by naturalism nor easily explained by it. Although I have outlined above some of the ways in which even the strange alternation of languages in the final book and the Greek abilities of the elite are actually well and realistically motivated within the text, the naturalist explanation while very important is not sufficient on its own.

Suzanne Saïd, in her article “Les langues du roman grec”, constructs a dichotomy

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44 This is not to say, of course, that we would have a sufficient basis to trust Heliodorus as a source on ancient Meroe. If he gets some historical details right in the depiction of his fictional kingdom, this is to his credit. But we certainly should not trust him to have special information or a desire to transmit a historical picture of the people or society of the upper Nile. See Hägg (2000).

45 This is the view taken by Perkins (1999) p. 207, who notes that the whiteness of Andromeda in the painting points to a foreign (Greek?) element in Ethiopian society and culture even in its distant, mythological past.

between the presentations of language in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* and Heliodorus' novel.<sup>46</sup> She is right to point out that these two works stand apart from other works of the novelistic genre—however we characterize that genre (or non-genre).<sup>47</sup> Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* is the *Aethiopica*'s only rival in attention to the language barrier, with characters' ability to speak, understand, and even read Greek (or their lack of those abilities) being commented on by Damis, the internal narrator. Saïd is right to draw our attention to the ways in which the Greek language is, in Philostratus' work, consistently connected with other accoutrements of Hellenism, culture, and wisdom.<sup>48</sup> This is perfectly consonant with the famous words of Apollonius that “to a wise man, everywhere is Greece” (σοφῶ ἀνδρὶ Ἑλλάς πάντα, 1.34). Saïd is also right to see Philostratus' handling of the language barrier as substantially different from Heliodorus'. Saïd's comparison of the two works, however, leads her to conclusions about Heliodorus which are less than convincing.

The first conclusion is that Heliodorus represents the final step in a gradual process in which the novelists “little by little renounced the convenient literary convention of the intercomprehension of characters.”<sup>49</sup> This seems to me a mischaracterization of the evidence. Outside the *Life of Apollonius* and the *Aethiopica*, no novel shows more than a very occasional, passing interest in the complicated reality of multilingual interactions. Longus conspicuously

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46 Saïd (1992)

47 Although the boundaries of the genre “novel” or “romance” are notoriously problematic and lack a coherent name in ancient literary criticism, it seems clear that a.) writers observed generic conventions as if they existed and b.) that while the lines could be rather strictly drawn around the novels of Chariton, Xenophon, Longus, Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus, there is much value in grouping these “romances” with the extended prose narratives focused on travel of the sort that include *The Life of Apollonius*, Antonius Diogenes' *The Wonders Beyond Thule*, etc.

48 Thus, for example, the Persian King Vardanes is not only able to speak Greek as well as his native language, he also keeps up on Greek philosophy and decorates his palace with tapestries depicting the Persian Wars (with Greece), and the Indian king Phraotes, who in addition to speaking Greek, also enjoys the gymnasium and the plays of Euripides. In contrast stands the unnamed king of 3.26 ff. who looks down on Greeks, is ignorant of their history and their language. See Saïd (1992) p. 171-3.

49 Saïd (1992) p. 178: *ils ont peu à peu renoncé à la convention littéraire commode de l'intercompréhension des personnages.*

shuns all multicultural influence, and Achilles Tatius' brief mention is essentially in line with the practice of Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus.<sup>50</sup> We possess no texts of an intermediate interest in the questions of cross-language communication. The treatments in the *Life of Apollonius* and the *Aethiopica* appear suddenly and already near the opposite side of the spectrum from earlier works. As such, the presence of this attention to the language barrier cannot be explained with reference to “l'évolution du genre” and demands to be explained as a particular feature of the texts in which it appears.<sup>51</sup>

Saïd's second conclusion is at least partially correct. She describes Philostratus' work as reflecting a 3<sup>rd</sup> century ideal in which Greek society was largely persuaded of “the superiority of Greek as the natural language of culture and philosophy.”<sup>52</sup> This much is surely right; the *Life of Apollonius* leaves little doubt that knowing Greek means being educated and not knowing it means the opposite.<sup>53</sup> What I would like to interrogate further, however, is Saïd's claim about Heliodorus: that he lacks confidence in the superiority of Greek, perhaps due to the intellectual currents of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup>

The vision of the relationship between language, culture, and philosophy in the *Aethiopica* is quite simply not radically different from that in the *Life of Apollonius* and certainly not “totally different.”<sup>55</sup> In the *Aethiopica*, Greek retains its superiority as the language of learning and culture. Every character who can boast of any education or any elite cultural or

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50 Saïd (1992) p. 169-170 provides a brief paragraph on the appearances of the language barrier in Xenophon, Chariton, and Achilles Tatius.

51 Saïd (1992) p. 178 on the evolution. Given more evidence it might also be tempting to connect biographical information about Heliodorus and Philostratus with this change, but in the absence of such evidence, reference to the texts themselves seems the most sensible route.

52 Saïd (1992) p. 178.

53 Interestingly, however, Apollonius himself, like Kalasiris and unlike Charikleia, is not monolingual, but rather supremely polylingual; he knows all languages without having learned any of them! (I.19)

54 Saïd (1992) p. 178. Saïd's argument is based in part on MacMullen's (1966) argument about the emergence of local languages and a concomitant decline in Greek from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century on.

55 Saïd (1992) p. 178.

philosophical knowledge speaks Greek. The clearest example is, of course, Kalasiris, whose pontifications range from the mysteries of the Nile to playful etymologies of Homer's name and whose facility with Greek is unimpeachable. As I argued in my first chapter, Thyamis' Greek is further testimony to the connection between Egyptian education and Greek language. The Phoenecian traders whom Kalasiris stumbles upon in Delphi include among their number a man capable of winning in wrestling at the Pythian games (the same display of learned manly virtue with which Theagenes proves himself at the novel's end), and unsurprisingly they also seem to speak Greek.<sup>56</sup> As problematic as it is, Arsake's love of Greek is a mark of her status as an elite, educated woman, paralleled by Persinna and even Hydaspes, the sophisticated and educated royalty. The gymnosophists, who clearly occupy an important position allied with the divine and the author also know the Greek language.<sup>57</sup> It is a predictable feature of the novel that the less Greek a character possesses, the less culture and wisdom he possesses.<sup>58</sup> One thinks of Thermothis, Thyamis' henchman, whose Greek consists entirely of the word "Thisbe" and who is a personification of the lusty, dangerous, animalistic barbarian.<sup>59</sup> This collocation does not mean that ability with Greek guarantees cultural sophistication or philosophical wisdom; Arsake would be an abysmal philosopher. But despite her lack of sexual self-control, Arsake is an otherwise polished, sophisticated lady of society, supremely aware of the social codes of those around her.<sup>60</sup>

Heliodorus does afford other languages their own place in the world, from Mitranes' Persian to Theagenes' Egyptian. But if we should interpret that Heliodorus has created a space

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56 *Aethiopica* 4.16.3 ff.

57 On the connections between the gymnosophists, the divine, and the author see chapter two, and below.

58 Here I am in agreement with Slater (2005) p. 114 who says "the ability to speak or understand Greek is [usually] a measure of character sympathy in the novel."

59 He shares his name with a kind of snake, the legends about which seem to be invoked in his death at 2.20.2. Morgan (2008) p. 392 n. 46 connects the bandit to the description of the snake at Aelian, *Nature of Animals* 10.31.

60 Thus, for example, her manipulation of the Greek toasting gesture at 7.27.3 discussed in chapter four.

for noble non-Greek-speaking—and I am not sure that we should—still, we must admit that at no point in the novel is there the slightest indication that any other language has the prestige of Greek or that any other language could hope to be bound up with cultural and philosophical sophistication the way that Greek is. Despite Saïd's claims, the inclusion of and attention to languages other than Greek in the *Aethiopica* cannot be explained with reference to the deterioration of the status of Greek in Heliodorus' time.<sup>61</sup>

Niall Slater's 2005 “And There's Another Country: Translation as Metaphor in Heliodorus” building upon the articles discussed above, as well as Judith Perkins' work on identity in the novel, considers Heliodorus' use of language principally as a marker, stand-in, or metaphor for cultural identity.<sup>62</sup> Thus characters who speak Greek are generally taken to be Greek, though Heliodorus obviously toys with these expectations, most emphatically through Charikleia and Kalasiris (both of whom appear to be Greek but are not). There is much to be said for this approach. Certainly language is one marker of identity in the novel, and if Charikleia's failure to communicate with the bandits in the opening scene marks the bandits as emphatically other, it also marks her as emphatically similar to the Greek-reading reader.<sup>63</sup>

Slater also cites the secret words and codes which Charikleia and Theagenes agree upon as one way in which language helps create identity and highlights the ways in which the adjective ἐγχώριος problematizes the reader's relationship with the characters by creating distance between the observer and the observed.<sup>64</sup> Finally, Slater suggests that Ethiopia represents the promise of a “universal translatability”, based in part on what he argues is a trend

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61 Whenever that time was. Saïd subscribes to the fourth century date, the consensus of the scholarly community and the date most probably correct, but the novel's date is far from definite and an argument based on the date being in the 4<sup>th</sup> rather than the 3<sup>rd</sup> century is already somewhat problematic.

62 Slater (2005).

63 Thus also Perkins (1999) p. 200.

64 Slater (2005). On the watchwords, p. 110 (including note 8). On ἐγχώριος, p. 107 and 119-121. cf. Whitmarsh (1998).

of increased understanding of Greek in Ethiopia, and in part on visual and theatrical language.

Although much of Slater's analysis is convincing, I disagree with him on several substantive points. As I show in chapter four, nonverbal/visual communication is anything but universally translatable. There may be some things which the visual is quite effective at transmitting across language barriers, but there are also a number of ways in which visual interpretation goes awry, not least through its inability to convey the complexity of some messages in the way that spoken/written speech can without problem. And whereas Slater points out that Charikleia and Theagenes' watchwords mark them as sharing a common vocabulary which consists of Greek lexical items, and thereby Greekness, the scene is even more problematic for this. The chosen words are not bland or picked at random, but rather intensely personal and symbolic of their past experiences and their moment of falling for each other and thus signify far more than simple Greekness.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, their plans are barely and somewhat improbably employed.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Egypt is not so crawling with Greeks that the couple really needs special codes to make their messages stand out.<sup>67</sup> Given the problems caused by the heroes' dependence on *translators*, if the Greek language were really the cultural marker Slater suggests it is, Theagenes and Charikleia should be able to recognize each other simply through their speaking Greek (as opposed to Persian or Egyptian). It is, in fact, in line with Perkins' assertions about the "slippery nature of identity" in the world of the novel, that the characters need such an elaborate system of code words.<sup>68</sup>

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65 *Aethiopica* 5.5.1-2. They agree to refer to themselves as Pythios/Pythia (in reference to their time at Delphi) in any inscriptions detailing their movements and agree on the words "torch" for Charikleia and "palm" for Theagenes based on their experience in the foot race in which Charikleia held the torch and Theagenes won the palm.

66 The exception is *Aethiopica* 6.6.7, where Charikleia uses "torch" to force Theagenes to recognize her when she is disguised. For some reason, Theagenes cannot recognize Charikleia in disguise, even when she runs up to him speaking Greek. It takes the code word to break the illusion.

67 Upon meeting another Greek in Egypt, characters are consistently surprised, from Charikleia and Theagenes' meeting with Knemon to Knemon's meeting with Kalasiris (who turns out not to be Greek after all).

68 Perkins (1999) p. 201.

As for Slater's notion of universal translatability, represented in the text by the utopian Ethiopia, my analysis of the novel's final book leaves me unconvinced that even Ethiopia tends in that direction.<sup>69</sup> It is true that the crowd makes some impressive and, in some cases, miraculous leaps of understanding, this does not represent a new normal, but rather an extreme and exceptional situation. Both Hydaspes and Persinna, Ethiopia's king and queen, are plagued in the book by their inability to interpret coded messages (Persinna, that of her dream; Hydaspes, Charikleia's riddling speech). Charikleia, for her part, fails in her attempts to subtly signal her relationship with Theagenes, a failure based on her ignorance of the modes of female speech. If Heliodorus does imagine a notion of universal translatability, this notion is not contiguous with Ethiopia's borders. Rather it is shared by the pious gymnosophists, who prove themselves to be quite different from the rest of the Ethiopian population, and who are in close contact with the divine.

### ***Conspectus***

My first chapter takes Morgan's view as a point of departure and examines the question of realism in the depiction of the linguistic phenomena. As I examine the linguistic abilities of the individual characters, I ask whether those abilities are well grounded in the information provided about the characters. If not, I investigate whether cultural expectations might explain the presence or absence of characters' abilities. In the end, I conclude that Heliodorus is careful to provide characters with compelling reasons to have the languages they have. The origins of many characters' abilities are made explicit, while those whose aren't explicit generally rely on familiar patterns of linguistic ability in Heliodorus' own time.

The second chapter, *Trust, Deceit and Δίγλωσσοι*, examines the ways in which the

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<sup>69</sup> See chapter five.

special abilities of bilingual people and characters place them in a precarious position in society. Because they have access to special information, they can be indispensable allies and often elicit the trust of those who depend on them. This same unique access to information also presents bilinguals with the chance to abuse their power and deceive those around them, as several characters in the *Aethiopica* do. This tension between trust and distrust of bilinguals is hardly unique to Heliodorus' novel, and instead represents a long-standing cultural attitude, which surfaces both in earlier literature and in the semantic evolution of the term δίγλωσσος, which can mean both bilingual (speaking two languages) and untrustworthy (speaking with forked tongue, having two faces).

Building upon the arguments of the second chapter, my third explores one way this distrust of bilinguals surfaces. The multilingual women of the *Aethiopica* find themselves under suspicion not only for their skill with foreign languages, but also for a concomitant suspicion that they may be sexually unfaithful. The lusty Persian princess and philhellene Arsake serves as powerful example of the connection, while Charikleia's loss of her native Ethiopian language and faithful dedication to remaining monolingual in Greek parallel and symbolize her devout sexual chastity. This connection again makes sense in terms of broader *mores* of Greek culture and contributes to the long-standing debates on the relationships between education, sex, and women in the ancient world.

With chapter four, I turn my attention away from the bounds of spoken language and towards the nonverbal phenomena in evidence throughout the novel. My analysis shows that characters try eagerly to exploit nonverbal communication as a way of making themselves understood when words fail but that this is far from a simple process. While many characters' gestures succeed in transmitting the intended message, others send the wrong message,

sometimes with fatal consequences. In the end, Heliodorus seems to suggest a vision of nonverbal communication as an intermediate stage between speech and noncommunicative silence and nonverbal communication proves to share with Winkler's dreams, oracles, and prophecies the need for careful and expert interpretation.

The fifth and final chapter turns to the events of the novel's final book, set in Ethiopia, which are densely populated with cross-linguistic phenomena. The bilingual Ethiopian rulers alternate between the Ethiopian language of the mob in attendance and the Greek of Charikleia and Theagenes, deploying their linguistic abilities to manipulate, include, and exclude. The crowd, meanwhile, performs not only remarkable feats of interpretation, but also demonstrates the limits of human language. I agree with Winkler and Morgan that the language barrier is implicated in questions of realism and interpretation, but I also argue that it plays a role in the complicated relationships between readers and author, as a marker of cultural status, and as an important contribution to characterization.

### ***Polyglossia***

Mikhail Bakhtin, probably the most influential theorist of the novel, famously described the relationship between language(s) and the genre of the novel.<sup>70</sup> For Bakhtin, the novel is the result of the incorporation of multiple voices and points of view within a single text. The novel even owes its existence, in his estimation, to the polyglottic world in which it flourished:

But the disintegration of this national myth, which was so fatal for the straightforward monoglotic genres of Hellenism, proved productive for the birth and development of a new, prosaic novelistic discourse. The role of polyglossia in this slow death of the myth and the birth of novelistic matter-of-factness is extremely great. Where languages and cultures interanimated each other, language became something entirely different, its very nature changed: in place of a single, unitary, sealed-off Ptolemaic world of language, there appeared the open Galilean world of many languages, mutually animating each other. ("From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," p. 65)

In other words, having more than one language at play both allowed people to think of language in itself (as opposed to language merely being a means of communicating thought) and it helped

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70 Bakhtin (1981).

create the world of the novel, in which contrasting viewpoints are brought into dialogue and conflict. While Bakhtin stresses how Greek and Roman authors' first steps into the world of the novel were still dominated by a single, conventionalized style, I would like to emphasize the ways in which Heliodorus' novel demonstrates *polyglossia* in action.<sup>71</sup>

Heliodorus' novel is animated by the clash of cultures and viewpoints. Persians understand that the Greeks hate them. An Egyptian priest can use the reputation of his countrymen for expertise in low magic to virtuously defraud his would-be employers. The chief priests of Ethiopia can express severe displeasure with the religious customs of their own kingdom. But more than just a jumble of competing viewpoints, Heliodorus makes Bakhtin's *polyglossia* explicit within his text; characters' inability to see eye-to-eye is expressed at times in their lack of a shared language in which to communicate. Heliodorus, more than any other Greek author, presents a world in which Greece and Greek are not the center of the world. While Greek still plays an anachronistically prominent role in the linguistic economy of his novel, space is made for non-Greek languages and non-Greek points of view. This dissertation helps explain why.

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71 Bakhtin (1981) p. 65.

## Chapter 1: The Languages of Heliodorus' Characters

Reading literature with an eye towards the language barrier means straddling two extreme views. At one extreme, we might expect absolute linguistic realism from our texts, and at the other, absolute freedom from language. Linguistic realism demands that characters' linguistic abilities be accounted for within the text and that the text's treatment of language, language barriers, and cross-language communication correspond with those familiar in the extra-textual world. Freedom from language, on the other hand, deprioritizes the linguistic elements of a narrative, ignoring particulars of the characters' linguistic abilities or language barriers in favor of other aspects of the text. This kind of freedom is indulged in far more texts than linguistic realism, especially in ancient literature, and it is Heliodorus' tendency towards linguistic realism which merits this dissertation's treatment of the language barrier.

There are of course, more than these two positions; I envision linguistic realism as a spectrum with absolute freedom on the far left side and absolute realism on the far right, with a potentially infinite number of places in the middle into which a text might be slotted. One could analyze the linguistic realism (or lack thereof) of every text, or every ancient Greek text, or every ancient novel, and arrange them from left to right, from free to realistic. If we were to perform such an analysis, Heliodorus' place at the far right-hand side, towards the pole of extreme linguistic realism is assured. He not only pays more attention to other authors, but also constructs a more strictly realistic linguistic world.

This model is somewhat reductive and I will spend the bulk of this chapter both complicating Heliodorus' realism and taking into account the variety of possible presentations of the linguistic. Nevertheless, I believe the spectrum model will allow me to make a fundamental

point about Heliodorus' treatment of the language barrier as clearly as possible. Before delving deeper into Heliodorus' place on this spectrum, I would like to briefly discuss the two poles so that by exploring what Heliodorus does not do, we might better understand what he does.

When confronted with a multinational, multilingual cast of characters, realism can create problems. How can the characters communicate with each other? Must the author put a translator into every scene that would require one in reality? Many authors (including most ancient Greek authors) opt to employ “the literary convention which allows characters from diverse origins to understand each other without engaging the question of exactly which language they speak.”<sup>1</sup> This need not be thought of as a kind of crutch, employed by authors who cannot handle the complexities a more realistic treatment of language would introduce. Instead, we should think of it as merely one particular kind of stylization, one way of emphasizing some aspects of the text by playing down less important ones. Thus, both Euripides' *Helen* and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* deal with Greek mythological characters stranded overseas in emphatically barbarian lands. These characters have no problem, however, speaking to the locals.<sup>2</sup> As foreign and isolated as Colchian Medea is, she never complains of an inability to converse with Creon, Jason, or the Corinthian women around her. It is not the case that Euripides was incapable of problematizing the language barrier on stage, he does so on occasion elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Instead, it is clear that for these plays, language was not among the most important themes, while actually

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1 Saïd (1992) p. 169.

2 In the *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, the chorus refers to an Ἀσιητᾶν ...βάρβαρον ἄχάν (barbaric Asian cry) at line 180, but a.) it is not clear that it is the language as opposed to the style or pitch of the cry which makes it barbarian and b.) even if we grant that the Scythian setting of the play is a land of a different tongue, this in no way impedes communication between the Greek Iphigenia and the Scythian king, Thoas. Bacon (1961) p. 115 takes the cry to refer to the music rather the words.

3 The most significant example include the Phrygian slave in Euripides' *Orestes*, who at 1395-7 glosses his own Asiatic and therefore foreign cries and the Asian Bacchae of the *Bacchae*, who at 159 refer to their Phrygian shouts. Bacon (1961) p. 117 points out that αἴλινον, the allegedly foreign word used by the *Orestes*' Phrygian slave, is used elsewhere in tragedy by Greek characters, including the chorus of the *Agamemnon*. Colvin (1999) p. 85 describes the reference as conventional and stylized, but not very relevant to foreign language.

putting an interpreter on stage, for example, would unnecessarily drag out the dialogue.<sup>4</sup> Both genre and tradition surely had an effect as well, since no extant tragedy actually puts foreign speech on stage, although some playwrights clearly toyed with these boundaries more than others.<sup>5</sup>

Homer too, tends toward this extreme of freedom from linguistic realism, removing significant language barriers between Greeks and Trojans and between gods and men.<sup>6</sup> Rutherford is right to say that “only pedantry would protest at this convention.”<sup>7</sup> Putting an interpreter between Priam and Achilles in *Iliad* 24 would not only ruin the intimacy of this important and touching scene, but would also suggest the divisions in humanity at exactly the moment when Priam asks Achilles to look to shared human universals. The benefits of this freedom from the linguistic are so valuable and numerous that it is not hard to see why so many authors opt to frame their works at that end of the spectrum.

Linguistic realism, on the other hand, means expecting that characters will only speak the languages we should expect them to speak based on their personal histories and that they will be unable to understand characters with whom they do not share a language. Thus not only should a Greek man (like, say, Menelaus in Euripides' *Helen*) speak Greek, he should also not be able to

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4 Pace Willis 2003 who rightly points out that the *Helen* complicates linguistic matters by problematizing the relationship between name and named with Helen and her *eidolon*.

5 The most striking example is Aeschylus' treatment of Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* who for a short while (lines 1050-1071) appears to not understand the Greek of Clytaemestra and the chorus, but is gradually revealed to not only understand Greek all too well—as she laments at line 1254—but also can speak it quite competently. It is her prophetic curse that prevents her from being fully understood, not something as prosaic as an inability to speak Greek.

6 The bibliography is extensive. The first chapter of Gera (2003) explores the presentation of language in Homer, with particular attention to the linguistic issues surrounding Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemus. Watkins (1995) p. 51 and 144-51 deals with the historical languages upon which Homer's texts were based. Mackey (1996) presents an analysis of the differences between Greek and Trojan speech, but these differences come to the fore precisely *because* both speak the same language. The language of the gods, specific vocabulary items of which are pointed out occasionally by the poet, has attracted much discussion. Ancient commentators included Plato in the *Cratylus* 391d2ff. and Dio Chrysostom 10.23-4, 11.22-4. Linguists have seen in the language of the gods some preservation of Indo-European heritage but the question of exactly what kind is less clear. See Bader (1989), Heubeck (1949-1950) and Watkins (1970) and (1995).

7 Rutherford (1992) p. 158 (*ad Od.* 19.175).

speak Egyptian, say, unless we learn at some point that he had an Egyptian nurse, or spent time as a mercenary in Egypt in his youth, or some other such story. More importantly, if a Greek and Egyptian come into contact, and we have no reason to believe that either shares the other's language, there should be communicative difficulties. An author writing at this end of the spectrum must keep an internal list of every character's background and linguistic abilities and must explain (or at least hint) to his reader why a character has or does not have facility with a particular language.

Aristophanic comedy tends in this direction, and Aristophanes exploits cross-language communication for laughs. Furthermore, the paratragic elements of comedy make the representation of foreign languages a comment on the lack of realism in tragedy. Thus the Persian (or Persian-esque) jibberish of Pseudo-Artabas in the *Acharnians* both points up the funny way foreigners are perceived to talk, and points out that the audience's expectations that all characters on the stage will speak the same language are unrealistic.<sup>8</sup> Likewise the “simplified register” of the Scythians in the *Thesmophoriazusae* is both a piece of realism—Athens' foreign police force likely did speak Greek less than perfectly—and a chance to laugh at the other.<sup>9</sup>

This question of realism and the language barrier is further complicated by the fact that there are potentially two language barriers implicated in every exchange: a barrier between the characters within the novel and a barrier between the characters and the reader. Even if Euripides made his Egyptians speak Egyptian, his Athenian audience could hardly be expected to follow. Modern movies and television programs have the freedom to tend toward the pole of realism largely because the technology of subtitles helps the audience understand foreign speech.

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8 The most important recent work on foreign language and dialect in Greek comedy are Willi (2003) and Colvin (1999). See also Long (1986) for treatment of barbarians in comedy generally.

9 In Chapter 7 of his 2003 work, Willi, informed by work in modern linguistics, discusses the features of this “simplified register” and broader features of Aristophanic “Foreigner Talk.”

Furthermore, the availability of translators helps the monolingual author compose accurate foreign speech for a globalized audience which may include members of that foreign speech community. At this far right end of the spectrum, the pole of absolute realism, the author faces significant challenges of presentation but the reward is a linguistically complex world that is both exploitable in its own right and apparently true to the reader for whom linguistic complexities are a fact of life.

Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* stakes a claim on the realistic half of the spectrum from its famous opening scene. In that scene, our heroine, the (evidently Greek) Charikleia surrounded by Egyptian bandits delivers a monologue in which she begs the bandits to kill her and thus bring her tragedy to a close.<sup>10</sup> The bandits, however, being Egyptian and not Greek speakers, fail to understand her speech and the novel is therefore saved from a premature ending. From this opening scene of his *Aethiopica*, Heliodorus places the expectations of linguistic realism front and center, as something which is not only an important aspect of the novel's attention to interpretation and the construction of understanding, but also affects who his characters can communicate with, and thereby what role they play in the development of their own story. This opening scene forces our interpretive hands. We can no longer expect that linguistic *realia* can or will simply be ignored. We know now that language barriers do exist within the world of the novel and that there are rules for who understands whom.

This, however, cannot be the end of our inquiry. This chapter will analyze the extent to which Heliodorus is successful in including linguistic realism in his text. It will also complicate the spectrum as outlined above. Heliodorus' novel can be thought of as realistic not only because it engages with the language barrier, but also because characters' knowledge of language is

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<sup>10</sup> The monologue is *Aethiopica* 1.3.1, with the reaction in the following section. The nonverbal behavior of this fascinating scene is treated extensively in the beginning of chapter four of this dissertation.

consistently motivated by their back stories, because character's linguistic abilities change over the course of the novel as they mature and have new encounters, and because the novel almost entirely avoids giving characters unusual linguistic abilities merely for the sake of the plot convenience. This is not to say, however, that Heliodorus' treatment of language is completely realistic. At times he seems to stretch the bounds of believability, such as when he has Theagenes pick up Egyptian unusually quickly. Heliodorus is less clear on the question of *why* characters learn languages than *that* they have learned them, with the result that the audience is left to infer the details. In some cases, such as those of Nausikles and Kybele, the answers are not terribly hard to find. In others, like that of Bagoas and to a lesser extent the Ethiopian court, we are left to our own surmises based on reconstructions ancient ideas about language and society.

This rest of this chapter will examine the linguistic abilities (or lack thereof) of the novels' major characters and ask whether these abilities are fully realistic, that is whether they are reasonably motivated by the characters' experiences and back story, and how they complicate our notion of Heliodorus' linguistic realism. This character-by-character analysis will also help orient the reader who is less familiar with Heliodorus' complex plot and cast of characters. I do not deal with the characters whose context is entirely monolingual, especially Knemon's father, Aristippos; his step-mother, Demainete; and his friend, Charias, all of whom can be safely assumed to be monolingual Greek speakers. Nor do I engage with Charikles, Charikleia's adoptive father. Although Charikles does spend some time abroad in Egypt, first on the trip which leads to his adoption of Charikleia, and later when he hunts down Theagenes, we are never given any evidence of his learning any languages.<sup>11</sup> The characters I do analyze all show

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<sup>11</sup> This may be due in part to the fact that the novel rarely focalizes his experience; Kalasiris tells the story of only one moment of his first trip, a moment when he speaks with a Greek speaker. We could imagine that Charikles gained great facility with Egyptian "off-stage" but since he never deploys his language "on-stage," the point is moot. His arrival in Ethiopia at the novel's end again is only a brief episode in which his Greek is likewise more than sufficient.

signs of some form of ability with two languages or should be expected to by the logic of the novel.

I will begin with the unusual case of Charikleia, whose monolingualism is odd in the face of her extended time abroad and the multilingualism all around her, followed by her lover, Theagenes, who gains an unexpected facility with Egyptian. Because Theagenes' abilities are linked in certain ways to two Egyptian priests, Thyamis and Kalasiris, I explore them next. Though Nausikles and Knemon are both Greeks in Egypt, their stories are quite different and they put their abilities to quite different uses. I then analyze the Greek slave Kybele and the Persian princess Arsake, both among the novel's most gifted linguists. Ethiopia comes near the end and includes both the King and Queen of Ethiopia as well as the interesting case of Sisimithres who demonstrates the capacity for linguistic improvement. I follow this with the Persian Eunuch, Bagoas, whose facility with Greek is one of the most perplexing features of the novel's treatment of language. Finally I return to the question of the novel as a whole. As I hope my analysis will make clear, I believe Heliodorus' novel actually does aspire to a place at the far right end of the spectrum, and only falls short of full achievement of this goal by a small amount. Given the complexity of the novel and its large cast of characters, the novel's moments of unrealistic linguistic behavior are very few and may be amplified by the limits of our own knowledge of ancient ideas about language and multilingualism.

### ***Charikleia, the Monolingual Heroine***

Charikleia is an interesting place to begin because of her unique status among the characters of the novel. As the heroine, and the character that we readers spend the most time with, she encounters almost every barbarian tongue in the novel, and yet she remains resolutely monolingual. The simplest explanation for this is that she rarely needs to communicate with

anyone who does not speak Greek, because she is usually accompanied by a man (or occasionally a woman) who can talk for her. Sisimithres speaks Greek while entrusting her to her Greek foster-father Charikles.<sup>12</sup> When she finally leaves Delphi with Theagenes, it is the Greek-speaking Kalasiris who leads them and interacts both with the Phoenician sailors and the pirates (whose identity is not clearly marked, but may in fact be Greek).<sup>13</sup> The opening scene of the novel sees her bumping up against the language barrier and is the only moment in which Charikleia truly fails to communicate. At that point neither of her guardians can help her; Kalasiris has already fled, and Theagenes is badly injured. Later, Knemon is explicitly made her translator while in the bandit camp.<sup>14</sup> After she and Theagenes flee the camp, they are intercepted by a detachment of the Persian army, but the Greek-speaking Nausikles immediately speaks for her and accompanies her back to Kalasiris, who sees her to Memphis.<sup>15</sup> The Greek-speaking Kybele acts as intermediary with the Persian court until Charikleia is rescued by the eunuch Bagoas, who, again, has some ability with Greek.<sup>16</sup> Theagenes steps up by suddenly being able to speak Egyptian when they are captured by an Ethiopian party.<sup>17</sup> And once in Ethiopia, Charikleia is helped by the prominence of Greek among the Ethiopian royalty and sages. As I will argue more fully in chapter three, Charikleia's resolute abstention from foreign languages is paralleled by her exceptional chastity, and is protected by the continual presence of *kyrioi* who come

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12 Charikleia's transfer from Sisimithres to Charikles is told by Kalasiris at *Aethiopica* 2.30.1-2.33.4.

13 The pirate leader Trachinos and his crew come onto the scene most prominently at *Aethiopica* 5.24.1-5.32.6. Charikleia does address Trachinos at 5.26.2-3, though Kalasiris' description of the scene pays special attention to the nonverbal elements of Charikleia's seduction as well. If we take the pirates to be Greek or speak Greek, no language barrier exists here. If they do not—and Heliodorus does not provide any indication that is the case—Charikleia's nonverbal behavior could be thought to do some of the work of her potentially incomprehensible speech.

14 In *Aethiopica* 1.7.3, Charikleia and Theagenes are assigned to lodge with Knemon so that they might have someone to speak with (τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι ἕνεκεν) and at 1.19.3, Knemon is assigned to translate for the Greeks.

15 On Mitrans' use of his linguistic abilities to capture Charikleia, see below, p. 40.

16 Kybele is actually a Greek by birth, while Bagoas' facility with Greek is fairly perplexing. see below, p. 43 and 54 respectively.

17 The encounter occurs at *Aethiopica* 8.17.1-5.

between her and the linguistic other.

### ***Theagenes, the Unexpected Bilingual***

Given Charikleia's linguistic isolation, it is somewhat surprising to find that Theagenes, whose cultural and racial identity are far clearer and less interesting than his beloved's, actually gains facility with a second language. Theagenes begins the novel as a Hellene of the purest breeding, a descendent of the original tribe of Hellenes who gave their name to Greeks everywhere.<sup>18</sup> Like Charikleia, he shows no obvious interest in the languages of the people by whom he is surrounded for much of the novel. However, when an Ethiopian scouting party comes upon Theagenes, Charikleia, and Bagoas, the scouting party inquires who they are:

Πλησιάσαντες οὖν οἱ Αἰθίοπες καὶ τὸν μὲν Βαγῶαν εὐνουῆχον καὶ ἀπόλεμον ἐκ τῶν ὄψεων γνωρίζαντες τοὺς δὲ ἀόπλους μὲν καὶ δεσμώτας κάλλει δὲ καὶ εὐγενείᾳ διαπρέποντας ἠρώτων οἵτινες εἶεν Αἰγύπτιον τε ἀπὸ σφῶν ἓνα τε καὶ περισίζοντα τὴν φωνὴν εἰς τὴν πεῦσιν καθέντες ὡς ἢ ἀμφοτέρων ἢ θατέρου πάντως συνήσουντας. Οἱ γὰρ ὀπτηρῆς τε καὶ σκοποὶ λεγομένων τε καὶ πραττομένων ἀποσταλέντες ὁμογλώσσους τε καὶ ὁμοφώνους τοῖς τε ἐγχωρίοις καὶ πολεμίοις ἐπάγεσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς χρείας ἐδιδάχθησαν. (*Aethiopica* 8.17.2)

So, as they closed in, the Ethiopians also recognized at sight that Bagoas was a eunuch and not a soldier and that the other two were unarmed, in chains, and were of outstanding beauty and breeding. They asked who they were and appointed for the inquiry one Egyptian from their number who also knew Persian so that surely they would understand one, the other, or both. Spies and scouts of things said and done, you see, are taught by necessity to bring with them people who speak the same language or babble as both the natives and the enemy.

There is much of interest here. The scouts correctly size up the trio based on interpretation of visual clues, a theme I will return to in chapter four. The attention to the real exigencies of wartime maneuvers (needing translators) is uncommon in literary depictions. And while the author knows which language will be necessary for this scene, having the translator be bilingual (or trilingual if we count Ethiopian, which he must know well enough to translate back to the scouts) Heliodorus maintains his detached and realistic narratorial stance.<sup>19</sup> Even the tense of the verb “to ask” (ἠρώτων, imperfect) realistically indicates the time involved in repeatedly asking

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18 Theagenes' breeding and the connection between the hero and his mythological genealogy is presented in *Aethiopica* 2.34.1-7.

19 See Morgan (1982).

the same question in different languages. All this realism suggests that the scene will continue in a realistic vein, that the answer will be given by the character most likely to be able to speak either Persian or Egyptian, the Persian Eunuch Bagoas.

The answer, however, does not come from Bagoas but from a more surprising source, the thoroughly Greek Theagenes.

Ὡς οὖν ὁ Θεαγένης ὑπὸ τε συνδιαιτήσεως ἤδη μακρᾶς τῆς Αἰγυπτίας καὶ βραχείας τῆς πεύσεως τὰ πρῶτα εἶναι τοῦ σατράπου Περσῶν Βαγῶαν ἀπεκρίνατο ἑαυτὸν δὲ καὶ τὴν Χαρίκλειαν Ἑλληνας γένος Πέρσαις μὲν πρότερον αἰχμαλώτους ἀγομένους τὸ παρὸν δὲ Αἰθίοψιν ὑπὸ χρηστοτέρας ἴσως τύχης ἐγχειριζομένους, ἔγνωσαν φεῖδεσθαι καὶ ζωγρίᾳ λαβόντες ἄγειν· (*Aethiopica* 8.17.3)

So when Theagenes, because of both his length of time spent in Egypt already and the brevity of the question answered first that Bagoas was the property of the Persian Satrap and then that he and Charikleia were of the Greek race, formerly taken as slaves by the Persians but presently captured perhaps under a more merciful fate by the Ethiopians, who they knew would spare them and lead them away alive.

Theagenes' ability to understand and speak Egyptian is not the only surprise here. I will return to the puzzle of where and why Theagenes picked up this facility in a moment but for now, it is important to note the narratorial slight of hand at play. First, despite the narrator's claim that Theagenes has spent a long time in Egypt (ὑπὸ τε συνδιαιτήσεως ἤδη μακρᾶς τῆς Αἰγυπτίας), he and Charikleia have been making their way across the country fairly quickly. While the reader has made his way through eight books of Egypt, vast portions of the reader's time has been spent in flashback.<sup>20</sup> Theagenes, on the other hand, has spent no more than a week or two traveling south, plus his time sequestered in the Persian court, where he can hardly be expected to have picked up much Egyptian from Arsake, Kybele or Charikleia.<sup>21</sup> Secondly, while it is true that the

20 Thus the 20 years of backstory told by Kalasiris unfolds over 10 days within the course of the novel, see Kim (2008) p. 150. As Futre Pinheiro (1998) p. 3150 puts it "Time stretches or shrinks according to the needs of the plot." On the time in the novel, Bakhtin (1981), p. 84-258 is foundational, though his generalizations do not apply to all the ancient novels equally. Futre Pinheiro (1998) looks at the question of time in Heliodorus specifically, while Kim (2008) provides an overview of scholarship on time in the Ancient novel.

21 It is approximately 650 miles from modern Alexandria near the Heracleotic mouth of the Nile to Aswan (Syene). For the first 120 miles or so, as far as Memphis (modern Giza), they proceeded on foot. After their escape from the prison in Memphis, the three rode horses towards Syene at night and rested during the day. Heliodorus, of course, neither had the benefit of modern maps nor was he bound strictly by the geographical estimates that did exist in his day (e.g. those of Herodotus). Heliodorus seems to underestimate the distance from Memphis to Syene, as they make the journey of over 500 miles in two nights. I do not mean to denigrate Heliodorus for geographical inaccuracy, but merely to point up the way in which this inaccuracy actually lessens the amount of

question (“Who are you?”) is quite simple and well within the range of abilities of someone with just a few weeks' immersion, Theagenes' answer is significantly more complex. He does not answer “We are Greeks. We are prisoners. He is Persian. We are now with you.” Instead, his response is a deft plea which both truthfully answers the question and also recasts the Ethiopian scouts as saviors rather than enemies, attributing their appearance to the merciful hand of fate.<sup>22</sup> This speech is effective not only for its unexpected fluency but also its surprising tact, a testament to Theagenes' ability, like his famous ancestor, to be a speaker of words as well as a doer of deeds.<sup>23</sup>

Still, even if we set aside the questions of timing, how would Theagenes have acquired this facility with Egyptian? Heliodorus never prepares us for this revelation by telling us that “then Theagenes started learning Egyptian.” The novelist does, however, provide a reasonable pathway for Theagenes' acquisition of Egyptian through the friendship which develops between Theagenes and Thyamis. After Charikleia (facetiously) agrees to marry Thyamis, the high-priest-turned-bandit-chief occasionally invites Theagenes (whom he believes to be her brother) to share his table on occasion as a sign of respect towards Charikleia.<sup>24</sup> We know from elsewhere in the novel that Thyamis knows some Greek, though not a lot.<sup>25</sup> Even if Theagenes and Thyamis dined alone, Theagenes would likely pick up some Egyptian over supper. If, as seems more likely, Theagenes was one of many at Thyamis' table, surrounded by Egyptians, he might have an even greater exposure to Egyptian and motivation to learn it.

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time Theagenes has spent in Egypt, and therefore makes his sudden speaking ability even more remarkable.

22 It is reasonable to suppose that Heliodorus here, as he often does, has polished up the speech of Theagenes a bit and presented in good, indirect speech, the somewhat more broken speech of Theagenes. While this is interesting in its own right, it also suggests a surprising facility with the language, especially given lack of narratorial comment on the brokenness of his speech.

23 On Theagenes as Achilles see *Aethiopica* 2.34.1-7. There is a sense in which Theagenes' assertion of control over this situation foreshadows the athletic triumphs which will prove his masculinity in the novel's denouement.

24 *Aethiopica* 1.24.2: Καὶ διαίτᾳν τέ τινα ἀβροτέραν τῆς οὔσης παρεῖχεν ὁ Θύαμις καὶ εἶπη καὶ τὸν Θεαγένην εἰς αἰδῶ τῆς ἀδελφῆς ὁμοδαίτον ἐποιεῖτο

25 See below, p. 35.

Furthermore, after Theagenes and Charikleia are captured by Mitranes and his soldiers, Theagenes ends up being captured yet again by the army of Bessans led by Thyamis.<sup>26</sup> Here again Theagenes finds himself in the midst of an Egyptian force, the only non-Egyptian. When Thyamis and Theagenes reappear in the text outside the walls of Memphis, they converse without problem:

Θεασάμενος δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ Θύαμις “ὦ γαθὲ” ἔφη “Θεάγενες, οὐχ ὄρας ὅπως τῷ δέει πάλλεται ὁ Πετόσιρις;” “Ὅρῳ” ἔφη, “ἀλλὰ πῶς χρῆσι τοῖς προκειμένοις; οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς πολέμιος ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ἐναντίος.” Ὁ δὲ “Εὖ λέγεις” εἶπε... (*Aethiopica* 7.5.4)

When Thyamis saw him [sc. Petosiris] he said “My good Theagenes, do you not see how Petosiris is quaking with fear?” “I do” he said “but what will you do in this situation? It's not just an enemy you're facing; it's your brother.” Thyamis responded “That's right...”

The conversation is completely unmarked and presents two possibilities: either they speak in Greek or Egyptian. If we understand that they speak in Egyptian, we have a precedent for Thyamis' Egyptian speech when ambushed by the Ethiopians. This would still be a noteworthy linguistic gain, but it is at least sensible based on their shared time together and the fact that the two are still part of the Bessan's revolutionary campaign. If, on the other hand, we suggest that the lines above are meant to be Greek (as signaled in part by the narrator's not marking them as any other language), this too is comprehensible. We need only infer that during their time together Thyamis has expanded his limited Greek, an interesting and significant indication of his incipient reclamation of his priestly title.

Theagenes, on the whole, has a less well developed personality and a less memorable role in the novel than Charikleia. He is often the passive and despondent one, quick to give up and slow to learn to trust in providence. This moment of bilingualism is, I would argue, meant to be a surprise. Theagenes' leap into action here anticipates his leap into athletic action when animals break loose in book 10. Just as those heroics prove his manly virtue, this surprise moment of

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26 The witch of Bessa provides the story from her (limited) point of view at 6.13.1 ff.

multilingualism allows him to demonstrate his ability to help save himself and Charikleia through speech, an opportunity denied him in book ten.

### ***Egyptian Priests: Thyamis and Kalasiris***

If Theagenes learns his Egyptian from Thyamis, it is worth noting that Thyamis himself begins the novel with some Greek under his belt as well. Moments after his appearance on the beach, Thyamis and Charikleia attempt to make themselves understood; Thyamis orders Charikleia to come with him, a command she only understands through his body language.<sup>27</sup> When Charikleia responds by threatening to kill herself, however, we learn that Greek is not completely opaque to Thyamis: “The bandit chief, understanding partly through what was said, but more through her gestures...” (Συνεῖς οὖν ὁ λήσταρχος τὸ μὲν τι τοῖς λεγομένοις, πλέον δὲ τοῖς νεύμασι..., 1.4.2) The indication that Thyamis knows some Greek is never given an explicit explanation in the text, and it stands in powerful contrast to the rival bandits who just moments before failed to understand any of what Charikleia said (οἱ δὲ οὐδὲν συνιέναι τῶν λεγομένων ἔχοντες, 1.3.2). This is the first clue in a minor mystery regarding the identity and background of this noble savage, a mystery which acts in some way as a miniature of the larger mystery of Charikleia's identity.<sup>28</sup>

Upon reaching his camp, Thyamis again kindly reaches out to Charikleia and Theagenes by entrusting them to Knemon, another young Greek captured by Thyamis and his band, “for the sake of conversation” (τοῦ διαλέγεσθαι ἕνεκεν, 1.7.3). It is tempting to associate Thyamis' Greek with Knemon, his Greek captive, and this is not out of the question, but Heliodorus never indicates a particularly close relationship between Thyamis and Knemon. Instead, Knemon

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<sup>27</sup> On the rich and interesting nonverbal elements here, see chapter four.

<sup>28</sup> Like Charikleia, Thyamis is a priest, like her he is displaced to the north by a perceived sexual scandal. Like her, he will return down the Nile to reclaim his rightful place. The fact that Charikleia's Ethiopian story eclipses Thyamis' Egyptian one is typical of Heliodorus' novel.

appears to be kept around specifically to translate for Greeks, as he will do when Thyamis organizes an assembly to ask for Charikleia's hand:

Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἤχθησαν, ἤθροιστο δὲ καὶ ὁ λοιπὸς ὄμιλος, ἐπὶ τινος ὑψηλοῦ προκαθίσας ἑαυτὸν ὁ Θύαμις καὶ τὴν νῆσον ἐκκλησίαν ἀποφήνας καὶ τὰ λεχθησόμενα φράζειν τὸν Κνήμωνα καὶ τοῖς αἰχμαλώτοις προστάξας (συνίη γὰρ ἤδη τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, ὁ δὲ Θύαμις οὐκ ἠκρίβου τὰ Ἑλλήνων), “Ἄνδρες” ἔλεγε “συστρατιῶται”... (*Aethiopica* 1.19.3)

When they had gathered and the whole band was assembled Thyamis settled in on top of a high spot and declared the island an assembly. Ordering Knemon to communicate what would be said to the prisoners too (for Knemon already knew Egyptian, but Thyamis wasn't fluent in Greek), he said “Noble fellow soldiers...”

Here for the second time, the incompleteness of Thyamis' mastery of Greek is emphasized.

Knemon was only captured a short while ago (οὐ πρὸ πολλοῦ αἰχμάλωτος, 1.7.3) and yet he has already (ἤδη) mastered the language. Thyamis' abilities are described not as absent but rather as imprecise or inexact (οὐκ ἠκρίβου) and it is this imprecision that will cause him to enlist Knemon's services as translator as he delicately handles proposing his marriage to Charikleia.

This still does not answer the question of why Thyamis has any facility with Greek at all, however. I believe this can be explained by comparing Thyamis to his father Kalasiris. Kalasiris is the most accomplished polyglot in the novel. He not only speaks his mother tongue, Egyptian, but is also fluent enough in Greek to cause the Athenian Knemon to suspect that Kalasiris is Greek:

κατὰ πρόσωπον ὑπαντίσας πρῶτα μὲν χαίρειν ἐκέλευε. Τοῦ δὲ οὐ δύνασθαι φήσαντος, ἐπειδὴ μὴ οὕτω συμβαίνειν αὐτῷ παρὰ τῆς τύχης, θαυμάσας ὁ Κνήμων “Ἑλληνα δὲ” εἶπεν “ὁ ξένος;” “Οὐκ Ἑλληνα” εἶπεν “ἀλλ’ ἐντεῦθεν Αἰγύπτιος. (*Aethiopica* 2.12.3-4)

Knemon walked up to him, face-to-face and bid him good day. When he replied that he could not have a good day since it was not fated for him to have one, Knemon was amazed and said “The stranger is a Greek?!” and he replied “Not a Greek, no, from here, I am an Egyptian.”<sup>29</sup>

This introduction to Kalasiris marks him as not just capable of basic Greek like his son, but rather an expert at sophisticated word play. He not only understands Knemon's “χαῖρε!” (Hello/Good Day, literally “Rejoice”), he playfully interprets the word according to its literal

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<sup>29</sup> In this translation, I am in debt to Morgan's translation in Reardon (2008) which insuperably captures Kalasiris' play with language here.

meaning rather than its conventional one in such a situation.<sup>30</sup> Although the first segment of the conversation is described indirectly and therefore it is possible to imagine it taking place in either Greek or Egyptian, the play on the word *χαῖρε* strongly encourages us to understand the conversation as Greek. This view too is supported by Knemon's reaction ("The stranger is Greek?!") though this is hardly unproblematic.<sup>31</sup> Regardless, Knemon's reaction also reveals the extent of Kalasiris' talents in Greek. Kalasiris does not mumble or trip over the words but speaks in such a way that Knemon can believe him to be a native speaker, an outcome of which any student of language would be jealous.

Kalasiris probably also understands Ethiopian and possibly Punic. First, Kalasiris tells Charikleia that he had a private meeting with Persinna, during which the Ethiopian queen charged him to find Charikleia.<sup>32</sup> As we will see, Persinna knows Greek too so the pair might have spoken in either Greek or Ethiopian, but Kalasiris soon proves capable of reading the Ethiopian script as well, a talent based at least partially on the similarity of Egyptian and Ethiopian hieroglyphs.<sup>33</sup> Although it is impossible to be completely confident in Kalasiris' ability in Ethiopian, all signs in the text point to a capability.

Arguing the case for Punic is more difficult. Kalasiris describes his conversations with Phoenician sailors without marking in any way the linguistic problems possible in such an

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30 It is possible, I suppose, to take Kalasiris' playfulness as obtuseness and suppose that his grasp of Greek is quite weak. Given his long time in Greece (to say nothing of his other linguistic *bona fides*), this view cannot be reconciled with his character as it develops. Shalev (2006) begins her valuable analysis with this episode, which represents a particularly interesting nexus of multiculturalism and the techniques involved in narrating episodes involving speech.

31 Knemon's behavior cannot be resolved entirely satisfactorily here. If Knemon did not think the stranger was Greek, why hail him in Greek rather than Egyptian? If Knemon did think he was Greek (based on Kalasiris' Greekish appearance), why is he surprised?

32 *Aethiopica* 4.12.2

33 Heliodorus' representation of these two systems of hieroglyphs may parallel that of Chinese characters within different Sinitic languages or dialects. In this view, the written form of the language is mutually intelligible even when the spoken form is not. For a more extensive discussion of Heliodorus' treatment of written Ethiopian see my discussion of Charikleia's recognition token in chapter three, especially footnote 43.

encounter.<sup>34</sup> They must speak in either Greek or Punic. If it is the latter, Kalasiris not only understands Punic but does not seem to need to note that he has this ability. It seems more likely, on the other hand, that these Phoenicians speak Greek. They are merchants and therefore likely to have some knowledge of local languages. Moreover, one of their number is Hellenized enough to win the wrestling competition at the Pythian games. Finally, the Phoenicians praise Kalasiris as a wise man and a Greek, a comment that seems rather unlikely if the conversation is meant to take place in Punic. Still, even setting Punic aside, Kalasiris remains at least tri-lingual (Greek, Egyptian, Ethiopian) and the novel never gives us an opportunity to evaluate his skill in Persian.

Kalasiris' linguistic talents can only be explained in relation to his priesthood. It is his priesthood that gives him special knowledge in other matters.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, it is his priesthood which endows him with the ability to read hieroglyphic Egyptian at all.<sup>36</sup> The question of why an Egyptian priest in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE should know the Greek language is not entirely clear.<sup>37</sup> The easiest answer is simply that Heliodorus needs it for his novel to work, and while this is true, it is unfair to Heliodorus' project to take this as the only answer. A better answer, I think, is to attribute this to two related causes: ethnocentrism and anachronism. Certainly, in Heliodorus' own time, Greek was both the prestige language, and the *lingua franca* of the Eastern Mediterranean. It seems likely that try as he might to displace his novel into a markedly pre-Hellenized past, the status of Greek in his own day shades into this imagined past.<sup>38</sup> The

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34 *Aethiopica* 4.16.6-10

35 See, for example, his knowledge of "the true story" of Homer's origins at 3.14.1-4 and his clever interpretation of Homeric verse at 3.12.2-3.13.3.

36 At the dramatic date of the novel, hieroglyphic writing would have still been employed, although increasingly rarely in comparison to the hieratic script (a cursive shorthand of hieroglyphs) and the increasing use of the letter-script known as Demotic. At any rate, writing in Egypt was largely the domain of professional scribes and priests and never became the province of the average Egyptian.

37 The question will come up again in my discussion of Greek in Ethiopia, below, chapter five.

38 And indeed, as clearly as Heliodorus marks the novel's setting to some point in the past when Persia ruled Egypt, he does not seem overwhelmingly interested in the specifics of this temporal setting. Other anachronisms do creep through such as the Monument of the Epicureans at 1.16.5, on which see Morgan (2008) p. 367, footnote 20.

phenomenon of Egyptian priests being well educated, literate, and multilingual is one with a basis both in Egyptian reality and the Greek imagination and seems remarkably stable across the time periods relevant to Heliodorus and his novel.<sup>39</sup> Because a powerful and educated priest of Heliodorus' day would likely know Greek, Kalasiris knows Greek. Obviously this anachronism can be paired with a kind of ethnocentrism (or linguacentrism). Heliodorus might have taken pains to show Kalasiris speaking Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the Persian empire in which he resides, but instead opts for Greek, the language in which Heliodorus himself writes and has clearly read extensively. Whether this decision is motivated primarily by a linguacentric desire to see the prestige of the Greek language projected into the past, or by a less ideological or intentional anachronism, Kalasiris' knowledge of Greek is a reflection of the importance the Greek language is accorded in the novel.

To return to the question of Thyamis' Greek then, it becomes clear that his status as a displaced priest perfectly explains the incompleteness of his mastery of Greek. Because Kalasiris was priest for a long time, his Greek was already quite good before his own self-imposed exile to, among other places, Greece. Thyamis, on the other hand, was forced to flee due to Arsake's lustful advances and his younger brother's plots to steal the priesthood and thus never completes his training in Greek. Heliodorus never spells this out for the reader and the clues he leaves are subtle but become clear upon examination, most notably according to Thyamis partial understanding of Greek which he never really needs, and which he never really uses. The detail, however, fleshes out his characters and the multilingual world in which the text operates, and provides some comment on the place of language in that world.

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39 On priests as the stable “indigenous cultural and literary elite” see Moyer (2011) p. 34 and *passim*.

## ***Greeks Living in Egypt: Knemon and Nausikles***

The Athenian Knemon, whose back story figures heavily in the first two books of the novel, and who, in turn, becomes the audience for Kalasiris' stories is a relatively simple case. In addition to Greek, Knemon has picked up Egyptian in the time since his arrival in Egypt. Knemon had set out for the Egyptian city of Naukratis in order to reclaim Thisbe, whose trickery led to the political downfall of both Knemon and his father and the more literal downfall of Knemon's stepmother into the *barathron*.<sup>40</sup> Thyamis' band of brigands, however, seems to have intercepted Knemon at some point and integrated him into the band. Knemon quickly picks up enough Egyptian to serve as interpreter between Charikleia and Theagenes and their captors, as has already been discussed.<sup>41</sup> To return to questions of the realism of the timeline, it is not clear how long Knemon has been in Egypt and therefore how long he has been learning Egyptian. He has spent enough time in the Nile delta to have some practical knowledge of local botany.<sup>42</sup> In short, Knemon's acquisition of Egyptian as a second language is not only without problem, anything less than this would be unusual in these circumstances.

When Knemon sets out to the city of Naukratis in Egypt, he does so to retrieve Thisbe from her merchant-lover, a Greek resident of that city. It later turns out that her merchant-lover is no other than Knemon's own host, Nausikles. Naukratis has its origins as a pan-Hellenic trade colony, the first Greek foundation in Egypt, and Nausikles not only shares the first half of his name with his home city, but is practically the embodiment of that city's *ethos*.<sup>43</sup> Nausikles obsesses over profit and trade and it is in this aspect that we see his bilingual abilities. Since

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40 Knemon recounts the story in brief at 6.2.3-4.

41 See above, p. 30.

42 He speaks of repeatedly making use of a certain herb to tend to the wounds of his compatriots. *Aethiopica* 1.8.5: “Ἀλλὰ καὶ μᾶλλον εἰς ἕω κουφισθήσῃ” ἔφη ὁ τὴν φρουρὰν αὐτῶν ἐπιτετραμμένος· “τοιαύτην σοι ποιοῦμαι βοτάνην ἢ διὰ τρίτης ἐνώσει τὰς πληγὰς· ἔχω δὲ αὐτῆς ἔργω τὴν πείραν λαβών· ἐξ οὗ γὰρ με δεῦρο αἰχμάλωτον οἶδε ἦγαγον, εἴ τίς ποτε τῶν ὑπηκόων τῶδε τῶ ἄρχοντι συμβολῆς γενομένης τραυματίας ἦκεν, οὐ πολλῶν ἐδεήθη πρὸς ἴασιν ἡμερῶν ἢ λέγω ταύτη βοτάνη χρῆσάμενος.”

43 On the foundations of Naukratis see Boardman (1999), p. 118-132 and Herodotus 2.181.

Thisbe, had been captured by bandits, Nausikles bribes Mitranes, the commander of the Satrap's guards, to find her, actions which reveal not only the substantial pull the rich Nausikles has with the ruling bureaucracy, but also his familiarity with that system.<sup>44</sup> Instead of Thisbe (who is now dead), however, the Persian troops find Charikleia and Theagenes and Nausikles' actions demonstrate his bilingualism:

Ὡς οὖν ἀγόμενοι πλησίον οἱ περὶ τὸν Θεαγένην ὤφθησαν θεοὺς σωτῆρας ἐπιβοώμενοι πολλάκις, ἐμπορικόν τι καὶ δραστήριον ἐννοήσας ὁ Ναυσικλῆς ἐξήλατό τε καὶ προσδραμῶν «Αὕτη ἐκείνη Θίσβη» κεκραγῶς ἔλεγεν «ἦν ἀφηρέθη μὲν πρὸς τῶν ὀλέθρων βουκόλων ἔχω δὲ διὰ σέ, Μιτράνη, καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς.» Ἐδράττετό τε τῆς Χαρικλείας καὶ χαίρειν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν ἐνεδείκνυτο καὶ τῇ Χαρικλείᾳ Θίσβην ὁμολογεῖν ἑαυτὴν εἰ βούλοιο σῶζεσθαι παρεκελεύετο, ἡρέμα καὶ ἑλληνιστὶ παραφθεγγόμενος ὡς ἂν λανθάνοι τοὺς παρόντας· καὶ τοῦ σοφίσματος ἔτυχεν· ἡ γὰρ δὴ Χαρίκλεια γλώσσης τε ἑλληνίδος αἰσθομένη καὶ τι καὶ συνοῖσον ἀνύεσθαι πρὸς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς στοχαζομένη συνύφαινε τὸν σκοπὸν καὶ τῷ Μιτράνῃ πυνθανομένῳ τίς ποτε καλοῖτο Θίσβην ἑαυτὴν ὠμολόγει. (*Aethiopica* 5.8.3-4)

Now when he saw that Theagenes and those around him were being lead nearer and repeatedly invoking the gods to save them, Nausikles came up with something clever and business-like. He sprung up and ran towards them yelling “That's her! That's Thisbe, the one who was kidnapped by those wretched bandits and whom I have because of you, Mitranes, and the gods!” He held onto Charikleia and pretended to be excessively happy and ordered Charikleia to agree that she was Thisbe if she wanted to be rescued, whispering in Greek so that the others there wouldn't catch it. The trick worked; Charikleia, both hearing his Greek speech and intending to get something useful out of him, contrived to his end and, when Mitranes inquired who she was, she gave the same story—that she was Thisbe.

Heliodorus does not mark any language in the passage besides Greek. Still, it is worth noting that Heliodorus' attention to the language in which Nausikles addresses Charikleia (“In Greek”, ἑλληνιστὶ) conspicuously suggests that the merchant's speech to the Persian official is not “in Greek.” Whether we imagine this unmarked speech to be Persian or Egyptian is essentially irrelevant. Nausikles' ruse works precisely because he is able to speak one language (Greek) to Charikleia and another (Persian/Egyptian), the language of power, to the governmental bodies whose power he exploits. If Mitranes speaks only Greek, then the adverb ἑλληνιστὶ would have no place; the low volume of Nausikles' voice would be enough to prevent communication.

It is worth noting here too that Heliodorus seems to present the Greek Charikleia answering the Persian Mitranes' question in a straightforward way, without translator. The easiest

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<sup>44</sup> *Aethiopica* 5.8.2 narrates the story most concisely.

way of explaining this, it seems to me, is to infer that Nausikles acts as intermediary and translates the commander's question. One might also suppose that Charikleia, being as sharp and observant as she is, and needing to say no more than “Thisbe” to pull off the ruse, simply says the name “Thisbe” when asked a question in a foreign language. At any rate, Mitranes' control over both languages clearly allows him to manipulate both the Persian officer and the Greek heroine.

Nausikles' position as intermediary is precisely what allows him to get away with the girl, essentially to steal Charikleia from the Persian army. This is the masterful performance of a bilingual who employs his code-switching in line with his eye for profit and at the expense of the truth to both sides. Mitranes is deceived and although Charikleia obtains her freedom from Mitranes, he has less than honest intentions with respect to her.<sup>45</sup> In my fourth chapter I will explore more extensively the relationship between some kinds of bilingualism and deception. For now, suffice it to say that Nausikles' bilingualism is an indispensable part of his character, in line with his obsession over money. As a Greek living abroad, we would expect him to be at least bilingual, and Heliodorus does not disappoint.

### ***Foreign Women of Memphis: Kybele and Arsake***

As Kalasiris makes his way south to Memphis with Charikleia, Thyamis does the same with Theagenes and outside the walls of the city, there is a dramatic reunion between both father and son and the protagonists. Arsake, the sister of the Great King of Persia, and the wife of Egypt's satrap, Oroondates, is ruling the city while her husband is away on campaign and it is with Arsake's illicit intrigues that we spend most of books seven and eight. Interestingly, both Arsake and her confidante Kybele prove to be remarkably multilingual, a fact which I will

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<sup>45</sup> His plan is to sell her to the Queen of Ethiopia as a Greek companion. The theme is more fully explored in Chapter three.

contrast more extensively with Charikleia's linguistic purity in my third chapter. For now, I will explore the linguistic inventories of these two women, beginning with Kybele.

The multilingualism of Arsake's nurse and confidante, Kybele, derives from an idealized version of what must have been a common experience in ancient world: capture in war and slavery. Shortly after Kybele secures the transfer of Theagenes and Charikleia to Arsake's palace, she provides them with an account of her backstory which explains, among other things: how a Greek speaker came to be the nurse to a Persian princess:

Ἐρεῖτε δὲ πρὸς γυναῖκα οὐ παντάπασιν ἀλλοτρίαν ὑμῖν· εἰμὶ γάρ τοι καὶ αὐτὴ τὸ γένος Ἑλληνίς καὶ Λεσβία τὴν πόλιν, ὑπ' αἰχμαλωσίας μὲν ἀχθεῖσα δεῦρο πράττουσα δὲ τῶν οἴκοι βέλτιον· εἰμὶ γάρ τοι τῇ δεσποίνῃ τὰ πάντα καὶ μόνον οὐκ ἀναπνεῖ με καὶ ὄρα, καὶ νοῦς ἐκείνη καὶ ὦτα καὶ πάντα τυγχάνω, τοὺς καλοὺς αὐτῇ κάγαθοὺς γνωρίζουσα ἀεὶ καὶ τὸ πιστὸν αὐτῇ διὰ πάντων ἀπορρήτων φυλάττουσα.  
(*Aethiopica* 7.12.6)

But you will be speaking to a woman not at all different from you. For I am Greek myself, you know, by birth, from the city of Lesbos. I was brought here at the point of a spear but am doing better than those back home. For I am, you see, my lady's everything. She not only breathes me in. I am both eyes and mind to her, her ears and her everything. I always introduce attractive gentlemen to her and I keep her confidence through all her unspeakable secrets.

Kybele's backstory provides a perfectly reasonable explanation of why she can speak Greek to Theagenes and Charikleia; she is Greek! She does not say how old she was when she was captured, though it seems to have been long enough ago that she has both come to act as nurse to Arsake and been elevated to a place of relative prominence in the Persian court, as Arsake's most trusted confidante. I will demonstrate in my third chapter the place Heliodorus accords in his novel to female slaves with valuable linguistic skills. As this scene already demonstrates, however, Kybele makes use of her ability to speak Greek and to present herself as Greek in order to further Arsake's lusty designs on Theagenes.

Kybele's other linguistic abilities are only hinted at within the text but it seems more than reasonable to infer that she speaks Persian and Egyptian. Kybele's unique position as Arsake's

confidante already suggests a facility with Persian.<sup>46</sup> Add to this Kybele's interaction with other members of the staff of the Persian palace, including the old woman working as doorkeeper outside the room in which Theagenes and Charikleia are lodged.<sup>47</sup> Although this doorkeeper bears no obvious linguistic or ethnic identity, in the absence of any other evidence it seems likely that most slaves of the Persian palace in Memphis are not Greek speakers.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the most suggestive piece of evidence for Kybele's abilities beyond Greek is the name of Arsake's son whom the doorkeeper introduced us to, and who plays a larger role as the episode at Memphis develops: Achaimenes. This ultra-Persian name, recalling the Achaemenid Dynasty, is a reflection of Kybele's attempt at assimilation to Persian culture. Achaimenes' prestigious position as head steward indicates her success and the pair's elevated status in the household. It is likely that the reader should understand Achaimenes' father to be Persian, possibly even the satrap himself, a speculation which would again suggest, though by no means prove, some facility with Persian for Kybele. This argument for Kybele's Persian ability is admittedly circumstantial but to argue against it requires believing that a prisoner of war, living among Persian speakers for at least a decade, one who holds a place of particular prestige and whose ambitions are made clear through both her Persian-named son and her own status, remains ignorant of the language which surrounds her. This seems too unlikely to permit, and although Heliodorus draws no attention to

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46 Depending on how we understand Arsake's abilities in Greek (see below) this point will be more or less persuasive. Regardless, it is hard to imagine this particular relationship being monolingual and seems more natural to expect code switching on the part of both women.

47 *Aethiopica* 7.14.3: Ὡς δὲ ὅτι Θεαγένην καὶ Χαρίκλειαν ἤκουσεν, “αὐτοῦ με περιμένειν” εἰποῦσα ὡς τὴν Ἀρσάκην ἀπέτρεχεν, ἐπιστείλασα πρότερον πρὸς τὴν θυρωρὸν—ἦν δὲ καὶ αὕτη γραῦς—εἴ τις βούλοιτο παρεισιέναι μηδαμῶς ἐπιτρέπειν ἀλλὰ μηδὲ ἐξιέναι ποι συγχωρεῖν τοῖς νέοις. Τῆς δὲ “Μηδ’ ἂν ὁ παῖς ὁ σὸς Ἀχαιμένης παραγένηται;” ἐρωτησάσης “ἄρτι γὰρ καὶ μετὰ τὴν σὴν εἰς τὸν νεῶν πρόσοδον ἐξελήλυθεν ἐναλειψόμενος τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ· οἶσθα γὰρ ὡς φέρει τι μικρὸν ἔτι κακώσεως.” “Μηδὲ ἐκεῖνος” ἀπεκρίνατο “ἄλλ’ ἐπικλεισαμένη τὰς θύρας καὶ τὴν κλεῖν αὕτη κατέχουσα φάσκε ἐμὲ κομίζειν.” The language of this encounter is in no way marked, though the inclusion of direct speech might suggest to the reader that this conversation (like that of the previous section of this chapter) is in Greek. This is only assailable by questioning just how many Greek speaking slaves this Persian palace employs.

48 And practically, it would be of benefit to have the doorkeeper be ignorant of Greek so that she would be less easily convinced to let her Greek speaking guests/prisoners go.

Kybele's linguistic ability with Persian, this may be because he simply takes it for granted. How could she not know it?

It is worth briefly mentioning a scene that further complicates Kybele's linguistic identity. When Kybele goes to the temple of Isis to retrieve Theagenes and Charikleia and bring them to the palace, she has a conversation with a certain temple official (τῶν νεωκόρων τις, 7.11.2), who being in the employ of an Egyptian temple, should be assumed to be Egyptian himself. The language of this conversation is not marked, though the same official has a conversation with Theagenes and Charikleia in the ninth section of the same chapter. The easiest and most convincing resolution to this puzzle, though one lacking direct evidence, is to assume that the temple official knows Greek. This would be in line with what I have argued above and will return to in my fifth chapter about the place of Greek in the novel's version of Egyptian and Ethiopian temple culture. If we do not assume that the temple official knows Greek, we must assume either that Heliodorus has forgotten about the language barrier for a moment, or that both Theagenes and Kybele have sufficient capability with Egyptian for these conversations. On the whole, it seems more likely that Kybele is simply bilingual in Greek and Persian, the former as a native language from her home in Lesbos, and the latter as a perfectly reasonable acquisition during her time in the Persian court.

Arsake's linguistic inventory forms a kind of opposite to Kybele's. Arsake, being Persian, clearly knows the Persian language and only secondarily knows Greek. The key passage in determining the extent of Arsake's ability with Greek is her meeting with Theagenes in the Persian court. Arsake has Theagenes brought in and in a moment of proud disgust at Persian pomp, Theagenes refuses to abase himself as he should, refuses to wait until spoken to, and

instead addresses Arsake with a respectful (or sarcastic) honorific appellation in Greek.<sup>49</sup> The courtiers bristle with outrage at Theagenes' lack of respect but Arsake dismisses their concerns on the grounds that Theagenes' Greekness excuses both his ignorance and his disdain for the court. She then turns to address him directly in a brilliant example of the nuance with which Heliodorus approaches linguistic matters:

Καὶ ἅμα καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὴν τιάραν ἀφεῖλε, πολλὰ τῶν παρόντων κωλυόντων—τοῦ γὰρ ἀμείβεσθαι τὸν ἀσπασάμενον σύμβολον τοῦτο πεποιήνται Πέρσαι—καὶ “Θάρσει, ὦ ξένη” εἰποῦσα διὰ τοῦ ἑρμηνέως, συνιῆσα γὰρ τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλῶτταν οὐκ ἐφθέγγετο, “καὶ λέγε τίνος χρήζεις, ὡς οὐκ ἀποτευξόμενος” ἀπέπεμπε, νεύματι τοῦτο πρὸς τοὺς εὐνούχους ἐπισημήνασα. (*Aethiopica* 7.19.3)

As she said these things she took off her *tiara*, despite the protestations of the others there—The Persians do this as a sign that a greeting is returned—and said “Fear not, foreigner!” through the interpreter, for though she knew Greek, she did not speak it, “Say what you want; you will not lack it.” and she sent him away, having given the eunuchs the message with a gesture.

This short passage is rife with nonverbal signals which I explore at some length in my fourth chapter but for now I would like to focus on what this passage has to tell us about Arsake's linguistic abilities. Arsake's response to the events alone would suggest some basic understanding of what Theagenes means with his brief speech, but the narrator informs us too that she understands Greek (συνιῆσα γὰρ τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλῶτταν). This is Heliodorus' normal way of indicating comprehension and seems clear enough. I will argue at greater length in chapter three that Arsake's linguistic abilities can be connected with her ambiguous philhellenism which creates in her both an interest in Greek culture and Greek men (like Theagenes). The prominence of Kybele within the Persian court is both a reflection of the importance of things Greek to Arsake and the likely source of Arsake's knowledge of Greek. As to why a haughty Persian princess should be so interested in Greeks or in learning the Greek language, the answer is not entirely clear. Kybele's backstory confirms a violent relationship between Ionian Greeks and the Persian Empire in Asia Minor and helps establish the novel's dramatic date as falling

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49 *Aethiopica* 7.19.2. The elaborate nonverbal communication portrayed in this scene is discussed in chapter 3 as well.

within this period of contact. As such, Greek affairs in general might be imagined to be front and center in the minds of the Persian elite, and when such a vision of Persia conforms with the needs of the author, it is not surprising that he includes it. On the other hand, it is tempting too to look no further than Arsake's illicit sexual desires to explain her enthusiasm for Greek culture. It is a typically Heliodoran move to provide multiple possible explanations without definitively explaining.

But given that Arsake *understands* Greek, how are we to understand the second half of Heliodorus' claim that she “did not speak it” (οὐκ ἐφθέγγετο)? Modern translators have traditionally taken this to mean that Arsake's Greek abilities were one-sided; she could understand spoken Greek but could not speak it herself.<sup>50</sup> Such a view is certainly within the realm of possibilities, and one need look no further afield than most Classicists to find people who have a passive understanding of a language but whose ability to speak would only rise to the occasion with some difficulty. How Arsake would have come into possession of this particular balance of linguistic abilities is less clear. Every other character in Heliodorus' novel has fully rounded linguistic abilities. If a character knows a language, he speaks it well. If he only knows the language in a limited way he speaks it badly. No one else understands a language well but can't speak it. Still, the largest problem for this view is a conversation that Arsake and Theagenes have face to face a short while later.

When Theagenes and Charikleia's situation appears to be at its most desperate, Theagenes consents to a one-on-one meeting with Arsake in her quarters. After Theagenes delivers a speech of defiant refusal, Arsake responds to his claim directly:

Καὶ ἡ Ἀρσάκη “Μὴ ἀπίστει” ἔφη “βούλεσθαί με πάντα σοι χαρίζεσθαι, ἥτις καὶ ἑμαυτὴν ἔτοιμος ἐκδιδόναι· ἀλλὰ προληφθεῖσα ἐπώμοσα ἐκδώσειν Ἀχαιμένει τὴν σὴν ἀδελφὴν.” “Εὖ” ἔφη “ὦ δέσποινα· τὴν ἀδελφὴν τοίνυν ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκδίδου· μνηστὴν δὲ τὴν ἐμήν καὶ νύμφην καὶ τί γὰρ ἄλλοῃ γαμετὴν οὔτε

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50 See Morgan (2008) p. 505 and Hadas (1999) p. 180.

θελήσεις, εὔ οἶδα, οὔτε θέλουσα ἐκδώσεις.” “Πῶς” ἔφη “λέγεις;” Ὁ δὲ “Τὰ ὄντα” ἀπεκρίνατο· “οὐ γὰρ ἀδελφὴν ἔχω τὴν Χαρίκλειαν ἀλλὰ νύμφην ὥσπερ ἔλεγον...” (*Aethiopica* 7.26.4-5)

And Arsake said “Have no doubt that I want to satisfy you totally, just as I am ready to give myself to you, but I have already sworn to give your sister to Achaimenes. “Okay, mistress” he said “whoever my sister is, give her to him, but my fiancée? My bride? Essentially my wife? I am sure that you would not wish to give her to him, nor will you even if you do want to. “What are you telling me?” she asked. “The truth” he answered “Charikleia is not my sister but my bride, as I said.”

The revelation of Charikleia's true identity will of course create even more trouble for our heroes, but of particular note here is that this intimate conversation is presented as a back and forth between the princess and the Greek youth, with no translator acting as intermediary. Immediately after the conversation Arsake steals a kiss from Theagenes, an act she would scarcely undertake were anyone else but Kybele present. Because we have no reason to suspect Theagenes is capable of speaking Persian, we must either assume that Heliodorus has faltered on the language barrier here, that Kybele translates but is not credited explicitly with that job, or that Arsake is in fact capable of speaking Greek.

If we take the last scenario to be true, and assume that Arsake is capable of speaking Greek, how do we explain the earlier assertion that at 7.19.3 she “did not speak” it? I think the most sensible way to interpret this claim is to contextualize her behavior within the norms of the Persian court. We should remember that the court was just outraged at Theagenes' lack of the appropriate behavior and tried to prevent Arsake from returning Theagenes' greeting by removing her *tiara*. Surely, the sister of the Great King responding to an impudent foreigner in his language would be a third and potentially even more grievous breach of decorum. And given that Arsake's licentious behavior already arouses suspicion at the court, playing the properly haughty ruler while in court is a smart course of action. It is not that Arsake *cannot* speak Greek, but merely that she refuses to do so in this context.<sup>51</sup> This interpretation does not make

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51 The view is supported by Slater 2005. Such too is the interpretation of the Jacques Amyot in his 16<sup>th</sup> century French translation of the novel. He renders the relevant Greek “*puis luy fit dire par un truchement, combien qu'elle sceust bien parler Grec, mais pour lors ell n'en voulut pas user*” Plazenet (2008) p. 419. The imperfect

Heliodorus' presentation any less nuanced; instead of Arsake displaying one particular species of bilingualism, she is merely a clever user of her bilingualism, aware of the power of code-switching.

Arsake and Kybele form an interesting pair of reciprocal bilinguals. Kybele's bilingualism is motivated by her violent capture in war and transferal from Greece to the Persian court. Her adoption of the Persian language and adoption of Persian culture is an adaptive technique meant to improve her lot in her new foreign surroundings. Part of that improved lot is her incredibly close relationship with Arsake, in which Kybele seems to act as part caretaker, part procurer, and part language instructor. However we explain why Arsake knows Greek at all it is clear that her case allows Heliodorus to present reasonable nuance to his treatment of language, while using this nuance to help further his characterization of Arsake as a highly intelligent and capable seductress.

### ***The Ethiopians: Hydaspes, Persinna, and Sisimithres***

Persinna and Hydaspes, the queen and king of Ethiopia, are bilingual in Greek and Ethiopian, as is Sisimithres, the Ethiopian sage who at one point was Charikleia's foster father. The first time the reader encounters the Ethiopian language is in the letter from Persinna to Charikleia, sown into the band with which Charikleia is abandoned. It is clear that the language is different than Egyptian, and yet written in a somewhat similar fashion with hieroglyphs. When Kalasiris gets his hands on the band, he is able to read it and eventually to translate it for Charikleia.<sup>52</sup> However, once the novel has shifted its scene to Ethiopia itself, Heliodorus twice makes clear that the royal family speaks Greek. First, when Theagenes and Charikleia are

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tense here, then, is the so-called “imperfect of refusal”, see Smythe (1972), n. 1896.

52 The message is transcribed in 4.8.1-8. Kalasiris' ability with Ethiopian is discussed above, p. 37. It may be worth mentioning that Persinna not only speaks Egyptian but is also literate. Literate women are not exceptional within the *Aethiopica* or the Greek novel in general.

brought before Hydaspes after the sack of Syene, Theagenes responds to Hydaspes' question about who they are by replying that they are Greek (and lying that they are siblings).<sup>53</sup> When Hydaspes turns to address Charikleia he does so in Greek, as the narrator informs us:

Καὶ ἀποστρέψας τὸν λόγον εἰς τὴν Χαρίκλειαν καὶ τὴν φωνὴν ἑλληνίζων, σπουδάζεται γὰρ ἤδη ἡ γλῶττα παρὰ τοῖς Γυμνοσοφισταῖς καὶ βασιλεῦσιν Αἰθιοπῶν, “Σὺ δὲ” ἔφη, “ὦ κόρη, τί σιγᾶς οὐδὲν ἀποκρινομένη πρὸς τὴν πεῦσιν;” (*Aethiopica* 9.25.3)

[Hydaspes] turned to address Charikleia, speaking Greek—for this language is studied by the Naked Sages (Gymnosophists) and the royalty of Ethiopia—said “you, my girl, why are you silent instead of answering the question?”

Hydaspes, having learned that Charikleia is Greek, Hydaspes switches perfectly into Greek to address her directly. This moment of code-switching is not only the kind act of a benevolent ruler, it is also an attempt to get direct answers on the confusing question of Charikleia's identity. Since Hydaspes had dreamed that a girl who looked exactly like Charikleia was his own daughter, the issue of Charikleia's identity is both of particular interest and extremely personal. By switching to Greek, Hydaspes excludes any non-Greek speakers in the vicinity and gets direct answers from Charikleia without the mediation of translators.<sup>54</sup>

Nor is this moment of code-switching unique. As the novel's final scene plays out at the celebrations in Ethiopia, Charikleia's revelations cause a disturbance that leads Sisimithres, the chief Gymnosophist, to switch to Greek so that the people are excluded from this sensitive matter.<sup>55</sup> The scene at this point largely unfolds in Greek, turning the scene into a kind of pantomime for the assembled Ethiopian crowd, and allowing Charikleia to fully participate. As Charikleia reveals her identity to her father, she does so in Greek, winning the help of her one-

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53 *Aethiopica* 9.25.2: Σιωπῶσης δὲ τῆς Χαρικλείας καὶ τοῦ Θεαγένους εἰπόντος ὡς ἀδελφοὶ καὶ Ἕλληνες... It is noteworthy that here again the language in which Theagenes is speaking is unmarked. The most likely reading is to understand him saying this in Egyptian, a language with which we now know he has some capability. In such a case, Hydaspes' understanding may rely on interpreters of Egyptian such as we know exist in his army. If we understand Theagenes to have spoken in Greek, the problem of Hydaspes' comprehension resolves itself, but we are left to explain why Theagenes believes speaking Greek would be productive.

54 All these actions are consonant with the development of the scene to come in the final book, analyzed in chapter five.

55 *Aethiopica* 10.9.6: Καὶ ὁ Σισιμίθρης “Εὐφήμησον” ἀπεκρίνατο, ἑλληνίζων ὥστε μὴ τὸ πλῆθος ἐπάειν...

time foster-father Sisimithres. Hydaspes' active participation in this Greek discussion is inline with his understanding of Greek as discussed above.

Persinna, on the other hand, responds at first mainly to visual cues, though her unmarked speech as part of the debate suggests her ability with Greek.<sup>56</sup> It is not impossible to imagine the queen piecing together what was happening based on the visual (as most of the Ethiopian audience does). Likewise, when she finally runs up and embraces her daughter, Persinna does not address her in Greek or in Ethiopian, but instead is so overwhelmed by emotion that she is only able to make a sound which the author describes as a bellow, using a word usually reserved for cattle (μυκηθμῶ, 10.16.1). At 10.21.3, however, Persinna's ability with Greek is finally confirmed. Charikleia and her mother finally talk to each other and, given Charikleia's devout monolingualism, this can only be understood to be in Greek.

It is possible but ill-advised to assign to Hydaspes some facility with other languages. As noted above, it seems likely that Theagenes speaks Egyptian at their first meeting, and Hydaspes understands even though the narrator does not assert the presence of any translators. Similarly at 9.26.2-3, Hydaspes addresses the Persian satrap Oroondates and Heliodorus makes no mention of any language barrier or code-switching. Both these conversations occur during a formal audience, in which Hydaspes surveys his captives and rewards his soldiers. It seems likely that at such an official moment translators were present even if the narrator does not explicitly describe them, especially given the already established presence of translators among the military.

Sisimithres presents one of the most interesting cases of bilingualism in the novel. We meet him twice, once in a doubly imbedded flashback from the time when Charikleia was given to her Greek foster-father Charikles, and again at the novel's conclusion, when Theagenes and

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<sup>56</sup> Persinna is first visually stunned by the appearance of the band on which she had composed her message to Charikleia, then speaks to Hydaspes (in an unmarked language) at 10.13.2. Again it is Charikleia's revelation of her black birthmark which stirs Persinna to fully recognize Charikleia as her daughter and run to her at 10.16.1.

Charikleia arrive in Egypt. What makes the gymnosophist Sisimithres so interesting is not that he is capable of speaking Greek—as we've seen above, this is in line with his position as an Ethiopian elite—instead it is the fact that his facility with Greek changes drastically between his two appearances.

The first appearance of Sisimithres is narrated by Kalasiris to Knemon. Kalasiris describes Charikles' account of his own time in Egypt in which he encountered the gymnosophist:

άνήρ τις πρόσεισι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα σεμνὸς ἰδεῖν καὶ ἀγχίνοιαν ἀπὸ τοῦ βλέμματος ἐμφανίζων ἄρτι μὲν τὸν ἔφηβον παραλλάξας τὴν χροιάν δὲ ἀκριβῶς μέλας καὶ με ἠσπάζετο καὶ τι βούλεσθαι ἰδίᾳ φράζειν ἔλεγεν ἑλληνίζων οὐ βεβαίως. (*Aethiopica* 2.30.1)

A man approached me whose eyes signaled his wisdom and who was otherwise too majestic in appearance. He had just passed the boundary of adulthood and his skin was exactly black. He greeted me and said that he wanted to show me something in private, speaking Greek poorly.

To an experienced reader of the novel, Charikles' physical description confirms Sisimithres' identity from the very outset. Sisimithres is black (and therefore Ethiopian); he has a kind of holy aura about him; even his eyes reveal a wisdom that belies his youth. When Sisimithres later goes into more detail about his own history and relationship with Charikleia, he indicates to Charikles that he has recently become a gymnosophist, and this explains his religious bearing and access to wisdom.<sup>57</sup> It is also no coincidence that this young neophyte of the naked sages only speaks Greek with problems. Surely, we are meant to connect his recent entry into this group of religious men who study Greek with his uncertain use of the Greek language. Even the words used to describe his Greek (οὐ βεβαίως, unsteadily) suggest more the faltering steps of inexperience than linguistic incompetence. We should note too that Heliodorus makes no effort to reproduce Sisimithres' linguistic tottering, even in his long speech describing how he came to be Charikleia's foster-father. The detail is clearly important enough to warrant inclusion but

<sup>57</sup> *Aethiopica* 2.31.1: οὐδὲ γὰρ ἦν μοι θεμιτὸν ἐν κινδύνῳ ψυχῆν ἅπαξ ἐνανθρωπήσασαν παριδεῖν, (ἐν γὰρ καὶ τοῦτο παράγγελμα τῶν γυμνῶν παρ' ἡμῖν σοφῶν ὧν ἀκουστής εἶναι χρόνοις ὀλίγῳ πρόσθεν ἤξιωμα).

Heliodorus has no desire to turn his novel into an Aristophanic parody of foreigner speech.<sup>58</sup>

When Sisimithres appears again at the novel's end, both his position and his linguistic capabilities are changed to a great extent. At 10.4.2, Sisimithres is identified as the leader of the gymnosophists, “the head-teacher of their council” (ὁ προκαθηγητής τοῦ συνεδρίου). This meteoric rise from neophyte adolescent to leader of his organization in less than a decade marks Sisimithres as particularly gifted, and is confirmed by his ability to predict the future.<sup>59</sup> When at 10.9.6, Sisimithres addresses Hydaspes in Greek, no mention is made of his ability with this language. While we cannot base our assessment of his linguistic ability on the fluent Greek speech on the page of the novel, it is important I think that here the narrator makes no comment on his linguistic ability. His Greek is no longer noteworthy for its halting, imperfect character and so he simply speaks. During the decade of Sisimithres' service as a Greek-studying gymnosophist, he moves from an unsteady speaker to an unremarkably fluent speaker of Greek. Heliodorus supplies all the information we need to know why this change comes about and it constitutes an exciting case of change in linguistic ability.

There are several reasons why Heliodorus might have made his gymnosophists speak Greek. Not least importantly, his predecessor, Philostratus, has his gymnosophists speak Greek in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the Andromeda myth, which is constantly in the background of Heliodorus' novel, forges an important link between Greece and Ethiopia that stretches back to a shared, imagined past. As I will argue in chapter five, it also seems likely that Heliodorus simply engages in linguistic anachronism, attributing the connection between Hellenism and elite status of his own time and place to a setting too early to be historically

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58 See Colvin (1999) and Willi (2002) and (2003).

59 At *Aethiopica* 10.4.3, he accurately predicts the return of Hydaspes and the arrival of a letter from the king to Persinna.

60 See Saïd (1992).

accurate. At any rate, Heliodorus bestows Greek upon his elite Ethiopians consistently and all of them make intelligent use of their abilities.

## The Unusual Case of the Eunuch Bagoas

The main contribution of the Eunuch Bagoas to the novel is to rescue Theagenes and Charikleia from the prison in Memphis and bring them to Syene for the Satrap Oroondates. We are told precious little about his background and therefore his linguistic abilities (namely his ability to speak Greek, albeit less than perfectly) come as a surprise, and a feature of the novel which is inadequately explained. Bagoas is introduced as “one of the Eunuchs whom Hydaspes trusted” and it is noteworthy that he is on campaign with Hydaspes not at the palace in Memphis with Arsake.<sup>61</sup> This is, in essence the only background we have to help explain why Bagoas will speak Greek. It is, of course, sensible that if Oroondates knew that Bagoas (of all his trusted eunuchs) knew Greek that he would choose Bagoas to be sent to escort these young Greek-speakers.

When Bagoas enters the cell in which Theagenes and Charikleia are trapped, accompanied by Euphrates, a fellow eunuch, the hero and heroine assume the worst and Theagenes launches into a brave speech lamenting the injustice and promising divine retribution for their maltreatment. While we might expect the eunuchs to be as uncomprehending of Theagenes' speech as the bandits were of Charikleia's similar speech at the novel's opening, that is not what we find. Instead, we are told that “the Eunuchs wept for them, having slightly understood what had been said” (Ἐπιδακρύσαντες οὖν οἱ εὐνοῦχοι, συνίεσαν γὰρ ἡρέμα τῶν

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61 *Aethiopica* 8.2.3 : Βαγῶαν τινὰ τῶν πεπιστευμένων εὐνούχων προσκαλεσάμενος... The name Bagoas is essentially a stock name for eunuchs, appearing in the works of Plutarch (*Alexander*; *Quomodo Adadulator*; *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna*) Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Arrian, Lucian (*Eunuch*), Josephus (*Antiquitates Judaeicae*) the Septuagint's , Book of Judith and more. Morgan (2008) p. 518 notes Pliny's claim at *Natural History* 13.41 that the name “Bagoas” was Persian for “Eunuch.” This collocation suggests the intriguing possibility that Bagoas Persian name masks a non-Persian identity.

λεγόμενων, *Aethiopica* 8.13.5). It is not at all clear why the Eunuchs should understand at all. Perhaps if we learned that they regularly dealt with Kybele or Arskae when either woman was using her Greek, we might have some reason. Heliodorus makes it clear, however, that they understood what was *said*, not simply what was meant, or what could be inferred from tone or body language. Nevertheless, it is also made clear that the eunuchs' comprehension is extremely limited.

After a long ride all night and until early morning, Bagoas, Charikleia, and Theagenes pause to rest and wait out the midday heat, and it is here that Bagoas' ability to speak Greek as well as partially understand it becomes clear. At first we are told only indirectly that Bagoas speaks with Charikleia and Theagenes, encouraging them to eat and allaying their fears that they are being led to their deaths.<sup>62</sup> When news arrives that Arsake has killed herself, however, the narrator switches to direct speech and has Bagoas deliver the news in a speech of some length.<sup>63</sup> The speech which the narrator reports in perfect Greek is tagged as less than perfect by a description at the end of the speech:

Ταῦτ' ἔλεγεν ὁ Βαγώας <ὡς> παραστησόμενος, ἀλλὰ ψελλιζόμενος τὴν Ἑλλάδα φωνὴν καὶ παράσημα τὰ πολλὰ ἐπισύρων... (*Aethiopica* 8.15.3)

Bagoas gave this speech in order to bring them over to his side, but he bumbled the Greek language and made many mistakes.

The contrast between Bagoas' clumsy and somewhat incompetent delivery and the Greek speech presented to the reader is curious and points up the limits of Heliodorus' engagement with the language barrier. No matter how bad a speaker is, Heliodorus refuses to inject barbarisms or solecisms into his novel's text. The sorts of mistakes Bagoas makes are no doubt the same kind of mistakes any speaker of a foreign language who is not yet fluent would make and they mark

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62 *Aethiopica* 8.14.4.

63 *Aethiopica* 8.15.2-3.

his status as a beginning or inexperienced speaker. Moreover, his speech's problems explain his failure to win over Theagenes and Charikleia in any significant way and signal his lack of effectiveness and influence in general. When the three are apprehended by the Ethiopian scouting party, it is Theagenes who will speak up even though the scout speaks Persian.<sup>64</sup> Thereafter Bagoas remains on the scene but becomes completely irrelevant and is eventually forgotten.

As for the primary question, however, of why Bagoas knows any Greek, Heliodorus is ultimately frustrating. It is tempting to see in this Heliodorus finally failing to fully motivate one of his characters' linguistic abilities. Unlike the Greek of the Egyptian priests discussed above and the Ethiopian elite discussed below, there seems to be no clear real-world cultural analog which might obviate the need for an explicit explanation. It seems unlikely that Persian eunuchs of Heliodorus' own era or any era were regularly familiar with Greek. And it is key that in Heliodorus' novel Bagoas does not seem to be a particularly unusual eunuch; Euphrates too knew some Greek and we might generalize from these two to the rest of the eunuchs of Memphis or even of the Persian Empire in general. The best explanation I can muster is that Heliodorus might anachronistically assume Greek to be a part of daily life in the court at Memphis as it is in his Ethiopia. If this were true, we might expect the eunuchs to have some familiarity with the language. Nevertheless, Bagoas' Greek proves to be the one significant bit of bilingualism which is not satisfactorily explainable.

## ***Conclusion***

Having explored the linguistic abilities and inventories of the novel's main characters, I would like to return to the issue with which we began this chapter, the question of Heliodorus'

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<sup>64</sup> See above, p. 31.

treatment of the language barrier in general. It must be acknowledged that Heliodorus engages with the language barrier extensively. Almost every significant character in the novel has some degree of bilingualism and several have more. Charikleia, the significant exception to this rule has not been overlooked, but rather has been strategically protected from multilingualism, a strategy that is especially intriguing given her hybrid racial and cultural status. Even when Heliodorus pushes against the reader's suspension of disbelief, like Theagenes' quick acquisition of Egyptian, he provides a method for learning the language, and a motivation. It should be noted too, that the *Aethiopica* presents a world that is not linguistically static. Over the course of the novel, characters gain facility with languages (Theagenes and Sisimithres are excellent examples) and even lose ability with languages (Charikleia).

If we return to the spectrum of linguistic realism with which we began this chapter, we will have to assign Heliodorus a place very near the right end of the spectrum. The case of Bagoas is a puzzle without a satisfactory answer and thus presents a slight lack of realism. It should be remembered, however, that Heliodorus' treatment of the Egyptian priests' languages and the Ethiopian elite's languages are only sensible and logical to us through inference built up by multiple characters and independent cultural knowledge. Heliodorus never feels the need to say “part of the job of being a priest in Egypt is learning Greek” though that sense comes through careful comparison of Thyamis and Kalasiris. The fact that we know more about the historical reality of Egyptian priests than that of Persian eunuchs also helps us interpret the priests' situation more clearly. There is a possibility that to Heliodorus' original audience, no explanation would be needed as to why a Persian eunuch living in 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Egypt should know any Greek. Given the generally well thought-out and rational explanation of most other linguistic phenomena in Heliodorus' novel, such a possibility seems even more likely.

The claim that Heliodorus' treatment of language is realistic is true, but falls short on two accounts. First, the label of realistic vs. unrealistic presents a dichotomy that is insufficiently nuanced to deal with with the range, and variety of linguistic phenomena to be represented. Secondly, while Heliodorus' presentation is largely realistic and it seems such was his goal, at times he falls short of his goal. Heliodorus's novel remains unique, however for its treatment of linguistic reality and presents a more nuanced, and complex picture than any other ancient Greek work.

## Chapter 2: Trust, Deceit, and Δίγλωσσοι

Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* presents one of Greek literature's most interesting representations of the language barrier in the Cassandra scene, which displays an early example of a nexus of related concerns that comes to its most developed form in Heliodorus' novel. Clytaemestra attempts to invite the Trojan prophetess Cassandra into the house but soon runs into what appears to be a lack of understanding due to Cassandra's foreignness. After briefly examining this moment from the *Agamemnon*, I will examine the inter-connected relationships of trustworthiness, deceit and bilingualism as Heliodorus portrays them. As I will argue, Heliodorus' handling of these issues represents the culmination of a long tradition within both Greek literature and wider Greek culture.

From lines 1035-1046 of Aeschylus' play, Clytaemestra invites Cassandra in to the house, ordering her to desist from her haughty resistance, and providing Heracles as a model of the noble who submits to slavery. The chorus responds by encouraging Cassandra to obey:

**Χο.** σοί τοι λέγουσα πάυεται σαφή λόγον·  
ἐντὸς δ' ἀλοῦσα μορσίμων ἀγρευμάτων  
πείθοι' ἄν, εἰ πείθοι'· ἀπειθοίης δ' ἴσως.  
**Κλ.** ἀλλ' εἴπερ ἐστὶ μὴ χελιδόνος δίκην  
ἀγνώτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον κεκτημένη,  
ἔσω φρενῶν λέγουσα πείθω νιν λόγῳ. (*Agamemnon*, 1047-52)

**Chorus:** She is done speaking this clear speech to you  
and you are caught within the fates' nets.  
You should obey, if you are convinced, but perhaps you aren't?  
**Clytaemestra:** Unless she, like the sparrow,  
has an unknown barbarian language,  
speaking reasonably, I should convince her with my speech.

The passage is not without its textual problems, but its sense is clear enough.<sup>1</sup> Clytaemestra and the chorus both believe that Clytaemestra's speech should have been enough to spur Cassandra

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1 See Fränkel (1950) v.2, p. 447-8 on the textual problems.

into action. Her lack of action provides a possibility whose novelty cannot be overstated: Cassandra might not speak Greek.

In part, this novelty derives from the fact that Homer (from whose “great banquet” Aeschylus' plays were considered “slices”) consistently downplays linguistic difference in his epics, to the extent that it is not clear whether the *Iliad's* Trojans even speak another language. Their allies certainly do, and a cluster of images near the end of book two and the beginning of book three uses the polyglot nature of the Trojan army to characterize the disorganized state of the Trojan forces.<sup>2</sup> It is important to Homer's poem, however, that the Greeks and Trojans are able to converse freely without need of interpreters.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, Clytaemestra presents the possibility of Cassandra's tongue being so foreign that it is not only gibberish, it is also “unknown” and “unknowable” (ἀγνώτα φωνὴν βάρβαρον).

The notion that the Trojan Cassandra might not speak Greek seems sensible enough, although its break with the Homeric precedent might have raised a few eyebrows in the original audience. Still, the linguistic realism implied by Clytaemestra's statement would have no doubt rung true to the Athenians familiar with foreign languages in the decades after the Persian wars. Although (as we shall see shortly) Cassandra does not in fact have any trouble speaking or understanding Greek, Aeschylus teases his audience with the possibility of a true barbarian on

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2 At *Iliad* 2.804, Iris (as Polites) describes the Trojans' allies as each having their own language (ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα πολυσπερέων ἀνθρώπων). At 2.867, the Carians are called barbarian-voiced (βαρβαροφώνων). At 3.2-3 the noise of the Trojan army is called a κλαγγή and compared to the sound of birds, though it is not clear whether this suggests unintelligibility of speech or just the noise of an army in armor. At 4.438 Homer describes the Trojans and their allies as having a mixed voice, since they are from many countries (ἀλλὰ γλῶσσα μέμικτο, πολύκλητοι δ' ἔσαν ἄνδρες). In all these cases, it is clear that language barriers exist *within* the Trojan army, but the poet never suggests any language barrier *between* the Trojans and the Achaeans. Ross (2005) argues that these passages draw attention to Achaean unity and characterize the Trojans as other, if not linguistically. As he says at p. 314 “the development of Panhellenism has been captured at a stage of an operationally but incompletely unified “us” versus a diverse, plural “those others.” Gera (2003) p. 1-4 also briefly addresses the issue.

3 Although Hilary Mackie's (1996), ch. 2, analysis of “Trojan Talk” points out important ways in which Trojan speech is different from that of Achaean speech, these differences occur on the levels of content and style not on the level of syntax, morphology or vocabulary.

his stage speaking a foreign, barbaric, Trojan language, as incomprehensible to the audience as to the Argives on stage. Indeed, Cassandra's long silence since her appearance on the stage seems to confirm the idea. Such a development would be shocking, and in fact Greek tragedy never goes so far as to present fully foreign speech on the stage.<sup>4</sup>

After Clytaemestra explains that she is in a hurry to start the sacrifice, she makes one last attempt to get through to Cassandra before hurrying inside:

**Κλ.** εἰ δ' ἀξυνήμων οὔσα μὴ δέχηι λόγον, (1060)  
 σὺ δ' ἀντὶ φωνῆς φράζε καρβάνωι χερὶ.  
**Χο.** ἐρμηνέως ἔοικεν ἡ ξένη τοροῦ  
 δεῖσθαι· τρόποσ δὲ θηρὸς ὡς νεαίρετον.  
**Κλ.** ἡ μαίνεταιαί γε καὶ κακῶν κλύει φρενῶν,  
 ἥτις λιποῦσα μὲν πόλιν νεαίρετον  
 ἤκει, χαλινὸν δ' οὐκ ἐπίσταται φέρειν  
 πρὶν αἱματηρὸν ἐξαφρίζεσθαι μένος. (*Agamemnon*, 1060-7)

**Clytaemestra:**... but if you're unintelligible, and can't get my speech, instead of your voice, make a sign with your barbarian hand.

**Chorus:** This foreign girl seems to need a smart interpreter. She acts like a freshly caught beast.

**Clytaemestra:** She's furious and listens with an evil heart since she left behind her freshly caught city and comes here, and now she does not know how to bear the rein until her bloody passion has boiled off.

This time, while the text is relatively secure, the interpretation of line 1061 is debatable.<sup>5</sup> Either way it is notable that the chorus becomes convinced that Cassandra is in fact ignorant of Greek.

Given the chorus' potential to stand in for the audience of the tragedy, we can see in this a further

4 Aeschylus does make use of foreign or loan words to flavor the speech of his foreign characters (particularly in the *Persians*, but also in the *Suppliants*.) Other tragedians seem to have followed suit somewhat, though whereas Aeschylus will let a loan word like βᾶρις or βαλὴν mark the speech as foreign, Euripides tends to simply have characters call their own or others' speech (or song) βάρβαρος. See Bacon (1961) for a full account of barbarians in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Comedy, on the other hand, as we will see below, does present foreign babble on stage. Willi (2003) ch.7 has an extensive treatment of "Foreigner Talk" as represented by Aristophanes based on modern linguistic study of the same. Willi (2002) has a more general treatment of *Languages on Stage* in Greek Comedy. Colvin's (1999) study of *Dialect in Aristophanes* is buttressed by a useful history of foreign speech in Greek literature before the late 5<sup>th</sup> century.

5 The line could also be understood as "you (chorus leader), instead of my voice, show her with your barbar-speaking hand." The version presented in the main text has the advantage of characterizing Clytaemestra as not exactly level-headed and making a mistake of the same sort as those who simply speak louder when faced with an uncomprehending listener. Fränkel (1950 v.2 p. 484-5) prefers this reading. The latter reading makes Clytaemestra a smarter responder to the language barrier, moving to a kind of nonverbal language (assault) now that words have failed. Needless to say, in performance the delivery of σὺ δ' would clarify this ambiguity.

move to convince the audience that a language barrier exists between Cassandra and the Greeks around her on stage. Furthermore, just as Clytaemestra compares Cassandra to a swallow, the chorus again compares her to a wild animal, a comparison equally appropriate for her inability to produce and understand intelligible (i.e. Greek) speech. The chorus even seems to suggest that Cassandra's case is particularly difficult; she not only seems to need an interpreter, but also a sharp one. Clytaemestra, however quickly changes her mind again and, before she returns to the interior of the palace, ascribes Cassandra's silence not to an inability to understand but to an unwillingness to cooperate born of anger.

Even as Clytaemestra abandons the notion that Cassandra is ignorant of Greek, the audience (like the chorus) is left with the reasonable suspicion that Cassandra will either remain silent or will speak a barbaric Trojan language on stage. When Cassandra finally does step out of her chariot and begin to speak, the audience's suspicions are not immediately rejected. She cries out in inarticulate grief “ὄτοτοτοτοῖ πόποι δᾶ / ὥπολλον ὥπολλον” (1072-3). The first two “words” are both paralinguistic, moans associated with the expression of certain negative emotions, but hardly “Greek words” in their own right. The first, ὄτοτοτοτοῖ, may even have had been felt to have an Eastern or foreign flavor to it, to judge from Aeschylus's use of the exclamation. Besides its use here by Cassandra, the geriatric Persian chorus of the *Persians* and the Greco-Egyptian suppliant chorus of the *Suppliants* are the only Aeschylean characters to lament in this exact way.<sup>6</sup> Outside of Aeschylus and the scholia on Aeschylus, only Euripides

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<sup>6</sup> Cassandra repeats her exclamation again at lines 1076-7. The other references are *Persians* 1043, 1051; *Suppliants* 889, 899. Heirman (1975) p. 257 asserts that the utterance belongs “to a very primitive level of language” and p. 259 examines ὄτοτοτοτοῖ and similar words. Although Heirman's interpretation fails to take into account Cassandra's status as foreigner/barbarian, his analysis of her performance as a kind of *glossolalia* or speaking in tongues, rife with religious overtones, is largely compatible with my reading of the passage. Aegisthus's cry at *Libation Bearers* 868 is a syllable shorter and the Chorus' at *Libation Bearers* 158 is a syllable longer. Both prove the possibility that a native Greek speaker might use the word, though the foreign feel of the word might be appropriate both for the chorus of slave women and for the feminized Aegisthus.

reuses the cry, in the mouth of the Trojan Hecuba.<sup>7</sup> Like the first “word,” πόποι too had something of a foreign flavor, at least for later readers.<sup>8</sup> Even Cassandra’s transition to the word “δα” is only vaguely Greek; Aeschylus’ scholiasts explain as a Doric form of γῆ, but it may not have been understood as such by the original audience.<sup>9</sup> Her calling upon Apollo (using the Greek form of his name) is the only Greek to be found, and barely makes her exclamation as a whole Greek. Her words contain only the simplest syntax easily mastered by non-native speakers: the vocative particle and the vocative form of the name Apollo. Even though Cassandra has now spoken good, grammatical Greek, its simplicity still leaves her linguistic status an open question.

Eventually Cassandra’s cries give way to fully developed sentences with Greek words and syntax and later she claims to know Greek “all too well”:

**Κα.** Ἀγαμέμνονός σέ φημ' ἐπόψεσθαι μόρον.  
**Χο.** εὐφημον, ὦ τάλαινα, κοίμησον στόμα.  
**Κα.** ἀλλ' οὔτι παιῶν τῶιδ' ἐπιστατεῖ λόγῳ.  
**Χο.** οὐκ, εἴπερ ἔσται γ'· ἀλλὰ μὴ γένοιτό πῶς.  
**Κα.** σὺ μὲν κατεύχῃ, τοῖς δ' ἀποκτείνειν μέλει. (1250)  
**Χο.** τίνος πρὸς ἀνδρὸς τοῦτ' ἄχος πορσύνεται;  
**Κα.** ἡ κάρτα <μακ>ρὰν παρεκόπησ χρησμῶν ἐμῶν.  
**Χο.** τοῦ γὰρ τελοῦντος οὐ ξυνῆκα μηχανήν.  
**Κα.** καὶ μὴν ἄγαν γ' Ἑλλήν' ἐπίσταμαι φάτιν.  
**Χο.** καὶ γὰρ τὰ πυθόκραντα, δυσμαθῆ δ' ὅμως. (*Agamemnon*, 1246-55)

**Cassandra:** I say that you will look upon Agamemnon's death  
**Chorus:** Be quiet, wretched woman and speak auspiciously!  
**Cassandra:** There is no healer Apollo for what I say.  
**Chorus:** No, if it is actually so, but may it somehow not be!  
**Cassandra:** You go and pray, but their concern is to slay.  
**Chorus:** By what man is this crime being plotted?  
**Cassandra:** How greatly you misunderstand my prophecies.  
**Chorus:** I cannot put together the design of the man bringing it to pass.  
**Cassandra: and yet I know the Greek language all too well**  
**Chorus:** yes, and so do oracles, but still they are hard to understand.

7 *Trojan Women* 1287, 1294.

8 Thus, the Scholia on the *Odyssey* (1.32) defines the word as a borrowing from the language of the Dryopians meaning “gods” (θεοί) a belief echoed by the scholia on Lycophron's *Alexandra* (943). The 12<sup>th</sup> century CE *Etymologicum Magnum* 823.32 suggests the word is Scythian and refers to ἀγάλματα ὑπόγαια τῶν θεῶν (subterranean statues of the gods).

9 *Scholia in Aeschylum* 841 and 1072 both offer the same etymology, but Heirman (1975) p. 260 n. and Fränkel (1962) v.3, p. 490 point out the possibility that the word might not be understood.

Given the way Aeschylus has drawn attention to the language barrier with the comments of Clytaemestra and the chorus, we cannot simply see Cassandra's Greek speech as a convention of stagecraft or genre, in which the foreigner is compelled to speak the language of her audience. Instead the audience is left to wrestle with an explanation both for Cassandra's facility with Greek and for the regret which prompts her to complain that she knows it all too well.

The most obvious (and, I think, correct) solution to this puzzle is to attribute Cassandra's ability with Greek to the same source as her knowledge about the fate of Agamemnon, namely the prophetic powers given to her by Apollo. The prophet's position is essentially the same as the interpreter's, responsible for communication across the barriers that separate gods from men and men from each other. Cassandra's knowledge seems to come from divine possession (rather than say, from augury or oneiromancy) but nevertheless involves interpreting information to which only she has access for a crowd who would be otherwise ignorant.

The figure of Cassandra also presents two ways of reacting to the information provided by such an interpreter: distrust, suspicion, and disbelief or trust and acceptance. The audience of the play, perhaps armed with the knowledge of Cassandra's plight, recognizes the truth of her words as regards both the past of the house of Atreus, the present crimes being prepared, and the slaughter to come.<sup>10</sup> The chorus too confirms the stories Cassandra tells as far as they can understand them, though some of Cassandra's riddling prophecies are too opaque for them to follow. On the other hand, while the audience and chorus generally trust Aeschylus' Cassandra in general, she makes clear that her prophecies were widely disbelieved.<sup>11</sup> Thus after describing the

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10 Schein (1982) indicates the importance of Cassandra and her scene to the audience's making sense of the events on stage, connecting, as she does, both chthonic and Olympian deities, past and present in one series of mad visions.

11 The clearest indication of this aspect of the tradition is Cassandra's own words at line 1212: ἔπειθον οὐδέν' οὐδέν, ὡς τὰδ' ἤμπλακον.

crimes of the past, Cassandra challenges the chorus with the questions “Did I hit my target, like a hunter shooting his prey, or am I a false prophet, begging and babbling at the door?”<sup>12</sup>

Cassandra's accurate prophecy proves she is not what she might be suspected to be, a false interpreter, playing on her audience's gullibility for her own gain.

Aeschylus' Cassandra is thus the mythological embodiment of the bilingual. She has access to special knowledge, and it is equally possible to trust her fully (as, in fact, she deserves) or to distrust her (as do the characters within the myths). As such, Cassandra expresses a tension that I will argue is never far away from bilingual characters in Greek literature, and is especially strong in Heliodorus' novel. This tension, between reliance and caution, trust and distrust of the bilingual, is based on the lived experience of Greek speakers and is reflected even in the language used to describe bilingualism. Aeschylus' handling of Cassandra illustrates his ability to play with generic conventions and point to the *realia* or the cross-cultural encounters depicted in his play, in its own way already an important antecedent for Heliodorus' treatment of the language barrier. Moreover, his use of the figure of Cassandra, a figure both trustworthy and untrusted, religiously inspired with special knowledge, and yet incapable of fully making use of that knowledge, acts as precedent for Heliodorus' novel, in which questions of trust and distrust, religion, and the language barrier will once again surface.

### ***Trust and Deceit in the Aethiopica***

I will argue in this chapter that the reality of ancient bilingualism produced a bifurcation of cultural attitudes toward bilingual individuals and that Heliodorus plays on this idea. These attitudes are both reflected in and produced by Greek literature which becomes both evidence of attitudes toward language and an important contributor to those attitudes. Bilingualism itself

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12 *Agamemnon* 1194-5: ἡμαρτον, ἢ θηρῶ τι τοξότης τις ὤς;/ ἢ ψευδόμαντῖς εἰμι θυροκόπος φλέδων;

tends to surface at different points on the socio-economic spectrum. Outside the upper classes, we should expect to find people whose bilingualism is dictated by the necessities of their lives. We might include among this category those who served as mercenaries abroad, merchants and others whose profession makes familiarity with foreign languages a necessity (either for buying and selling itself, or for the dealing with foreign officials which such business often entails), and the children of bicultural or bilingual households in Greece or abroad, whose linguistic knowledge is predicated on the knowledge of their parents.

All three of these types of bilingual are present in the *Aethiopica*. Although Knemon did not set out as a soldier of fortune, he has since become one and it becomes clear that he is valuable to Thyamis' band in part because of his Greek abilities--He is certainly not a valuable fighter.<sup>13</sup> Nausikles, the merchant from Naukratis, seems to know Persian well enough to both enlist the help of the local army and to lie to that army's commander for his own profit. Finally, the existence of a "half-caste" Greek among the Ethiopian army indicates that Heliodorus' world is as culturally complex among the anonymous lower classes as it is at the top.

On the other side of this bifurcation are the leisured bilinguals, people for whom the acquisition of a second language is done not out of strict necessity but rather out of a devotion to either pleasure or wisdom. In the *Aethiopica* this is most clearly demonstrated through the characters of Arsake (whose language learning is clearly based on pleasure, not duty) as well as the priestly class that includes Thyamis, Kalasiris, Sisimithres (and the rest of the gymnosophists), as well as Hydaspes and Persinna. The prominence of the priestly class in this novel among its bilinguals is no doubt a reflection of the religiosity with which the novel as a whole is infused.<sup>14</sup>

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13 On the character of Knemon, see Morgan (1989) and Jones (2006) p. 550 on the associations of Knemon's name with grumpy old men of comedy.

14 Morgan (2008) p. 350 draws the distinction between the religiose and the religious and makes a case for

This division between upper and lower-class bilingualism, however, is accompanied by another two-part division which largely corresponds to the class-based distinction, but does not map onto it exactly, namely a division between the trustworthy bilingual (largely coincident with priestly bilinguals) and the deceitful bilingual (of which, Mitranes is the best example). Kalasiris' complex status in the novel is underscored by the way in which he embodies both of these expectations of bilinguals, as a genuine and largely trustworthy prophet who is nevertheless capable of tremendous deceit.

This chapter will proceed to lay out in more detail the specific cases of the trustworthy religious bilingual (as represented by Sisimithres in addition to Homer), the deceitful bilingual (as represented by Mitranes and foreshadowed in Greek literature by characters like Pseudo-Artabas), and finally return to the curious collocation of these attitudes in Kalasiris.

### ***Religious and Trustworthy Bilinguals***

Sisimithres, the Ethiopian who takes care of the abandoned Charikleia until entrusting her to Charikles and who, a decade later, presides over the council of gymnosophists, is a particularly interesting character with whom to begin my analysis of trustworthiness because of the way he develops over the course of the novel. When we first meet him, he is a neophyte in the college of Gymnosophists and has been dispatched to Katadoupoi in Egypt to treat with the Satrap over the emerald mines at Syene. It is there that he approaches Charikles, who has wandered to Egypt himself in search of consolation and esoteric knowledge. Charikles' description of the scene draws attention to both the language barrier and the mercantile nature of

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Heliodoros' lack of serious dedication to his religious themes. The importance of religious themes to the text has long been a matter of scholarly debate especially in the wake of Kerényi (1927) and Merkelbach (1962) who made religion the primary aspect of the novel. Anderson (1982) suggests a more playful approach to the religion in the novel, while Dowden (1996) takes a more serious tack. Zeitlin (2008) provides a useful overview of the debate and the stakes.

the interaction:

άνήρ τις πρόσεισι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα σεμνὸς ἰδεῖν καὶ ἀγχνίοιαν ἀπὸ τοῦ βλέμματος ἐμφανίζων ἄρτι μὲν τὸν ἔφηβον παραλλάξας τὴν χροιάν δὲ ἀκριβῶς μέλας καὶ με ἠσπάζετο καὶ τι βούλεσθαι ἰδίᾳ φράζειν ἔλεγεν ἐλληνίζων οὐ βεβαίως. Ἐμοῦ δ' ἐτόιμωσ ὑπακούσαντος εἰς τινα νεῶν παρακείμενον εἰσαγαγὼν “ φύλλα τινὰ σε καὶ ρίζας” ἔφη “ τῶν Ἰνδικῶν καὶ Αἰθιοπικῶν καὶ Αἰγυπτίων ὠνούμενον ἐώρακα· εἰ δὴ οὖν ἀκραιφνῆ ταῦτα καὶ δόλου παντὸς ἐκτὸς ὠνεῖσθαι βουλευθείης, ἔτοιμος παρέχειν.” “ Βούλομαι” ἔφη “ καὶ δείκνυε.” Ὁ δὲ “ ὄψει μὲν” εἶπεν, “ ὅπως δὲ μὴ μικρόλογος ἔση περὶ τὴν ἀγοράν.” “ Σαυτῶ παρεγγύα” ἔφη “ μὴ βαρύτιμον εἶναι περὶ τὴν διάπρασιν.” (*Aethiopica* 2.30.1-2)

A man came up to me, who was generally solemn-looking and whose eyes signaled his shrewdness. He had just entered manhood and his skin was pure black. He greeted me and said that he wanted to show me something in private, speaking Greek unsteadily. When I agreed, he led me into a temple that was nearby and said “I saw you buying some herbs and roots from India, Ethiopia, and Egypt. So if you would like to buy some pure specimens with no tricks, I am ready to provide them.” “I’d like to.” I said, “Show them to me.” and he said, “You will see them but you had better not haggle about the sale.” “Take care” I said, “not to set extortionate prices.”

The setting is clearly a mercantile one, framed by Charikleia's shopping for herbs and roots, and despite Sisimithres' solemn appearances (σεμνὸς ἰδεῖν), his shrewd eyes are an ambiguous sign.

They might be the eyes of a merchant who knows how to take advantage of unsuspecting tourists, or (as they are) the eyes of a man of unsurpassed wisdom.<sup>15</sup> His black skin and his imperfect Greek mark him as barbarian, though Heliodorus' description merits some further thought. His skin is precisely black (τὴν χροιάν δὲ ἀκριβῶς μέλας), while his Greek is present but weak (ἐλληνίζων οὐ βεβαίως).<sup>16</sup> The word ἀκριβῶς and the related verb is used elsewhere in the novel to describe mastery of foreign languages.<sup>17</sup> The description thus marks Sisimithres as thoroughly biologically foreign while culturally ambiguous, a situation which prompts several questions: Why does he know Greek? With whom does he usually speak Greek? The true answers will be revealed in the course of the novel, but for now the only apparent answer is that

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15 They also recall Charikleia's mysterious eyes, by which Sisimithres was seduced upon finding her as an infant at *Aethiopica* 2.31.1.

16 Shalev (2006) p. 184-6 likewise analyzes this scene and notes as well the importance of Sisimithres' foreignness to the linguistic framing of his speech.

17 Heliodorus uses the word in a variety of meanings mostly specifying precision of time, definition, or clarity of idea, but the verb ἀκριβῶ is also used of mastery of skills including Thyamis' mastery of language at *Aethiopica* 1.19.3. Heliodorus use of the term in the context of precision of understanding is paralleled by the papyrus fragment W. Chr. 50, Fr. II 7-9, in which a man writing to his brother switches from Greek to Egyptian when narrating a dream so that his brother “might know it more accurately” (ὅπως ἀκριβῶς εἰδῆς).

this man is exactly what he appears to be, a merchant.

This impression about Sisimithres is confirmed by his boasting of the quality of his own wares (ἀκραίφνη ταῦτα) and promise to sell them honestly (δόλου παντὸς ἐκτός).<sup>18</sup> The first is undoubtedly true, as the wares he reveals first include pearls, emeralds, sapphires, and other brilliant gems. Two points, however, should be made about his claim to honesty. First, his advertisement that *this sale* will be transacted without guile implicitly asserts that other merchants are less honest. The common claim reveals general cultural expectations. Secondly, we should note that Sisimithres' actions are hardly straightforward. He lures Charikles into the temple on the promise of selling him herbs and roots and thereupon proceeds to show him gems. The Ethiopian then promises to give these to Charicles on the condition that he accept another gift to be identified the following day and which turns out to be Charikleia. Sisimithres is not out to con or cheat Charikles, but he is less than completely honest and seems to have taken it upon himself to play the part of the merchant just far enough to get Charikles alone. While his knowledge of Greek exists for reasons beyond the present scheme, Sisimithres need not have only had a limited grasp of Greek. Heliodorus might have made him perfectly fluent already. Instead, his limited speaking ability contributes to the impression that he is no more than a dealer of herbs (or gems), a dealer whose bilingualism can be attributed to his mercantile aspirations and whose skills with the language are no greater than a merchant's skills need be.<sup>19</sup> This impression is confirmed by Charikles' cautious responses. Although Sisimithres has a solemn, and potentially trustworthy appearance, Charikles is careful to insist that he keep his prices low

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18 Shalev (2006) p. 184 ff. argues that the mercantile nature of the scene does much to characterize it. See also Rotolo (1972).

19 The fact that the speech he delivers is, in fact, in perfectly good Greek should not suggest that his limited grasp with Greek is only a pretense. It is Heliodorus' standard procedure to comment that a character speaks Greek poorly and then provide direct speech without problem. The reader is left to imagine the solocisms, accent, or difficulty in pronunciation for himself.

and not overcharge him, signalling a reasonable distrust.

In spite of the attention I have just drawn to the ways in which Sisimithres presents himself as a suspicious character, his revelation of his status both reveals the true origins of his bilingualism and provides a truer account of his trustworthiness. At 2.31.1, Sisimithres indicates his recent entry into the “gymnosophists,” the religious/philosophical group who act as advisers for the Ethiopian royalty. Heliodorus will later indicate that Greek holds a special place among this group, but even for the first time reader of Heliodorus, for whom the connection between the Greek language and the gymnosophists has not been made explicit, several things merit notice. The idea of gymnosophists, experts in eastern wisdom seems to be clearly borrowed from Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, which likewise presents the gymnosophists as Hellenophiles and speakers of Greek.<sup>20</sup> Readers familiar with Philostratus' gymnosophists (or those of other writers) will be primed to correctly assume that Sisimithres is a trustworthy religious figure whose ability with Greek can now be attributed not to mercantile motives but rather to intellectual ones. When at 2.31.5, he explains his trust in Charikles by saying that he has observed him and judged his character to be “truly Greek” (Ἑλληνικὸν ὄντα τῷ ὄντι), he not only aligns himself with a Hellenocentric point of view, in which Greekness and decency are conflated; he also makes a prediction that Charikles will treat Charikleia humanely and with love, a prediction that does in fact come true.

When Sisimithres returns to the plot at the novel's end, he has blossomed from the nervous initiate, whose fumbling Greek marked his novice status within the gymnosophists, into the president of the organization, in full command of his priestly powers and his linguistic abilities, and who has a clever political head to boot. After the siege of Syene has been

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<sup>20</sup> Philostratus, *Apollonius* 6.6. The Greek imagination easily linked Ethiopia and India as places with dark-skinned inhabitants, in addition to the general geographic confusion about the location of Ethiopia (which is sometimes located in the far east instead of the south of Egypt).

successfully concluded, Hydaspes notifies both Persinna and the Gymnosophists of his return, and Sisimithres reveals a particular gift for prophecy:

Καὶ τῶν ἄλλων σιγῶντων ὁ προκαθηγητῆς τοῦ συνεδρίου Σισιμίθρης “ὦ Περσίinna” ἔλεγεν “ἡμεῖς μὲν ἤξομεν, οἱ θεοὶ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπουσι· θόρυβον δὲ τινα καὶ ταραχὴν προμηνύει τὸ δαιμόνιον, ἔσομένην μὲν παρὰ τὰς θυσίας εἰς ἀγαθὸν δὲ καὶ ἡδὺ τὸ τέλος καταστρέψουσιν, ὡς μέλους μὲν ὑμῶν τοῦ σώματος ἡ μέρους τῆς βασιλείας ἀπολωλότος, τοῦ πεπρωμένου δὲ εἰς τότε τὸ ζητούμενον ἀναφαίνοντος.” Καὶ ἡ Περσίinna “Τὰ τε φοβερὰ” ἔφη “καὶ πάντα τὴν πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ἔξει μεταβολὴν ὑμῶν παρόντων. Ἄλλ’ ὅταν αἴσθωμαι προσάγοντα Ὑδάσπην, σημαίνω πρὸς ὑμᾶς.” “Οὐδὲν δεῖ” ἔφη “σημαίνειν” ὁ Σισιμίθρης, “ἤξει γὰρ αὔριον ὄρθριος· καὶ τοῦτό σοι γράμμα μηνύσει μικρὸν ὕστερον. Καὶ ἐγένετο οὕτως.” (*Aethiopica* 10.4.2-4)

While the rest remained silent the head teacher of the council, Sisimithres, said “Persinna, we shall come; the gods are so inclined. But the divine foretells some confused disturbance which will disrupt the sacrifices but will in the end turn out well and pleasurable: one of your limbs or some part of the kingdom has been lost but fate is revealing what has been sought up till then.” And Persinna said “Anything fearful will have a change for the better if you all are present. When I hear that Hydaspes is approaching, I will give you a sign.” “There is no need for a sign” Sisimithres said “he will arrive tomorrow morning; a letter will indicate this to you in a short while. And that’s exactly what happened.”

The gymnosophist's response begins in a generic enough way. The priests have consulted the gods about whether they should participate in a certain ceremony and the gods have indicated that this is favorable. However, Heliodorus has Sisimithres quickly indicate the extent of the Gymnosophists' powers by having him predict the commotion which Charikleia's recognition (and salvation) will create. The prophecy functions in the way that Tim Whitmarsh and others have elaborated, both indicating the delay which will constitute this tenth book and reassuring the audience that in the end, all will be well.<sup>21</sup> Even if Persinna fails to recognize whom “the limb” or “the part of the kingdom” refers to, the audience cannot help but understand that Charikleia is indicated and that her recognition and reintegration into her home society is, if not imminent, at least in the cards. This prophecy also helps to confirm the powers of the gymnosophists and aligns them both with the practitioners of good (heavenly) magic as outlined by Kalasiris and the divine (and thereby the author).<sup>22</sup> The gymnosophists, like the author

21 Whitmarsh's (2011) reading draws attention to the pull between desire to finish the novel and the desire to delay the ending and thereby extend the enjoyment of reading. On p. 191 ff. Whitmarsh engages specifically with the questions of teleology and prophecies in the novels.

22 On good and bad magic in the novel, see Jones (2005). I return to the question of the connection between the gymnosophists and the author in my final chapter.

promise the reader that the novel will end with pleasure (ἡδύ) and with benefit to the reader (ἀγαθόν).

The importance of interpretation in the passage should be underscored. Persinna promises to “signal” (σημαίνειν) rather than “tell” the gymnosophists when Hydaspes is about to arrive, although what this signal might consist of is far from clear. The gymnosophists, however, have no need of a signal from Persinna because they are already capable of interpreting the signals from the divine. The divine indicates (προμηνύει) the future to the priests, enabling them to predict not only the commotion but also the letter which will come to Persinna from Hydaspes and the time and day of Hydaspes arrival. Neither Heliodorus nor the gymnosophists make clear the process by which they have acquired this prophetic information but the verbs make clear that the process is an interpretive one. The vagueness of the divinity providing this information (τὸ δαιμόνιον) argues against a direct communication with the god of the sort one might expect, say, of Apollo at Delphi or Zeus Ammon at Siwa. Instead, we are left with the distinct impression that somehow or other the priests have reached these conclusions on their own, whether through augury or some other form of observation. The exact method is less important than that the method requires interpretation of divine will. The notion that this prophetic information comes from an interpretive process is, I think, key to understanding the way Heliodorus links multilingualism with the divine and thereby with trust. Communication with the divine is always a moment when the language barrier is present and here, as throughout the chapter, I would like to turn to the way archaic and classical Greek poetry prefigure this important connection.

Even in Homeric epic, the gods must transform themselves vocally before they address mortals.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the poet shows an awareness of a few words of “the language of the

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<sup>23</sup> See Clay (1974) and Gera (2003). Cf. Plutarch, *de Genio Socratis* 588d ff. in which it is suggested that the divine might communicate through unspoken, voiceless words.

gods.” A typical example is the river which Men call Scamandros but which the gods call Xanthos.<sup>24</sup> Although scholars have posited a range of explanations for these individual words (leftovers from a pre-Greek substratum or the incorporation of poetic variants), their function within the poem also acknowledges two relevant ideas. First, because the gods possess their own language, they are marked as alien and other. As in the tale of the Tower of Babel, linguistic differences mark (or create) lack of harmony and cooperation. This effect is heightened since the Greeks and the Trojans seem to possess a common language (or at least, the poet never asserts that they have any trouble communicating).<sup>25</sup> Secondly, by revealing these words of the divine language, the poet asserts his place as the intermediary between humans and divine, an interpreter, capable of speaking both languages and translating for the audience to whom he speaks. This posture need not assume that the poet has any more developed a concept of the divine language than the few words mentioned in the poems.<sup>26</sup> Like the poet's invocation of the muse, his inclusion of divine language contributes to his trustworthiness. He must be divinely inspired; how else would he know the gods' language?

Sisimithres, like the poet, makes use of his access to divine revelation not only to inform his decision, but also to assert the gymnosophists' place on Ethiopia's moral high ground. In the confrontation to come between Hydaspes and Charikleia, the king will be bound by law regarding first fruits human sacrifice and will follow the letter of the law even as he connives to avoid its deployment against his daughter. The gymnosophists, however, will take a firm stand

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24 *Iliad* 1.303; 2.83-14; 14.290-1; 20.74; *Odyssey* 10.305; 12.61. Güntert (1921) is the classic study, though more recently Gera (2003) p. 49-54, Bader (1989), Watkins (1995) and (1970) are all of interest.

25 The fact that Attic tragedy later associated Troy with the Phrygian language is interesting, but of course, not a reflection of the way things are in the Homeric poems.

26 And indeed, it is worth mentioning the unique character of the divine language as represented in Homeric poetry. The only words referenced are all nouns, all “names” for things. Verbs, adjectives and other parts of speech are absent as is any notion of syntactical difference. Divine language appears to be no more than a one-for-one substitution of words, especially nouns. (A notion in line with the general tendency of Greek writers, who found foreign words interesting but showed little interest in what we would call comparative grammar or syntax). See Dubuisson (1983), Werner (1983), and Lejeune (1949).

against the immoral law, and will in the end see it abolished. When on Hydaspes' behalf, Persinna asks the gymnosophists to join the sacrifice, they agree only after determining that the gods do not forbid it (οἱ θεοὶ γὰρ ἐπιτρέπουσι, 10.4.2). This should not only be seen as a reflection of the group's pious behavior but also their political status. They come not because the king or queen say so, but because the gods say so (or rather, because they say the gods say so). Likewise, when the queen attempts to reassert control by telling them that she will inform them when the king is on his way, the gymnosophists take recourse to their interpretation of the divine to gain the upper hand again. The place of Sisimithres and of the gymnosophists in general within Ethiopian society seems dependent on their status to interpret the language of the gods (however we understand that they do so). Their ability to cross this “language barrier” is an important parallel to their ability to cross the language barrier between Greek and Ethiopian, a barrier actively deployed at the novel's end.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Untrustworthy and Deceitful Bilinguals***

On the opposite end of the spectrum from the piously religious Sisimithres, stands the Greek merchant Nausikles. While Sisimithres may play the deceptive merchant as part of his attempts to do the right thing, Nausikles is authentically deceptive. A morally ambiguous character, he is driven almost exclusively by a lust for profit. While Nausikles comes to the unintentional aid of Charikleia (and thereby Kalasiris, and Knemon), his motivations are always suspect and the linguistic ability which allows him to come to Charikleia's rescue are not only deployed deceptively, but are also in and of themselves a demonstration of the merchant's slippery allegiances.

In chapter one, I briefly discussed the scene in which Nausikles rescues Charikleia from

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<sup>27</sup> The alternation between Greek and Ethiopian in the novel's final book will be explored in my final chapter.

the Persian Mitranes, the commander of the Satrap's guards and I would like to visit the scene again here. Although the passage provides the evidence that Mitranes is, in fact, bilingual, it is equally noteworthy for the way it characterizes him as profit-driven and deceitful:

Ὡς οὖν ἀγόμενοι πλησίον οἱ περὶ τὸν Θεαγέην ὤφθησαν θεοὺς σωτῆρας ἐπιβοώμενοι πολλάκις, ἐμπορικόν τι καὶ δραστήριον ἐννοήσας ὁ Ναυσικλῆς ἐξήλατό τε καὶ προσδραμών “ Ἀὐτὴ ἐκείνη Θίσβη” κεκραγῶς ἔλεγεν “ ἦν ἀφηρέθη μὲν πρὸς τῶν ὀλέθρων βουκόλων ἔχω δὲ διὰ σέ, Μιτράνη, καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς.” Ἐδράττετό τε τῆς Χαρικλείας καὶ χαίρειν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν ἐνεδείκνυτο καὶ τῇ Χαρικλείᾳ Θίσβην ὁμολογεῖν ἑαυτὴν εἰ βούλοιοτο σῶζεσθαι παρεκελεύετο, ἡρέμα καὶ ἑλληνιστὶ παραφθεγγόμενος ὡς ἂν λανθάνοι τοὺς παρόντας· καὶ τοῦ σοφίσματος ἔτυχεν· ἡ γὰρ δὴ Χαρίκλεια γλώσσης τε ἑλληνίδος αἰσθομένη καὶ τι καὶ συνοῖσον ἀνύεσθαι πρὸς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς στοχαζομένη συνύφαινε τὸν σκοπὸν καὶ τῷ Μιτράνῃ πυνθανομένῳ τίς ποτε καλοῖτο Θίσβην ἑαυτὴν ὠμολόγει. (*Aethiopica* 5.8.3-4)

Now when he saw Theagenes and those around him were being led nearer and repeatedly invoking the gods to save them, Nausikles came up with something clever and mercantile. He sprung up and ran towards them yelling, “That’s her! That’s Thisbe, the one who was kidnapped from me by those cruel herdsmen but whom I have recovered because of you, Mitranes, and the gods!” He held onto Charikleia and pretended to be exceedingly happy and advised Charikleia to agree that she was Thisbe if she wanted to be rescued, whispering in Greek so that the others there wouldn’t catch it. And the trick worked; Charikleia, both hearing his Greek speech and guessing she would get something useful out of him, joined in weaving his goal and, when Mitranes inquired what she was called, she gave the same story—that she was Thisbe.

Nausikles' clever plan is not described as charitable, but rather as mercantile (ἐμπορικόν) and there are at least two senses in which this is true. In the first sense, Nausikles' acquisition of this attractive girl (whom he does not yet know is his guest's adoptive daughter) is a step in a plan to reap a profit by selling the girl to the queen of Ethiopia.<sup>28</sup> Nausikles had enlisted the help of Mitranes to find Thisbe for the same purpose, and it is clear that he views this substitution as a windfall, his merchandise lost only to reappear in even better quality. In the second sense, however, Nausikles' plan is ἐμπορικός because it is deceitful and self-serving. The deceptive merchant is a stock character and a stereotype that no doubt had its real life analogs and Nausikles embodies that stereotype wholly here, in his words and his deeds. It is no surprise that the word ἐμπορικός could also be applied to outlandish and unbelievable stories;<sup>29</sup> merchants'

28 This theme is discussed more fully in chapter three.

29 Polybius 4.39.11 explicitly contrasts true *aitia* of the currents from the Pontus to the merchant stories: Αἱ μὲν οὖν ἀληθεῖς αἰτίαι τοῦ ρεῖν ἔξω τὸν Πόντον αἰδ' εἰσίν, οὐκ ἐξ ἐμπορικῶν ἔχουσαι διηγημάτων τὴν πίστιν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν θεωρίας, ἧς ἀκριβεστέραν εὐρεῖν οὐ ῥάδιον.

stories could be exotic and entertaining but they were so untrustworthy, that they were to be looked on with suspicion.

The connection between multilingualism and deceitful behavior as exemplified by Mitrane is an understated one, but a scene from Aristophanes' *Acharnians* presents the connection more explicitly. Early in the play, While Dikaeopolis attends the Athenian assembly, he meets and confronts the Athenian ambassador to Persia, as well as Pseudo-Artabas, “the King's Eye.” After lamenting his “hardships,” namely the luxury in which he lived while in Persia, the ambassador instructs Pseudo-Artabas to speak:

**Πρ.** ἄγε δὴ σὺ, βασιλεὺς ἄττα σ' ἀπέπεμψεν φράσον  
λέξοντ' Ἀθηναίοισιν, ὧ Ψευδαρτάβα.  
**Ψε.** ἰαρταμὰν ἐξάρξαν ἀπισσόνα σάτρα.  
**Πρ.** ξυνήκαθ' ὃ λέγει;  
**Δι.** μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω ἔγω μὲν οὐ.  
**Πρ.** πέμψειν βασιλέα φησὶν ὑμῖν χρυσίον.  
**Πρ.** λέγε δὴ σὺ μείζον καὶ σαφῶς τὸ χρυσίον.  
**Ψε.** οὐ λῆψι χρυσό, χαυνόπρωκτ' Ἴαοναῦ.  
**Δι.** οἴμοι κακοδαίμων, ὡς σαφῶς.  
**Πρ.** τί δαὶ λέγει;  
**Δι.** ὅ τι; χαυνοπρώκτους τοὺς Ἴάονας λέγει,  
εἰ προσδοκῶσι χρυσίον ἐκ τῶν βαρβάρων.  
**Πρ.** οὐκ, ἀλλ' ἀχάνας ὅδε γε χρυσίου λέγει. (*Acharnians*, 98-108)

**Ambassador:** Come on, you, tell the Athenians  
what the King sent you to say, Pseudo-Artabas.

**Pseudo-Artabas:** *iar taman exarxan apissona satra*

**Ambassador:** You get what he said?

**Dikaeopolis:** By Apollo, I did not!

**Ambassador:** He said that the king will send you all gold.

**Ambassador:** (turning to Pseudo-Artabas) You, say more about the gold, and say it clearly

**Pseudo-Artabas:** you will not getting goldo, open-assed Ionios

**Dikaeopolis:** God Damn—That was clear enough!

**Ambassador:** What on earth did he say?

**Dikaeopolis:** What?! He said that they've got gaping assholes  
if they expect gold from the barbarians.

**Ambassador:** No! *He said* you'll get the gold no hassle!<sup>30</sup>

Whether line 100 is authentically Persian or not, it marks a remarkable innovation in the presentation of the language barrier.<sup>31</sup> Barbarian speech, represented here on stage, forces the

30 I quote here Jeffery Henderson's (1992) superbly clever and readable handling of the ambassador's attempts to massage the truth into believable fiction.

31 The innovation is paralleled and superseded by Hanno's extended Punic or Pseudo-Punic speech in the opening

audience to rely on the interpretive skills of the Ambassador in order to make sense of the incomprehensible message. Dikaeopolis' exasperated confession that he did not understand voices the audience's frustration, while his swearing by the god of prophecy and interpretation is not only theologically precise, but evidently efficacious. Because Pseudo-Artabas' second statement is infinitely more Greek than the first (although it does preserve some elements of "foreigner talk"), the audience and Dikaeopolis are simultaneously able to understand the true meaning of the statement ("you won't get gold") and to detect the ambassador's lies.<sup>32</sup>

It seems clear that the Ambassador *should* be able to translate these statements correctly, especially given his eleven-year service in Persia. It is not the case that he is simply incompetent; rather, it is clear that he is criminally treasonous. He aims to continue his luxurious office abroad and be treated as an honored guest in Athens, even if it means giving the Athenians false hope of Persian aid. And much to Dikaeopolis' chagrin, this is exactly what he gets. Like Nausikles, the Ambassador deploys his ability with multiple languages to abuse the power which those languages give him. Like Nausikles, he is able to play one side off the other, and make a mint doing so.

Moreover, the ambassador provides a perfect example of the danger a bilingual individual represents to the monolingual society. As the representative of Athens, he should be acting in the interests of his *polis*, but just as he has acquired some facility with the Persian tongue, he has also developed a taste for Persian life, and essentially has Medized in allegiance as well as language. Because the Athenians of the play are dependent on his linguistic skills and position, they (unlike Dikaeopolis and the audience) are unable to detect his deception and treason. The case of Nausikles is somewhat more complicated; his home city of Naukratis has no ties to any

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of Act 5 of Plautus' *Poenulus* (lines 930-949). On which, see below, p.193.  
32 On "Foreigner Talk" see Willi (2003) ch. 7.

one Greek *polis* and is geographically Egypt, and politically controlled by the Persians. While it is not clear where exactly Nausikles' loyalties should lie, it is obvious that he, like the ambassador, would be willing to play any side off any other in order to achieve his personal and financial ends, and that his linguistic skills are an essential part of the toolkit which allows him to do so. The fact that Mitranes is deceived by his ignorance of Greek into believing that Charikleia actually is Thisbe demonstrates precisely the vulnerability of monolinguals which bilinguals can seek to exploit.

This association of untrustworthiness with bilingualism is confirmed in a surprising way by the history of the word δίγλωσσος and related words (δίγλωττος, διγλωσσία).<sup>33</sup> The earliest uses of the word including that of Thucydides at 8.85.2 demonstrate that the original meaning is the same as the English “bilingual” referring to someone who speaks two languages. Later sources, most prominently the Septuagint and Christian sources of late antiquity and the byzantine period, use the word to mean “duplicitous,” a meaning paralleled by the use of Latin *bilinguis*. The English idiom “to be two-faced” captures the logic of this semantic shift, while the idiom “to speak with forked tongue” connects the duplicity with the slippery anatomy of the snake. Despite the fact that it first appears in literature associated with the Near East, this second meaning of δίγλωσσος does not seem to be a calque or imported word, but rather reflects the ideas of Greek-speakers towards foreigners, an attitude which is both reflected by and a product of characters like Pseudo-Artabas and Mitranes.

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33 See Appendix 1 for a more detailed treatment of the semantic evolution of the word than this chapter can support. Δίγλωσσος is not the only word speakers of Greek could use to describe people with two or more languages. Julius Pollux lists as synonyms πολύγλωττος, ἀλλόγλωσσος, ὁμόγλωσσος at 2.108 and adds δίφωνος and πολύφωνος at 5.154. Such words, while less common than δίγλωσσος, were not uncommon and do not undergo the same semantic shift I will describe for δίγλωσσος. The idea of *two* rather than *more than two* seems to be essential to duplicity and the analogy of the snake's tongue makes γλώσση more appropriate than φωνή (which is more readily used for monsters like Typhon). At any rate, it is not surprising that the cultural attitudes which enabled the semantic shift of one word did not drag all other words for multilingualism with it, nor does the lack of semantic shift in those words disprove the cultural attitude.

A speaker of multiple languages always has the power to deceive his monolingual associates and this is especially true when, like a profit-driven merchant or a treasonous ambassador, the bilingual has an incentive to do so. To at least some Greeks and in at least some circumstances, a person with multiple languages at his disposal deserved to be treated with caution and disbelief, a fact that is reaffirmed by Heliodorus' treatment of Kalasiris.<sup>34</sup>

### **Kalasiris**

Kalasiris is, of course, one of Heliodorus' most richly drawn and fascinating characters and as a result has earned a special place in scholarship on the novel. The most famous examination of the character is the landmark article by Jack Winkler entitled *The Mendacity of Kalasiris and the Narrative Strategy of Heliodorus' Aithiopia*.<sup>35</sup> Winkler's wide-ranging article is framed by two problems:

The troubling aspect of Kalasiris' character, as some readers feel it, is the tension between his **oft-alleged wisdom, piety, virtual sanctity** on the one hand, and **his outrageous mendacity** on the other. Kalasiris is boldly and repeatedly deceitful, cozening anyone—and there are many—who might stand in the way of his success in getting Charikleia and her lover to Aithiopia. The second problem could be seen to stem from the first: one particular lie which Kalasiris seems to tell in his long narrative to Knemon is that after exiling himself from Memphis he happened to arrive at Delphi and while there happened to discover that Charikleia was actually the princess of Aithiopia. But he later mentions that he had in fact already visited Aithiopia and undertaken at the queen's request to search for her long-lost daughter. (Winkler (1982) p. 286, emphasis mine.)

Winkler makes a strong case for the identification of Kalasiris with the novelist, and thus his consequent identification of Kalasiris' deception with the numerous ways in which an author as sophisticated as Heliodorus good-naturedly deceives his readers, thus absolves Kalasiris of the negative associations of the charges leveled against him. Yes, Kalasiris deceives, but this is part of telling a good story.<sup>36</sup> In the light of my above exploration of the relationship between

34 See also my third chapter, in which I explore how this distrust surfaces in particular in the case of bilingual women, whose multiple languages are seen as markers of their sexual infidelities.

35 Winkler (1982).

36 Actually two good but interwoven stories, as Winkler has shown (1982) p. 338-9. Winkler gives these two stories the humorous titles "My Priestly Life: Adventures in the Service of Gradual Revelation" and "How Charikleia and Theagenes Fell in Love and Eloped to Points South."

religious trust, deceit, and multilingualism, I would like to explore the ways in which Kalasiris' status as the most accomplished polyglot in the novel enhances both sides of this contradiction. Kalasiris is to be trusted, as a priest, in part because of his linguistic abilities, and likewise, his linguistic abilities enable his outrageous mendacity.

As I discussed in my first chapter, Kalasiris is marked by his particular ability with Greek.<sup>37</sup> He is able to pass as a Greek speaker among both native Greek speakers and foreigners.<sup>38</sup> When Kalasiris first arrives in Delphi, his ability to speak Greek fluently allows him to establish his credibility quite quickly, with Apollo's help. Upon his arrival, the Pythia greets him with a prophecy identifying him as Egyptian and welcoming him.<sup>39</sup> Kalasiris' response to the oracle (prostrating himself and asking for the god's blessing) publicly demonstrates his ability to understand Greek, his ability to decipher oracles (though this oracle is remarkably unambiguous), his religious propriety and cultural sympathy.<sup>40</sup>

Thereafter, he spends his time either scrutinizing religious functions (πρὸς ἱεροῖς ἦν ἢ πρὸς θυσίαις ἐξηταζόμεν, 2.27.2) or acting the expert about Egypt, answering questions at length and settling debates such as the controversy over the origin of the Nile flood. These two functions establish him quickly in the eyes of the Delphians as the personification of the ideal Egyptian priest, full of deep knowledge inaccessible to mere Greeks, and yet fully capable of understanding their world. Although the language in which Kalasiris speaks is never given special attention during this portion of his story, we should not ignore it. Special attention has

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37 Thus, for example, the exchange between Kalasiris and Knemon upon their meeting at 2.21.3-4, discussed in Chapter 1.

38 Thus at 4.16.9, the Phoenician traders in town for the Pythian games, after sharing a meal with Kalasiris believe him to be a Greek wise man (ἀνδρὶ σοφῶ τε καὶ Ἑλληνι).

39 *Aethiopica* 2.26.5

40 Though Heliiodorus does have Kalasiris undercut his own demonstration of his Greekness by having him refer to the famous Lycurgus as “some Spartan or other” (Λυκοῦργὸν τινα Σπαρτιάτην).

been drawn to his ability with Greek at 2.21, just a few chapters previous. Moreover, Kalasiris as internal narrator has already established his ability to speak Greek with Knemon; he is telling this very story in Greek! Explicitly announcing his ability to speak Greek makes little sense in either Kalasiris' narrative frame, or Heliodorus'. Kalasiris' ability with Greek both helps cast him in his role as expert foreigner and permits him to function within that role.

Kalasiris' discussion about the sources of the Nile, in turn, causes Charikles to share his story of his trip to Egypt, which in turn leads to the story of his acquisition of Charikleia. Once Kalasiris has proved his priestly credentials by confirming to Charikles what Charikles learned from other Egyptian priests, Charikles elicits his help in “curing” Charikleia of her lack of interest in marriage. His plea specifically invokes the abilities with magic implied in Kalasiris' status as Egyptian priest/magic user ( Σοφίαν τινὰ καὶ ἴγυγα κίνησον ἐπ’ αὐτὴν Αἰγυπτίαν) and his status as an educated speaker (λόγιος).<sup>41</sup> Kalasiris is the man for the job precisely because he speaks both languages. As an Egyptian, he has access to the magic words necessary to compel the unwilling girl to “recognize her own nature,” and as a Greek-speaking, educated gentleman of the sort with which Charikleia has long been accustomed, he has the ability to gain access to Charikleia, who might refuse a more obvious attempt.

If Kalasiris' facility with Greek and general trustworthiness is proved by his constant interactions with Greek speakers at Delphi, a typical example of his ability to use language to deceive arises when he performs a mock magical ceremony to “cure” Charikleia of the illness that he pretends not to know is lovesickness. Kalasiris relates the moment as follows:

Κάπειδὴ σχολῆς ἐλάβομην, ἠρχόμην ὥσπερ ἐπὶ σκηνῆς τῆς ὑποκρίσεως καὶ τὸν τε λιβανωτὸν ἐθυμίων καὶ τινα δῆθεν ψιθύροις τοῖς χεῖλεσι κατευξάμενος τὴν δάφνην ἐκ κεφαλῆς εἰς πόδας ἄνω καὶ κάτω πικρὰ τῆς Χαρικλείας ἐπεσόβουν καὶ ὑπνῶδές τι μᾶλλον δὲ γραῶδες ἐπιχασμῶμενος ὀψὲ καὶ βραδέως

41 *Aethiopica* 2.33.6-7. Charikles makes the same point (about Charikleia's familiarity with λόγοι) and calls Kalasiris σοφός at *Aethiopica* 3.19.3.

ἐπαυσάμην, πολὺν τινα λῆρον ἑμαυτοῦ τε καὶ τῆς κόρης καταχέας. Ἡ δὲ πυκνὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐπέσειε καὶ σεσηρὸς ὑπεμειδίᾳ, πλανᾶσθαί με τὴν ἄλλως καὶ τὴν νόσον ἀγνοεῖν ἐνδεικνυμένη· (*Aethiopica* 4.5.3-4)

When I had gotten some quiet, I began as if on an actor's stage. I lit frankincense and prayed something or other with whispering lips, shaking the laurel over Charikleia from her head to her toes up and down frequently and yawning as if I were drowsy, or perhaps better as if I were an old woman. Finally and at last I stopped making a fool of both myself and the girl. She shook her head frequently and gently smiled, signalling that I was off the right track and didn't understand her illness.

The scene is conspicuously marked by Kalasiris' self-awareness of his deception, thus the reference to actor and the stage. While the spoken (or mumbled) words are only one element of his performance, we should notice that they are both deceptive and vague. Kalasiris' vagueness about the words said (τινα ...κατευξάμενος ) suggests that whatever he spoke was not intended to be understood, or perhaps better, was intended not to be understood. The easiest way of understanding what is happening linguistically here is that he switches into the *voces magicae*, foreign-sounding words and names which were featured in many extant magical spells and which must have been a hallmark of an ancient magical performance. Even if the words are not explicitly Egyptian, given Kalasiris' credentials, it seems likely that he wishes Charikleia to associate these *voces magicae* with his Egyptian expertise. Either way, the Egyptian priest/magician's mystical mumbo-jumbo is part and parcel of his deceptive kit to win Charikleia's trust.

We should notice too that the word Kalasiris uses to describe his lips as he cons Charikleia is ψίθυρος (whispering/slandering), a word that stands alongside the negative connotations of δὶγλωσσοσ in the Septuagint traditions.<sup>42</sup> Obviously, Kalasiris is not slandering anyone here, but the negative connotations of the term are entirely appropriate for the deceptive actions he is undertaking. He knows not only that the cure for the evil eye and therefore the

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42 In addition to the passages from Sirach 5.14, 28.13 discussed in Appendix 1, the adjective ψίθυρος is linked with the tongue in censured behavior in Psalms 12.1.2, 12.4.2, 12.4.3 and Psalms 12.3.3 explicitly mentions χεῖλεσιν ψιθύροις.

magic spell he performs is a fake, but also that it would be useless even were his spell real. His real purpose is to confirm that Theagenes is the object of Charikleia's love, and the fake magician is merely the part he must play—as if an actor onstage—to nudge Charikleia into confessing her love openly.

Charikleia's rejection of Kalasiris' performance is a testament to the effectiveness of Kalasiris' deception. Her gestures signal that she understands what Kalasiris is trying to accomplish with his ritual and that it is simply the wrong cure for the wrong disease.<sup>43</sup> Charikleia, who is usually a quite savvy reader of others' deceptions, here falls completely for Kalasiris' ruse. Because Kalasiris is a good-natured, well-intentioned deceiver, everything turns out well for Charikleia, who might have suffered a different fate at the hands of a less virtuous deceiver.

As Heliodorus' most talented polyglot, Kalasiris bears a special weight for the issues under consideration in this chapter. He is, without doubt, the character who comes closest to the omniscient narrator. Even when he narrates his stories, he is able to do so with the full understanding, rather than the incomplete comprehension that marks other characters' viewpoints. This is in part because his extended narrative is a tale of the past, but that is not all. Instead, Heliodorus presents Kalasiris as a keen observer of people and surroundings and a superb interpreter of both human behavior and divine will. In addition to interpreting prophecies and dreams, Kalasiris predicts his own death and, according to the narrator's speculation, may have even died because the gods granted his prayer.<sup>44</sup> All this presents a man who is not only fluent in Egyptian and Greek and Ethiopian, but also one who speaks the language of the gods (if

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43 For more on nonverbal communication in the *Aethiopica*, see chapter four.

44 In addition to Winkler (1982) on the importance of interpretation of dreams and prophecies in the novel, see also Bowerstock (1994) and Bartsch (1989).

not in a literal Homeric way, then at least in a metaphorical way). This imbues him with an aura of trustworthiness that he rightly deserves.

And yet, as trustworthy as Kalasiris is, his slipperiness is implicated in the linguistic abilities which make him so trusted. Just as Sisimithres is able to play the merchant and deceive Charikles for the greater good, so is Kalasiris constantly able to use his special knowledge of languages to con those who stand in the way of the will of the gods. One's skill with languages determines the extent of both one's trust and the potential for deceit, and Kalasiris is the pinnacle of both. He acts as a kind of anti-Cassandra, a prophet whose predictions should be ignored more often than they are and who lies as often as he tells the truth. And yet, the same ambivalence creates the opportunities. When those around bilinguals require their help, they must trust the help they get. This monopoly on knowledge both creates the power of multilingualism in society and presents opportunities for misuse of that power.

It is no coincidence, I think, that the distinctions between bilinguals who use their skills for good and those who use them selfishly map on to the geography of the novel rather well. The novel's most sinisterly deceitful bilingual characters are from or in Greece, while those from Ethiopia are, if not completely honest, only occasionally deceitful, and then in service to a greater good. Kalasiris has visited both of the extremes of geography and bilingualism and is culturally adept enough to use his linguistic gifts appropriately; in Ethiopia he faithfully agrees to do a favor for queen Persinna, while in Greece he deploys his knowledge of language (among other things) to dupe, swindle, and deceive. It is at the home of Mitranes in the north of Egypt, the geographical middle of the novel's space that he tells his complex story.

This feature of the characterization of multilingualism is at its pinnacle in Heliodorus'

novel. It is tempting in the light of the evidence on the word δίγλωσσος to tie this to both the novelist's late date and his origins in the Near East. Just as δίγλωσσος makes a gradual change from being used primarily to denote bilingualism to denoting predominantly deceitfulness, the representation of bilingual characters grows increasingly problematic over time. It would be wrong, however, to limit this tension in the representation of bilingual characters to Heliodorus. Just as changes in the semantic field of δίγλωσσος seem to stem from a widespread cultural attitude not limited to one time or place, so bilingual characters (and people) had long been regarded with both desperate trust and skeptical suspicion. Just as the chorus of the *Agamemnon* asserts, one needs a sharp interpreter to handle someone bilingual.

### Chapter 3: Linguistic Chastity

One of the central concerns of Heliodorus' novel is the sexual chastity of its protagonists. Most ancient novels put a stress on the sexual purity of their heroes and, to an even greater degree, their heroines. We can think of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* in which the title characters' chastity is not so much out of restraint or a desire to act appropriately but out of sheer ignorance of the mechanics of sex. It is only once the urbane and experienced Lycanion shows Daphnis how to have sex (by having sex with him, of course) that he and Chloe are finally able to consummate their love physically.<sup>1</sup> In Achilles Tatius' novel, Leucippe and Cleitophon's chastity is of the utmost importance, and the dramatic final scene of the novel sees Leucippe locked up in Pan's cave, in a virginity test from which non-virgins never return. Both novels, of course, exempt their male heroes from these tests of their virginity or chastity, a double standard which the novels are hardly alone in upholding. The overwhelming concern is the control of female sexuality.

Heliodorus' novel, then, is somewhat distinct in echoing these other novels' strong concerns for the sexual purity but demanding the same thing from both its hero and its heroine. Nor are these two characters alone; purity of other kinds abounds in the novel. Kalasiris is a priest of Isis who not only abstains from sex, but also alcohol and meat. His son, Thyamis, also a displaced priest of Isis, although tempted by the prospect of marriage (and sex) with Charikleia, is delayed precisely because of his temperance in the light of religious matters. Charikleia's adopted father Charikles is a widower, and a chaste priest of Apollo. Even Hydaspes and Persinna, whose midday sexual tryst is the catalyst for the entire plot of the novel, show great

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<sup>1</sup> Goldhill (1995), p. 1-45 deals extensively with the question of virginity in *Daphnis and Chloe*.

restraint; that tryst only occurs because the gods suggest via a dream that he have sex with his wife. Indeed, it is not difficult to understand why both ancient and modern scholars have wanted to conflate Heliodorus the novelist with Heliodorus, the bishop of Trikka who imposed chastity upon his clergy.<sup>2</sup>

Nor is it a surprise, I think, that in an atmosphere of such sexual restraint, some of the clearest villains of the novel are those whose appetites get them into trouble, from Demainete, Knemon's lustful stepmother, to Arsake the wife of the Satrap of Egypt. When the victory of the heroes depends on their success at avoiding not only death but also deflowering, powerful figures who have the ability to make a “sex or death” ultimatum represent the pinnacle of danger.

This chapter will plot Heliodorus' characters' linguistic abilities against their sexual proclivities, and thereby show a link between sexual and linguistic characterization in the novel: the more *sophrosune* a character shows, the more likely he or she is to be monolingual. As we will see, even as the sexual double standard in other novelists is eliminated in Heliodorus, a linguistic double standard rises to the surface. Finally, this chapter will explore the broader cultural context of such a link between linguistic ability and sexual activity and why such a link might have been formed.

### ***Chastity in the Ancient Novel and in Heliodorus***

Michel Foucault's analysis of the role of chastity in the novels remains the most sensible starting point in a discussion of chastity in the ancient novel. The third volume of his *History of Sexuality, The Care of the Self*, Foucault argues that the novels focus on heterosexual relationships with both reciprocity and symmetry and emphasized these qualities in a way so alien to earlier periods and literature as to constitute a “New Erotics.”<sup>3</sup> One of the chief features

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2 On Heliodorus' biography, see Sandy (1982) p. 1-5.

3 Foucault (1986) p. 228-232.

of this New Erotics is the attention paid to virginity in novels or, in Chariton's novel, wherein the hero and heroine lose their virginity to each other within the opening pages, to chaste fidelity. Foucault sees this attention to virginity as a characteristic style of life, a choice made by the hero out of respect for himself, a choice which has marriage as its ultimate endpoint, but which is internally motivated before sexual desire is even activated. Both Charikleia and Theagenes, as Foucault points out, had dedicated themselves to virginity until they fell for each other.<sup>4</sup> David Konstan, in an elaboration of Foucauldian ideas, prefers the term “constancy” to “chastity” with this explanation:

However, constancy is not reducible to the preservation of physical chastity and indeed chastity as such is not, on the whole the main issue in the texts...To put it another way, in the greek novels the body is not the primary site on which the problem of love and fidelity is transacted. (p. 48)

This argument is supported by convincing readings of scenes in which one or another lover submits to sex, with no lasting repercussions to the main relationship, even if characters are not always comfortable discussing such encounters head-on. The key to this definition of constancy is that the sexual encounters in which characters in the novels engage do not involve a preference for the sexual partner over their committed lover. Instead they represent pragmatic stratagems for survival (as in the case of Habrocomes and Cyno), a gain of valuable sexual knowledge (as in the case of Daphnis and Lycanion), or simply humility and mercy (as in the case of Cleitophon with Melite).<sup>5</sup> Konstan's model does a good job of explaining the mostly unproblematic nature of these lapses in fidelity—as they appear to most modern readers—but is rather less convincing on the overall importance of virginity. Achilles Tatius has Leucippe prove her virginity in a magical cave of Pan, even as he problematizes such tests by having Melite escape detection through careful phrasing. Heliodorus, meanwhile has both Theagenes and Charikleia tested on a golden

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4 Foucault (1986) p. 230.

5 Konstan (1994) p. 48-54.

gridiron which will burn the feet of the impure who stand on it. Theagenes and Charikleia, unlike many of their fellow sacrificial victims, pass the test. At least on teleological readings, physical virginity is emphatically important.<sup>6</sup>

Simon Goldhill's important contribution, *Foucault's Virginity*, refocuses the discussion again on the body, in part by connecting the novels with the burgeoning Christian literature, including Methodius' *Symposium* and the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* which display a rejection of all sexuality, and of bodily pleasures in general.<sup>7</sup> For Goldhill, and for Heliodorus it seems, *sophrosune* (self-control, chastity, and modesty) is key. As such, Theagenes' *sophrosune*, exemplified by his refusal to kiss Arsake even as she is kissing him, displays his commitment to Charikleia and his virtue.<sup>8</sup> While Cleitophon's indulgence of Melite's sexual desires may not be infidelity, neither is it a demonstration of constancy.

*Sophrosune* has a pivotal place in the *Aethiopica* and is repeatedly brought up in erotically charged situations, as has been noted by Michael J. Anderson.<sup>9</sup> It is one of Charikleia's prime qualities, stretching from her girlhood as a priestess, during which she wished never to have to marry, to her arrival in Ethiopia. One assumes that she will be, like her mother, a chaste and modest wife and queen in her time. In fact, if anything, Charikleia has a little too much *sophrosune*. Much of the danger Theagenes is in throughout the final book is motivated because Charikleia cannot bring herself to identify Theagenes as her fiancée openly.<sup>10</sup>

In a study aimed at explaining the prominence of the ideal of virginity in the early

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6 On teleological readings, their limits and the problems associated with them, see Morales (2008) p. 43 as well as Nimis (1999) *passim*.

7 On the similarities between Christian texts and the novel, Brown (1988) is an important source. See especially p. 155-6 on Heliodorus in comparison to the Apocryphal Acts.

8 Goldhill (1995) p. 120 on *Aethiopica* 7.26.

9 Anderson (1997) 310-322.

10 Charikleia's modesty reflects a particular kind of *sophrosune* which is focused not only on who she does or doesn't have sex with, but rather with the appropriateness of discussing such things in public. Charikleia consistently strives to avoid such public pronouncements of desire. See Anderson (1997) p. 317 and below, p.178.

Christian church, Kate Cooper suggests that despite the emphasis on chastity, the novels are primarily concerned with fertility and act as to reinforce the conservative values of the elite.<sup>11</sup> This is more clear in the texts with which Cooper engages most directly, especially Longus' novel, than it is with the *Aethiopica*. *Daphnis and Chloe's* rustic setting and (less than straightforward) emphasis on nature and the natural certainly contribute to this argument. And if Callirhoe's child is not the center of the narrative it is a concern for Callirhoe. As Cooper points out too, Chariton's novel reveals an underscoring of the role of marriage as a social unifier, in that through the marriage of their children, the political feud Chaereas' father and Callirhoe's is ended. Heliodorus has no place in Cooper's argument, perhaps simply because the ambiguity of Heliodorus' date would have made his incorporation into her argument very difficult. It is not clear, however, what place Heliodorus would have in such a narrative, despite the often remarked-upon similarity between Charikleia and Christian martyrs. The emphasis on fertility which Cooper sees in the novel in general has little role in Heliodorus. Fertility is not a key element in this novel. Charikleia and Theagenes have no children, and though the novel ends with their marriage, the consummation of that marriage is referred to even more indirectly than in other novels. We can of course imagine such as an epilogue to the novel, but Heliodorus does not actively encourage us to do so. Even the sexual act by which Charikleia was conceived is presented as an act of duty, an appropriate response to a god-sent dream, in which Persinna does not enjoy herself or dream of children, but simply lies back and thinks of Andromeda.

Judith Perkins' The Suffering Self also analyzes the place of chastity and marriage and comes to similar conclusions. Arguing against those who see in the novel a rise in the individual as separated from society and traditional civic identity and free to act on his own erotic impulses,

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11 Cooper (1999) p. 22-44. Giulia Sissa's recent "Sex and Sensuality in the Ancient World" elaborates on the rise of Christian ideologies around sexuality, marriage and ascetic chastity. See Sissa (2008) p. 167-191.

Perkins argues that the genre's obsession with marriage suggests just the opposite: that the novels function to reinforce the individual's role in society.<sup>12</sup> Chastity, in particular, is a social concern: “Chastity is the manifestation of society's power inserted into the very body of its subjects; it acts as the actual embodiment of social control.”<sup>13</sup> Read in this way, every time a character chooses chastity, he does so not out of an individual desire to keep his body his own, but rather out of a loyalty to society. He puts society's rules and needs above his own, giving priority to others. Although Perkins only analyzes the novels of Xenophon, Chariton, and Achilles Tatius, the analysis would seem to hold true for Heliodorus as well. Theagenes' devotion to chastity is the result of a promise he makes to Charikleia. Charikleia's chastity, in turn, and her insistence on chastity from Theagenes, are in part the result of her mother's injunction and her childhood spent among priests of various kinds. Kalasiris' abstention from not only sex but also meat and wine, are mandated by his religious beliefs. These forms of self-denial for the sake of others are echoed by, among other things, Hydaspes' willingness to sacrifice his own daughter is in accordance with the religious customs of his country.

Chastity, then, was an issue of both personal and societal importance in late antiquity, a condition which could mark an individual's rejection of society through rebellion against patriarchal norms, or a decision to live fully within those norms and confine one's sexuality to the reproduction of legitimate heirs and the extension of society. *Sophrosune* meant more than just not having sex with people one shouldn't but also self-control, and an alliance with certain societal forces and it is in this context that the link between language and sexuality makes sense.

Let us now explore four of the novel's most important female characters, who provide insights into this link: Arsake, Kybele, Persinna, and Charikleia. The first two of these are both

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12 Perkins (1995) p. 41-76.

13 Perkins (1995) p. 46.

lascivious women, whose skills with language are put to use in the service of Arsake's desire for extramarital sex with foreign men. Persinna's case is a liminal one; she is a chaste and sexually appropriate wife who happens to speak Greek, but she abandons Charikleia precisely because of her fear that her white daughter will confirm the sexual suspicions associated with a woman's learning. Charikleia is the proverbial exception that proves the rule. She becomes and remains a monolingual Greek speaker, and preserves herself as sexually chaste, indignantly above even the suspicion of any impropriety.

### ***Arsake***

One of the clearest cases of a link between sexuality and second-language learning in the novel is that of Arsake, the lusty wife of the Satrap, who attempts to seduce Theagenes while her husband is out on campaign. The episode in which she appears, and which compromises much of books seven and eight, poses some of the greatest risks the heroes encounter in their adventure. Although Theagenes and Charikleia are recently reunited, Kalasiris' death removes their guide and chaperone and they are completely at the disposal of foreign (and hostile) powers. Arsake not only poses a threat to their pledges of fidelity, through her (ultimately unsuccessful) seduction of Theagenes, but also, when these plans are foiled, attempts to have Charikleia burned at the stake. This episode, then, is one of the tensest in the novel, and if generic conventions assure us that the heroes will survive, they do nothing to reassure us that Theagenes' chastity will remain intact. In fact, Theagenes is rare in the novels for his steadfast willingness to resist Arsake's advances. Daphnis not only submits to Lycanion's sexual initiation, but more or less requires it to be able to advance his relationship with Chloe. Cleitophon, meanwhile, eventually submits to Melite, once it is clear that her husband will be home soon, and thus the sexual act will pose no threat to his relationship with Leucippe. Arsake's seduction of Theagenes, then, fits

something of the same pattern (wealthy, cosmopolitan woman seduces our helpless hero) and the danger is only amplified by the fact that she is no ordinary society woman, but in fact a Persian princess, with a taste for things Greek.

The narrator first introduces Arsake as Thyamis arrives at the gates of Memphis with his army of Bessans. He describes her in terms that cast her as both attractive and debauched:

Ἡ δὲ Ἀρσάκη τὰ μὲν ἄλλα καλή τε ἦν καὶ μεγάλη καὶ συνεῖναι δραστήριος τό τε φρόνημα ἐξ εὐγενείας ὑπέρογκος καὶ οἷον εἰκὸς τὴν ἀδελφὴν βασιλέως τοῦ μεγάλου γεγонуῖαν, ἄλλως δὲ τὸν βίον ἐπίμωμος καὶ ἡδονῆς παρανόμου καὶ ἀκρατοῦς ἐλάττων· (*Aethiopica* 7.2.1)

Arsake was especially beautiful and tall and clever at understanding, and she was fiercely proud from her noble birth and as one would expect for the sister of the King. Otherwise too her life was blameworthy and she had a weakness for perverted and immoderate pleasure.

The conjunction of extraordinary beauty, a noble arrogance and excessive devotion to inappropriate (sexual) pleasure is certainly not a new one. Helen serves as a sufficient example for the link in the Greek mind. Perhaps better though, would be Circe or Calypso whose sexual attentions delay Odysseus' successful homecoming. Though it is Charikleia's homecoming and not Theagenes' at stake here, Arsake fits into a similar mold. But two words complicate this nearly stock character: *συνεῖναι δραστήριος*.

The words I have translated above as “clever at understanding” certainly mean that the queen is intelligent, a view which is born out by the steps she takes not only in her seduction of Theagenes, but also in her careful response to Thyamis' attack on the city. She restrains the troops from immediately marching out without first assessing the situation, the identity of the attackers and their motives.<sup>14</sup> While she does not have the self-control to mask her dismay when it is revealed that her own intrigues are the result of this conflict, she quickly arranges to dispose of one either Thyamis or his brother Petosiris by having them duel.<sup>15</sup> Through her quick

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14 *Aethiopica* 7.3.1.

15 *Aethiopica* 7.4.3-4.

comprehension, and deft handling of the situation, she avoids a battle which might threaten her city, and also recasts the conflict as a personal score to be settled between two brothers, rather than as a call for justice following her unjust dismissal of Thyamis from his priesthood. Certainly she is a smart ruler.

Συνεῖναι is a versatile word and refers not only to Arsake's ability to understand situations and thereby respond quickly and effectively to them. It is also one of Heliodorus' standard words for comprehension of a foreign language. As we shall see, Arsake is an eager student of foreign language, at least of Greek. Moreover, and most interestingly, this particular form of the verb “to understand” (συνίημι) coincides with a verb that means “to have sex with” (σύνειμι). We might, therefore, include within our understanding of the phrase “clever at understanding” the meaning “clever at sex.” A statement which we might take as redundant in view of the narrator's assertion of her “weakness for perverted and immoderate pleasure” but which succeeds in forging a link in the reader's mind between Arsake's intelligence, her fondness for foreign language, and her (perverted and immoderate) sexuality.

The phrase's other word, δραστήριος, should not completely escape our attention either. While this word is not especially common in Classical Greek, it is fairly common in the Greek of the second sophistic. It occurs four times in the *Aethiopica*, with the other three in contexts that clearly suggests it means something very close to “clever”.<sup>16</sup> Of these four uses, one use refers to Charikleia, and another to Theagenes, suggesting the word has the potential to be positive, a recognition of Charikleia's and Theagenes' ability, like Odysseus before them, to find a way out of the situations in which they continuously find themselves. Its use to describe Nausikles' self-

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16 In addition to the passage under consideration the word is used at 5.8.3, where it describes Nausikles “clever business plan” (ἐμπορικόν τι καὶ δραστήριον); 5.26.2, at which Kalasiris describes Charikleia's cleverness at coming up with plans to save herself (ἢ δέ (ἔστι γὰρ χρῆμα σοφώτατον) καιρὸν διαθέσθαι δραστήριος), and 7.25.7 in which Theagenes claims that he has invented a “clever” plot to escape having sex with Arsake (Ἀλλὰ τι δραστήριον ἐπινενοηκέναί μοι δοκῶ).

serving plan to sell off Charikleia to the queen of Ethiopia—the success of which would have saved Charikleia quite a bit of trouble—suggests that word is at least ambivalent. Being clever can be useful, but is not necessarily noble. In Arsake's case, a further complication comes into play. The word preserves the sense of its root, δράω, to act and thereby means in its most literal sense, something like active, and in fact can be used to describe the active voice in grammatical discussions.<sup>17</sup> Someone who is δραστήριος does not simply sit back and wait for things to happen, but rather actively contrives their occurrence. Arsake, then, is not just *clever* at understanding, able to quickly unravel things when she wishes to, rather she actively pursues understanding.

When we combine this understanding of δραστήριος with the sexual implications of συνείναι, we see that Arsake is cast, subtly but nevertheless clearly, as a woman not only eager for sex—after all, Greek men had long held the belief that most women had unsatisfiable sexual appetites—but an active sexual predator, a woman who was *clever at arranging sex* and one with penchant for the Greek language.

Arsake, perched atop the city walls, spies and instantly falls for Theagenes but, being royalty, arranges for her slave and erotic adviser Kybele to bring Theagenes (and Charikleia) into the palace and help facilitate her seduction. Kybele arrives at the temple of Isis to find Kalasiris dead, a situation which requires Theagenes and Charikleia to leave the temple and thereby plays into Kybele's hands. The nurse manipulates the custodian of the temple through his knowledge of Arsake:

Ἡ δὴ Κυβέλη τὴν ξυντυχίαν ἄρπαγμα καὶ ὥσπερ ἄγρας ἀρχὴν ποιησαμένη «Οὐκοῦν» ἔφη «ὦ νεωκόρων θεοφιλέστατε, καιρὸς τοὺς τε ξένους καὶ ἡμᾶς ἅμα εὖ ποιεῖν, μᾶλλον δὲ Ἀρσάκη μεγάλου βασιλέως ἀδελφὴν· οἶσθα γὰρ ὡς φιλέλλην τέ ἐστι καὶ δεξιόν τι χρῆμα περὶ ξένων ὑποδοχὴν. Λέγε οὖν πρὸς τοὺς νέους ὡς κατὰ πρόσταγμα τοῦ Θυάμιδος ἐν ἡμετέρου τὸ καταγώγιον αὐτοῖς ἠὲ τρέπεται.  
(*Aethiopica* 7.11.7)

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<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus *De Thucydide* 24.

Kybele, then, swooping in on the coincidence and starting her hunt said “Most beloved to the gods of all the custodians of the temple, this is an opportunity for you to both do right by these guests and us at the same time, and even more Arsake, the sister of the Great King; For you know that she is a philhellene and how ready a reception she has for foreigners. Tell these young people that in accordance with Thyamis' orders, lodging for them is being provided with us.

Kybele's managing of the situation is adept, arranging to get the youths moved inside without revealing her involvement or her mistress's true intentions. But nevertheless, her statement sheds interesting light on the character of Arsake. She presents Arsake as a Philhellene, a term which would normally stress her education and fondness for Greek intellectual pursuits. We will see that Arsake does in fact seem to have an abiding interest in things Greek. She maintains Kybele, her slave from Lesbos, as one of her closest confidantes, and she at the very least understands Greek speech. In this sense, Arsake's philhellenism is typical perhaps of the local elite in Heliodorus' day, but perhaps somewhat out of place in the haughty sister of the king of fifth century BCE Persia. What is clear to Heliodorus' readers, however, if not to the custodian of the temple, is that Arsake's philhellenism is at least partly a reinterpretation of the word philhellenism itself. Even if Arsake is interested in the Greek language or Greek culture, she is primarily a philhellene because she loves Greeks, and specifically Greek men. The fact that she all but ignores Charikleia except as a potential rival for Theagenes assures us that her other interests pale in comparison to her lust for Theagenes, whom we might now assume is not the first Greek man who has caught Arsake's eye.

The fact that Kybele can assume the temple attendant will be aware of Arsake's philhellenism and welcoming of foreigners implies her abiding interest in Greeks (or at least Greek things) is well known. It is interesting, however, that he fails to connect this with her “weakness for perverted and immoderate pleasure” (7.2.1, see above, p. 93).<sup>18</sup> In fact, the

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<sup>18</sup> We, of course, have more knowledge than the temple attendant, and it is not entirely clear how widely known Arsake's scandals are. At any rate, the narrator's assertions indicate that the temple attendant is not willfully ignoring this knowledge. It may, however, suggest that Heliodorus' characters do not consciously connect

narrator informs us in the following section that the priest did not remotely suspect Kybele's true intentions and simply saw the act as a way to curry favor without harming anyone.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the temple attendant, however, we can recognize that Kybele's description of Arsake's intellectual curiosity about foreigners is merely a front for her lust.

Once in the palace, Arsake's plan to seduce Theagenes continues full force. In their first meeting, Theagenes is brought into Arsake's presence while she is meeting with Persian magistrates (τῶν ἐν τέλει τινᾶς Περσῶν).<sup>20</sup> Although he had promised Charikleia to be meek and stay out of trouble, he becomes irked at the showiness of the Persian court and not only refuses to bow, but also breaks his silence and speaks directly to Arsake in Greek. After calming the furor of the court at these breaches of decorum, Arsake responds to Theagenes:

Καὶ ἅμα καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὴν τιάραν ἀφεῖλε, πολλὰ τῶν παρόντων κωλυόντων—τοῦ γὰρ ἀμείβεσθαι τὸν ἀσπασάμενον σύμβολον τοῦτο πεποιήνται Πέρσαι—καὶ «Θάρσει, ὦ ξένε» εἰποῦσα διὰ τοῦ ἑρμηνέως, συνηῖσα γὰρ τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλωτταν οὐκ ἐφθέγγετο, «καὶ λέγε τίνος χρήζεις, ὡς οὐκ ἀποτευξόμενος» ἀπέπεμπε, νεύματι τοῦτο πρὸς τοὺς εὐνούχους ἐπισημήνασα. (*Aethiopica* 7.19.3)

As she said these things she took off her *tiara*, despite the protestations of the others there—The Persians do this as a sign that a greeting is returned—and said “Fear not, foreigner!” through the interpreter, for though she knew Greek, she did not speak it, “Say what you want; you will not lack it.” and she sent him a way, having given the eunuchs the message with a gesture.

The scene is a complex one which we should give thought to. In play are not only dynamics of the guest/host relationship, of Arsake's sexuality, and of Theagenes' foreignness (and foreign tongue), but also issues of formality and propriety in the context of this (imagined) Persian court. Arsake's response begins by removing the *tiara*, the Persian cap that figured so prominently in Greek iconography of the Persian. Arsake's removal of this *tiara* is surely an acceptance of Theagenes' greeting (as *per* the Persian custom the narrator explains, though it is not clear how well Theagenes would understand this gesture.)<sup>21</sup> It is also the opening move in her seduction of

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chastity and foreign language in the way that I am arguing Heliodorus does.

19 *Aethiopica* 7.11.8.

20 *Aethiopica* 7.18.3.

21 For a more detailed analysis of this and other gestures in the Persian court, see chapter four.

Theagenes; the removal of this piece of iconography is the removal of that which marks her as foreign and her powerful, both of which could pose problems for her seduction. The Persian magistrates who strenuously object to this gesture surely could be ignorant of Arsake's seduction, or might be turning a blind eye to it, but they also object for the same reason Theagenes' refusal to prostrate himself rankled them: because in removing her *tiara* and accepting the greeting of this brash foreigner, Arsake is not acting in accordance with the rules of the Persian court.

It is in this context that we must understand the narrator's comments that Arsake did not speak Greek even though she knew it (συνιῆσα γὰρ τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλωτταν οὐκ ἐφθέγγετο). As I argued in my first chapter, we should understand this claim not to mean that Arsake *could* not speak Greek, but rather that in the present circumstances, she *would* not. Even if Arsake's abilities in Greek would have been useful in her seduction of Theagenes, the public nature of their meeting precludes her deployment of them.

A historical parallel for the collocation of seductive power, extramarital sexuality, and multilingualism can be found in Cleopatra VII, the last of the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt. Known to modern audiences primarily as a symbol of the seductress entangled in the last gasps of the Roman Republic, Cleopatra was also supposed to be a supremely gifted linguist. In his *Life of Antony*, Plutarch describes her thus:

ἡδονὴ δὲ καὶ φθεγγομένης ἐπὶ τῷ ἤχῳ· καὶ τὴν γλωτταν ὡσπερ ὄργανόν τι πολύχορδον εὐπετῶς τρέπουσα καθ' ἣν βούλοιτο διάλεκτον, ὀλίγοις παντάπασι δι' ἑρμηνέως ἐνετύγχανε βαρβάροις, τοῖς δὲ πλείστοις αὐτὴ δι' αὐτῆς ἀπεδίδου τὰς ἀποκρίσεις, οἷον Αἰθίοψι Τρωγλοδύταις Ἑβραίοις Ἄρασι Σύροις Μήδοις Παρθηαίοις. πολλῶν δὲ λέγεται καὶ ἄλλων ἐκμαθεῖν γλώττας, τῶν πρὸ αὐτῆς βασιλέων οὐδὲ τὴν Αἰγυπτίαν ἀνασχομένων παραλαβεῖν διάλεκτον, ἐνίων δὲ καὶ τὸ μακεδονίζειν ἐκλιπόντων. (*Life of Antony* 27.4-5)

There was pleasure too in hearing her speak: Tuning her tongue easily, just like some multi-stringed instrument, to whatever language she would want, she conversed with very few barbarians by interpreter, and most she answered herself by herself, including Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Jews, Arabs, Syrians, Medes, and Parthians. She is said to have learned the languages of many others too, while the kings previous to her refused to learn the Egyptian language, and some even stopped speaking Macedonian.

The description lends itself to two compelling readings. On the one hand, Cleopatra's

multilingualism casts her as a talented outward-looking ruler, whose linguistic abilities allowed her to treat with foreigners herself rather than through proxies or intermediaries, surely a valuable tool, and one no doubt appreciated by the rulers with which she dealt. On the other hand, Cleopatra's voice is rife with the dangers of bilingualism discussed in chapter two. Her voice is like a multi-stringed instrument, her tongue capable of being tuned however she wishes. This is a woman infinitely capable of crafting her message carefully for the audience she wishes. And if her voice is pleasurable too, this only contributes to her seductive powers. Arsake is merely bilingual and not septi-lingual (or better) as Cleopatra is said to have been, but nevertheless the historical queen cannot help but shade this foreign, alluring, and dangerous “queen” of Egypt.

In Arsake, then, we find a clear collocation of several traits: sexual license and weakness for pleasure, and a fondness for things foreign, including both Greek sexual partners and (not entirely unrelatedly) the Greek language. This pairing of sexual license with knowledge of foreign language is one which we will continue to see in Heliodorus' other female characters, and especially in Arsake's maidservant Kybele.

### ***Kybele***

Despite her status as a slave and a foreigner, Kybele is central to the experiences of Charikleia and Theagenes at Memphis. Not only does she act as intermediary for Arsake and act as the main source of information for the couple while they are housed in the palace, it is through the (indirect) actions of her son Achaimenes that Charikleia and Theagenes are eventually rescued from Memphis and brought south to Syene. Kybele's unique importance derives from her ability to straddle social and linguistic boundaries. As a slave, she is able to pass from the queen's side to the temple of Isis without attracting undue attention in order to have Theagenes

brought in. Arsake cannot go herself. And yet, it is not simply her status as slave that makes Kybele valuable to Arsake, it is also her background. She explains to Theagenes and Charikleia the circumstances that brought her to Memphis:

Ἐρεῖτε δὲ πρὸς γυναῖκα οὐ παντάπασιν ἄλλοτρίαν ὑμῖν· εἰμὶ γάρ τοι καὶ αὐτὴ τὸ γένος Ἑλληνὶς καὶ Λεσβία τὴν πόλιν, ὑπ' αἰχμαλωσίας μὲν ἀχθεῖσα δεῦρο πράττουσα δὲ τῶν οἴκοι βέλτιον· εἰμὶ γάρ τοι τῇ δεσποίνῃ τὰ πάντα καὶ μόνον οὐκ ἀναπνεῖ με· καὶ ὄμματα καὶ νοῦς ἐκείνη καὶ ὦτα καὶ πάντα τυγχάνω, τοὺς καλοὺς αὐτῇ κάγαθοὺς γνωρίζουσα ἀεὶ καὶ τὸ πιστὸν αὐτῇ διὰ πάντων ἀπορρήτων φυλάττουσα. (*Aethiopica* 7.12.6)<sup>22</sup>

And you will be speaking to a woman not at all different from you. For I am Greek myself, you know, by birth, from the city of Lesbos. I was brought here at the point of a spear but am doing better than those back home. For I am, you see, my lady's everything. She not only breaths me in. Both eyes and mind to her, her ears and her everything. I always introduce attractive gentlemen to her and I keep her confidence through all her unspeakable secrets.

The passage, on the one hand, explains Kybele's ability to communicate with Theagenes and Charikleia easily: she is from Lesbos. Even if, as Morgan has suggested, the island was chosen primarily for its erotic associations, it also serves as a thoroughly Greek place of origin for this slave.<sup>23</sup> Her status as a Greek, and her facility with the language is no doubt a helpful quality in her role of procuring for Arsake the gentlemen (καλοὶ κ'αγαθοί) whom Arsake wishes to meet.

Kybele's ability to communicate with Arsake, however, is not so clearly spelled out.

After all, it is easy enough to imagine a Greek woman captured and sold off to Persian royalty; in fact, this sort of induction into slavery must have not been too rare in the ancient world. It is less clear how such a slave would communicate fully with her masters. One can easily enough learn the word for “scrub” or “weave” in the language of one's masters, but “quietly arrange for that young Greek man you saw outside to be brought into the palace so that I can satisfy my lust” is of a different order of difficulty. Interpreters might be brought in—we know that Arsake had them available—and yet the sensitive nature of this intrigue would demand a conspiracy of as

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22 I follow here the emendation of O'Sullivan (1977).

23 Morgan, 2008 p. 500. n.177.

few people as possible. There are two obvious solutions to this problem in the case of Kybele and Arsake, both of which have some support in the text: 1.) Kybele converses with Arsake in Persian or 2.) Arsake converses with Kybele in Greek.

As I argue in my first chapter, I believe there are reasons why both of these might be true. I argued above for Arsake's ability with Greek. Kybele's intrigues in the court require her to be able to pass over language barriers. Moreover, the name of her son, Achaimenes, betrays her Persian assimilation.<sup>24</sup> It is tempting, but by no means certain that she also knows enough Egyptian to communicate with the temple officials in this, but even if Kybele is only bilingual and not trilingual, she still wields great power. Her ability to speak Egyptian (or Greek) allows for interaction with the local temple population; in Persian she can communicate with Arsake and the staff of the Palace, and in Greek she can indulge Arsake's love of things (and men) Greek.

Kybele's status in the Persian court is a kind of mother figure. Her name signals a connection with the Great Mother, but she also reveals a motherly side in her self-presentation as a care-taker for Theagenes and Charikleia. Theagenes, already suspecting her true intentions, nevertheless plays along by addressing her as he might any older woman, with the word "Mother" (Ἰω μήτηρ).<sup>25</sup> And yet as Theagenes suspects, she is far from having their best interests at heart. Likewise, she casts herself as a fellow-Greek and attempts to win the heroes over in this way. We as readers know the truth already, but in fact, Kybele is only Greek by birth (τὸ γένος

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24 Rattenbury and Lumb v.2 (1960) p. 138 n.1 suggest that Heliodorus chose the name to give his story "la couleur locale." But this cannot be sufficient given Heliodorus' wider interest in questions of the similarities of parents and children, and in cultural identity. If the novel as a whole is the struggle of Charikleia to find the correct cultural surroundings for a white Ethiopian Greek-speaking princess, the Persian son of a Lesbian woman needs at least some explanation.

Without knowing Achaimenes' father, his exact status is unclear (as it would be anyway, given our lack of knowledge about the racial dynamics of Heliodorus' imagining of the court of the Egyptian Satrap) but in as much as naming is widely used as an indication of cultural identity (if an imperfect one that is focused more on self-representation than classification of others) we should count Achaimenes, the second generation slave as, for all intents and purposes Persian. Especially when Heliodorus provides us no indications of his Greekness.

25 *Aethiopica* 7.13.1

Ἑλληνίς) and has, to use Herodotus's term out of context, Medized. Her loyalties lie with her "children", her Persian mistress (including that mistress's sexual proclivities) and with her Persian son (and his lust for Charikleia). In this nexus of sexual transgression, ethnic identity, and linguistic abilities, we find Kybele playing all sides off each other. She is Greek enough to (try to) win over Greek men, but Persian enough to be τὰ πάντα to her mistress and those around her. This duplicity is underscored and emphasized by her ability to speak the languages she needs to, to the people she needs to, so that the people who want to can satisfy their sexual urges.

### **Persinna**

Persinna, Charikleia's mother and the queen of Aethiopia makes a strange comparison to Arsake and Kybele. After all, while Arsake and Kybele are clearly villains who pose threat to the heroes' safety and chastity, Persinna is a consistently devoted mother, whose watchful eye saw Charikleia protected from her father's jealousy when Charikleia was an infant and helps preserve Theagenes once Charikleia divulges her love. Indeed, just as Hydaspes, her husband, is less a fleshed out character and more a personification of the philosophical ideals of the noble king, Persinna is the image of the perfect queen and matron. Unlike Arsake, she is no slave to pleasure, but instead takes great care to weave a strongly worded message on the subject into the band that will act as Charikleia's recognition tokens:

Ἄλλ' ὦ γλυκεῖα καὶ μέχρις ὥρας θύγατερ, ὅπως εἰ περιγένοιο μεμνήσῃ τῆς εὐγενείας τιμῶσα σωφροσύνην, ἣ δὴ μόνη γυναικείαν ἀρετὴν χαρακτηρίζει, καὶ φρόνημα βασιλείου καὶ πρὸς τοὺς φύντας ἀναφέρων ἀσκοῦσα. (*Aethiopica* 4.8.7)

But, my sweet and daughter for a moment, if somehow you survive, honor chastity in memory of your noble birth. Chastity alone marks a woman's virtue. Also practice keeping a royal bearing even for your parents.

Charikleia, true to her breeding, is hardly in need of such a warning. Before seeing Theagenes, she rejected love entirely. And after meeting him, the message only further cements her innate and constant concern with her chastity. The notion that chastity is a woman's sole virtue is

reaffirmed by the resolution of the novel, wherein Charikleia's salvation occurs almost immediately after her chastity is proven on the gridiron. Theagenes' salvation, however, is delayed until after he has proven his manly virtue through athletic and gymnastic feats. Persinna's call to chastity is painstakingly composed via the embroidery of Ethiopian hieroglyphs into a woven band.<sup>26</sup> This message is not incidental to the story that is the band's main focus, that of Persinna's decision to abandon Charikleia.<sup>27</sup>

Persinna's decision to abandon Charikleia, of course, is motivated by the fact that Charikleia looks so different from her father (and her mother, for that matter). Her white skin seems to suggest a white father, and thus suggests Persinna's adultery. The message to Charikleia, then, serves not only as a blanket warning to women in general, and upper class, royal women in particular, but a specific message to a daughter from a mother who lost that daughter because of (potential) suspicions that she had not been chaste. Persinna sums up the problem briefly:

Ἔγνω οὖν ἑμαυτὴν τε ἀπαλλάξαι τοῦ μετ' αἰσχύνῃς θανάτου, πεπεισμένη τὴν σὴν χροιάν μοιχείαν ἔμοι προσάψουσιν (οὐ γὰρ πιστεύσειν οὐδένα λεγούσῃ τὴν περιπέτειαν) καὶ σοὶ τὸ ἐκ τῆς τύχης ἀμφίβολον χάρισσθαι θανάτου προδήλου ἢ πάντως ὀνόματος νόθου προτιμότερον· (*Aethiopica* 4.8.7)

26 Morgan (1989) p. 404, Sandy (1982) p. 10 and Winkler (1982), p. 120 take embroidery or needlepoint as the means by which this message is written. Anderson (p. 316, note 24) challenges this notion by pointing out that neither (κατα-)στίζειν nor χαράττειν mean “stitch” and prefers to understand Persinna as writing on or stamping her message into the silk. The verbs' basic meanings both involve sharp objects (tattooing and sharpening), and although χαράττειν can denote writing more plainly, this sense is based on the idea of inscription in stone. I take Anderson's point that neither “embroidery” nor “needlework” is explicitly invoked but it does not seem clear to me that we should envision her writing with a *calamus* or even an Egyptian brush.

At the very least, understanding the message to involve some kind of sewing provides some attractive intertexts. The connection between textile-work and marital fidelity calls to mind Penelope (whose weaving helps delay the compromise of her fidelity), Ovid's Arachne (whose tapestry features the infidelities of the gods), and Ovid's Philomela (who is able to weave the story of her rape by her brother-in-law into a tapestry in order to obtain rescue by her sister and revenge). Weaving is paradigmatically the work of a faithful, productive wife in contrast with the adulterous and wasteful wife. Persinna's turn to textiles thus attempts to prove her faithfulness in two ways: through the message and the woven medium.

27 It strains credibility to believe that Persinna could have embroidered this long message (two full pages of Greek in the Budé edition) in the short period of time between giving birth to Charikleia and secretly abandoning her and telling Hydaspes the baby was stillborn. Even if Kalasiris is embellishing the retelling and even if Ethiopian hieroglyphs make the message substantially shorter—which Egyptian hieroglyphs, at any rate, would not necessarily—the band makes Persinna a particularly speedy embroiderer (not to mention a woman with an understanding of a complicated priestly writing system).

I decided then to free myself from a shameful death, since I was persuaded that your skin would attribute adultery to me (for no one would believe me if I told the tragic tale), and that the ambiguous outcome of chance was a better favor to you than a clear death or definitely than the label of illegitimacy.

Persinna's expectation that Charikleia's skin would expose her to charges of adultery is, on the one hand, sensible enough. Clearly even in the world of the *Aethiopica* “maternal impression” (the idea that what a mother sees at the time of conception can effect her child in profound ways) is a relatively rare occurrence.<sup>28</sup> Persinna assumes that the “reality” of maternal impression will be less convincing than the charge that she has slept with another man, namely a white(r) man. As others have noted, there was long a discrepancy in artistic representations of Greco-Ethiopian heroes like Memnon and Andromeda by which those heroes were depicted as white, more or less indistinguishable from Greek heroes, while the Ethiopians around them were depicted with stereotypical Ethiopian features.<sup>29</sup> However, with the exception of Charikleia, Heliodorus gives no sign that there are any white Ethiopians wandering around.<sup>30</sup> We might wonder then why this charge of adultery would be convincing. Are there “white” Europeans wandering around the Ethiopian court, one of whom might have seduced Persinna? None are described. But I do think there are some indications that we should understand there being some, namely the “half-caste Greek” (μιξέλληνά τινα) Ethiopian described at 9.24. and Persinna's evident familiarity with a Greek “type,” which is evidently sufficient to recognize Charikleia's (new) nationality at a glance at 10.7.5d.

In book 10, Charikleia and Theagenes are brought in with their fellow prisoners of war to

28 On maternal impression in medical writers: Morgan (2008) p. 433 n. 114 and Hilton (1998).

29 See, most recently, Gruen (2010) p. 215-6.

30 Heliodorus' descriptions do not usually focus on skin color, despite the huge importance of skin color to his plot. Charikleia's belief in the opening scene that the Egyptian bandits are ghosts suggests that their skin color is in fact, black (1.3.1). We might infer from this that all Africans are “black” (even Egyptians from the delta, who would probably not be described as such by modern standards.) On the other hand, Knemon is able to mistake Kalasiris for a Greek (2.21.4), which would seem to imply that he was “white” or at least white enough to pass. On race (and racism) in antiquity, Isaac (2006) is a good starting place. Perkins (1999) deals with the idea of passing. The description of Sisimithres' skin as blackness itself is a significant exception and is, interestingly, put in the mouth of the Greek Charikles rather than the narrator himself. See above, p. 52.

be sacrificed. While the other prisoners look grim, Charikleia stares straight at her mother, presumably hoping to be recognized. Persinna's reaction, however, is not to recognize her daughter straightaway, but nevertheless to remember her. After commenting on Charikleia's beauty, nobility, and resilience under her fate, Persinna draws attention to the similarity between her own daughter and this captive:

Εἰ περιεῖναι συνέβαινεν ἡμῖν τὸ ἅπαξ μοι κηθὲν καὶ κακῶς ἀπολωλὸς θυγάτριον, ἐν ἴσοις που ταύτη τοῖς ἔτεσιν ἐξητάζετο. Ἄλλ' εἶθε γε, ὦ ἄνερ, ἐνῆν πως ἐξελέσθαι τὴν κόρην, πολλὴν ἂν ἔσχον παραφυχὴν διακονουμένης μοι τοιαύτης. Ἴσως δέ που καὶ Ἑλληνίς ἐστὶν ἢ ἄθλία· τὸ γὰρ πρόσωπον οὐκ Αἰγυπτίας." (*Aethiopica* 10.7.4-5)

If the daughter born to me long ago and wretchedly killed had managed to be with us, she would perhaps be the same age as this girl. But come husband, if it were possible somehow to exempt this girl, I would have a great deal of consolation with a girl like her waiting on me. Could it be that the poor girl is Greek? Her face is not that of an Egyptian.

The irony of Persinna's estimation of the Charikleia's age—the same as her daughter's—is, of course, clear. More interestingly, Persinna is able to recognize her nationality from her facial features. Presumably, this includes her skin color but the jump to Greek as opposed to Persian, Phoenician, or any of the other non-Greeks who populate the world of the *Aethiopica* is interesting. Persinna has enough familiarity with Greeks to know a Greek when she sees one. Her indirect request that the girl be made her personal slave touchingly demonstrates that Persinna has never fully gotten over her decision to abandon Charikleia, but her desire for a presumably Greek serving girl, also fits in with information which we learn much earlier in the novel.

One of the greatest coincidences of the novel is that Thisbe, the Athenian slave girl who causes so many problems for Knemon, is rediscovered in Egypt, brought there by Nausikles, a Greek trader whose home in Chemmis houses Kalasiris and Knemon as they swap stories. Kalasiris explains to Knemon that Nausikles is not at home because he is out searching for Thisbe and the explanation provides us some insight into Persinna's character as well:

Χαλεπαίνει δὲ τὴν ἀφαίρεσιν τῆς Ἀττικῆς κόρης οὐχ ὡς ἐρωμένης μόνον καὶ μουσουργίαν ἀρίστης ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὴν καὶ βασιλεῖ τῶν Αἰθιοπῶν ἀπάξειν ἔμελλεν ὡς αὐτὸς ἔφασκε γαμετῇ τῇ ἐκείνου συμπαιστρίαν καὶ συνόμιλον τὰ Ἑλλήνων ἔσομένην. (*Aethiopica* 2.24.3)

He was grieved at the theft of the Athenian girl not only because he loved her and because of her exceptional musical skill but also because he intended to bring her to the king of the Ethiopians to be, as he himself said repeatedly, a playmate and conversation partner in Greek for the king's wife.

Nausikles is a consummate merchant and despite his love for Thisbe, he is ultimately looking to make a profit. It is not made explicit why he believes the Ethiopian royal family will be better customers than, say, the satrap and his wife. We might assume that the Ethiopians' surplus of wealth factors into the decision. Implicit in his decision, however, is also the assumption that a Greek-speaking serving girl would be something of interest to the queen of Ethiopia.

The specific words used to mark what Thisbe's role would be are intriguing.

Συμπαιστρία is a rare word only used in Aristophanes' "Frogs" before Heliodorus, and there with sexual overtones.<sup>31</sup> It would seem more appropriate to a princess, or a girl at any rate, than a queen. Συνόμιλος, on the other hand, is a much more common word which generally means something like an "associate." In the *koine* Greek of the first century CE, the verb συνομιλέω denotes conversation.<sup>32</sup> Heliodorus' uses the noun συνόμιλος in conjunction with τὰ Ἑλληνων which literally denotes the very general "the things of the Greeks" but which is used elsewhere in the novel to mean "the Greek language."<sup>33</sup> My translation of συνόμιλος as "conversation partner" may put too much specificity into a general word, but any translation should be understood to encompass this aspect of the role which Nausikles intends for Thisbe.

Nearly the same phrase is used again later in the work. As Kybele tries to assuage Theagenes' fears, she promises him good things for Charikleia, whom she believes to be his

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31 *Frogs* 411: the chorus of mystics mentions a συμπαιστρία whose torn *chiton* reveals her breast.

32 *Acts of the Apostles* 10.27: "While **talking to him** (συνομιλῶν), Peter went inside and found many people gathered." *The Tablet of Cebes* 13: "Those lovers of False Learning, who are deceived and suppose they **speak** (συνομιλεῖν) with true Learning, what are they called?" "Poets, Rhetors..."

33 *Aethiopica* 1.19.3: Thyamis appoints Knemon as translator because Knemon understood Greek but Thyamis did not speak Greek fluently (οὐκ ἠκρίβου τὰ Ἑλλήνων).

sister: ἀδελφή δὲ ἢ σὴ συμπαίστρια τε καὶ συνόμιλος ἔσομένη (*Aethiopica* 7.14.2, Your sister will be [Arsake's] playmate and conversation partner.) Kybele, then, intends Charikleia to play a similar role to Arsake as Nausikles would have Thisbe play to Persinna. Both of these rich, exotic queens are expected to need or want a young beautiful Greek girl to play with and speak Greek with. We have already discussed Arsake's penchant for Greek(s), but Persinna's has not yet been explained.

The narrator provides a brief indication of Persinna's Greek-speaking when Hydaspes first addresses Charikleia after the battle of Syene:

Καὶ ἀποστρέψας τὸν λόγον εἰς τὴν Χαρίκλειαν καὶ τὴν φωνὴν ἐλληνίζων, σπουδάζεται γὰρ ἤδε ἢ γλῶττα παρὰ τοῖς Γυμνοσοφισταῖς καὶ βασιλεῦσιν Αἰθιοπῶν, “Σὺ δὲ” ἔφη, ὦ κόρη, τί σιγᾷς... (*Aethiopica* 9.25.3)

He turned his speech to Charikleia and speaking Greek—This language is studied by the Gymnosophists and the rulers of the Ethiopians—said “You, young lady, why are you silent?”...

The reason why the political and religious leadership of Ethiopia should study Greek at the time when our novel is set is not entirely clear and it is a subject to which I explore in both my first and fifth chapters. What is important for my present argument is that they do study Greek, and the fact that Persinna is included in the word “rulers” (βασιλεῦσιν) is proven by her involvement in the final scenes which see the Gymnosophists, Charikleia, and the royal family all speaking Greek, much to the chagrin of the eager Ethiopian crowd.

Persinna, then, like Arsake, is a student of Greek and, as a student of Greek, needs a teacher and/or a conversation partner; she has to learn it from someone. Nausikles would have provided Thisbe to fulfill this role, a presumably attractive option because it would eliminate the need for a potentially cuckolding male teacher. Heliodorus does not explicitly associate Persinna's desire to learn Greek with a lustful desire for Greek men, unlike his treatment of Arsake. But the fact remains that a suspicion might be laid there. When Persinna anxiously frets

over the charges of adultery to which she suspects her white daughter will expose her, she implies that there are white men available in ancient Ethiopia to commit that adultery. Heliodorus may be projecting onto his text the world in which he lived. In the Syria of the late Roman empire, it may have been inconceivable that an important capital like Meroe would lack some measure of ethnic diversity, or at least of Greekness. Whether this would come through foreign ambassadors, merchants, colonists, traveling sages, or mercenaries may not be important. Anyone, after all, might serve as a conversational partner, or a potential adulterer. Just as any teacher might be exposed to the charge of sexually corrupting his pupils, so the chastity of a woman receiving an education might be suspect, especially if the woman's child has skin color closer to her tutor than her husband.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Charikleia***

Thus far we have examined women whose interest in foreign languages either made their chastity suspect or in fact exposed their lack of chastity. In *Charikleia*, we see the converse of this linkage. *Charikleia* is of course intensely focused on preserving her sexual chastity but Heliodorus also takes great care to imbue her with a linguistic chastity which reinforces the sexual one.

*Charikleia* is to all outward appearances a Greek girl, a priestess of Artemis at Delphi and, like her fellow heroines in Greek novels, a paragon of both virtue and beauty. And yet both famously and importantly, she was not born a Greek. *Charikleia* is an Ethiopian and, as we learn, was raised in Ethiopia for the first years of her life. After her abandonment, we next hear of *Charikleia* when the novice gymnosophist Sisimithres brings her to Katadoupoi and gives her to Charikles. *Charikleia* is, at this point, 7 years old, and no longer an infant; Kalasiris tells of

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34 On accusations of sexual impropriety against teachers, see below, p. 116.

Charikles telling that Sisimithres said that his decision was prompted by the maturing of Charikleia's beauty upon her reaching the pinnacle of youth.<sup>35</sup> It is at this point that Charikleia is entrusted to Charikles, who describes her actions when first left alone with the foreign stranger who will be her adoptive father:

“Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ” φησὶν “εἰς τὸ δωμάτιον ἦλθον ὑπαντᾶ τέ μοι ἡ παῖς καὶ ἔλεγε μὲν οὐδέν, οὕτω τῆς Ἑλλάδος συνιῖσα φωνῆς ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς χειρὸς ἠσπάζετο κάμῃ πρὸς τὸ φαιδρότερον ὀφθειῖσα μόνον ἀνίησιν” (*Aethiopica* 2.33.1)

“When” he said “I came into the room, the child came up to me and said nothing, since she did not yet know the Greek language, but she greeted me with her hand and only by being seen she cheered me up.”

The fact that Charikleia did not know Greek at this early point in her life is not surprising. What is somewhat more is that she doesn't respond, as a real child might, with pleas or questions in her native tongue, but rather resorts to a more universal gesture.<sup>36</sup> Heliodorus' decision to have Charikleia not speak Ethiopian, or indeed, even to acknowledge that she could speak the language of the country in which she has grown to be a young woman is curious, and is part of a strategy that makes Charikleia not-barbarian, even when she is not Greek.<sup>37</sup> The reader already knows that Charikleia is Ethiopian but she is presented here as an essentially Greek girl who is yet to be fully formed.

Charikleia does not remain in this incomplete state for long. Charikles continues his story and presents his developing relationship with Charikleia and her cultural acclimation:

σαλεύω γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ τὸν βίον καὶ ἔστι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα καὶ εὐχῆς κρείττων, οὕτω τάχιστα μὲν τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλῶτταν ἴλκυσε τάχιστα δὲ εἰς ἀκμὴν καθάπερ ἔρνος τι τῶν εὐθαλῶν ἀνέδραμεν.  
(*Aethiopica* 2.33.3)

For the ship of my life rides at her anchor and everything is better than I had prayed for. She drank up the Greek language oh so quickly and very quickly she shot up to her full height, just like some nicely blooming shoot.

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<sup>35</sup> *Aethiopica* 2.31.3: ἡ τῆς κόρης ἀκμὴ μείζονος ὥρας ἐφαντάζετο τοῦ εἰωθότος τὸ κάλλος δ' οὐδ' ἂν ὑπὸ γῆν κρυπτόμενον ἔλαθεν ἀλλὰ μοι δοκεῖ κἂν ἐκεῖθεν διεκλάμψαι...

<sup>36</sup> On gestures as (potentially, if problematically) universal, see chapter four.

<sup>37</sup> Judith Perkins (1999), p. 206, sees this silencing of Charikleia as part of a more general tendency of Heliodorus to recognize his text's silencing of non-Greek voices, which in turn is a reflection of colonial repression. Charikleia's silence represents “a loss—a loss of the ability to communicate with her own people, to speak any longer as 'the other,' or to the 'other.'”

Charikles presents Charikleia like a parched plant, quickly drinking up the Greek language like so much water. The image is one that suggests that Greek is not just another language to be learned, equal to the Ethiopian language that she had spoken until this point. Instead, Greek is as necessary to Charikleia as water to plants. The result of Charikleia's being watered with the Greek language too is a full realization of her physical potential (ἀκμή). The passage is a clear allusion to *Iliad* 18.56, in which Thetis describes Achilles "shooting up just like a shoot" (ὁ δ' ἀνέδραμεν ἔρνεϊ ἴσος). Even before the addition of her ability to speak Greek, Charikleia's beauty was already so outstanding that Sisimithres was worried about the attention it might attract. Charikleia's cultural assimilation, signalled here by her acquisition of Greek brings her into full bloom. The speed with which both these things happen (τάχιστα μὲν... τάχιστα δὲ) marks Charikleia again as essentially innately Greek. She doesn't struggle with the language and learn it after a long process of lessons and tutors, but rather absorbs it as passively and effortlessly as a plant. Lest we suspect that this is simply attributable to some innate talent for languages, we should turn our attention to Charikleia's (lack of) skills with Ethiopian.

After an elaborate series of lies and ruses to win the confidence of both Charikleia and her adoptive father, Kalasiris is able to bring together the embroidered band with Charikleia's backstory and Charikleia herself. Using this, Kalasiris reveals to Charikleia that he knows she is adopted and offers to provide her with the information on the band:

“Τὸ μὲν ὅπως ταύτην ἐκομισάμην εἰσαῦθις” ἔφην “ἀκούσῃ, τὸ δὲ παρὸν, εἰ τὰ ἐγγεγραμμένα γνωρίζεις εἰπέ μοι.” Τῆς δὲ οὐκ εἰδέναι, πόθεν; ὁμολογούσης, “Γένος” ἔλεγον “καὶ ἔθνος τὸ σὸν καὶ τύχην φράζει.” Ὡς δὲ ἀνακαλύπτειν ὅσα ἔχω γινώσκειν ἰκέτευσεν, ἔλεγον ἅπαντα τὴν τε γραφὴν ἐπιῶν ἐν μέρει καὶ πρὸς ἔπος ἐρμηνεύων. (*Aethiopica* 4.11.4)

“How I acquired it” I said “you will hear later. But first, tell me if you know what is written on it.” and when she agreed that she didn't, how could she?, I told her, “It tells of your birth, your origin, and your fate.” and when she begged me to reveal all that I could make out, I told her everything, going through the writing part by part and translating it word for word.

Charikleia's ignorance of the contents of the message are not particularly surprising. She herself had just explained that Charikles had locked it up to preserve it.<sup>38</sup> Nor is it particularly surprising that Charikleia cannot read the message for herself. The message was written in the so-called “royal script” (βασίλεια γράμματα) of the Ethiopians, which Kalasiris claims is highly similar to the “hieratic” script of Egypt.<sup>39</sup> Kalasiris, as an Egyptian priest, is able to understand the message because of his knowledge of his own Egyptian hieroglyphs and their similarities to this text. It is not entirely clear whether Kalasiris can actually understand Ethiopian (in, for example, its spoken forms) or whether he is simply able to infer meaning from the similarities of the writing systems in the same way a Mandarin speaker might be able to understand a document written in the similar Cantonese script but would be unable to correctly read it aloud. Unlike Chinese pictographs, however, Egyptian hieroglyphs represented, for the most part, phonetic values rather than semantic ones (i.e. A hieroglyph of a vulture represented a glottal stop most of the time; it did not usually mean “vulture”). If Kalasiris' understanding is to be based on recognition of the semantic value of pictographs, we have to concede that Heliodorus is not presenting hieroglyphs in a historically accurate way.<sup>40</sup> That said, the Greeks had a long history of misunderstanding the way hieroglyphic writing worked and Heliodorus would be in great company in assuming that hieroglyphs were primarily pictographs and that therefore would be

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38 *Aethiopica* 4.11.3

39 *Aethiopica* 4.8.1: ἐπελεγόμεν τὴν ταινίαν γράμμασιν Αἰθιοπικοῖς οὐ δημοτικοῖς ἀλλὰ βασιλικοῖς ἐστιγμένην, ἃ δὴ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίων ἱερατικοῖς καλουμένοις ὠμοίωται. Hieratic in this context seems most likely to refer to what scholars today call hieroglyphic writing, the pictorial system which is the most common modern image of Ancient Egyptian writing. The system of writing called “hieratic” by modern scholars is a cursive form of hieroglyphic but was likewise used by and for priests (and royalty). The so-called “demotic” system, as it is named by Herodotus, was known as the “letter script” and used for less formal communication originally, though reading it was still a specialized skill not widely available to the Egyptian populace. Diodorus Siculus discusses the Meroitic script of Ethiopia, which seems to have been an adaptation of Egyptian hieroglyphs to the Meroitic language. Such language, however, would figure as an anachronism in our text, as it was not in use until 2-3 centuries after the dramatic date of the novel. See Depauw (1997) on Egyptian scripts and Török (1997) on Meroitic.

40 Which essentially means he has no more knowledge than any other ancient Greek or Roman writer on the subject.

understandable across a language barrier for a skilled interpreter.

To return to the point at hand, one of two situations emerges then: Kalasiris either 1.) is able to read Ethiopian and can therefore read it aloud and translate it for Charikleia or 2.) is not able to read Ethiopian aloud but can infer the meaning through his understanding of Egyptian. He then translates his Egyptian understanding of the Ethiopian text into Greek for Charikleia. These two situations produce some differences in our understanding of the scene but the results come to much the same conclusion.

In the first case, in which Kalasiris can read Ethiopian, it is clear that Charikleia has lost her ability to understand spoken Ethiopian. Kalasiris does not simply read the text aloud to her. Rather he must translate it word for word (πρὸς ἔπος ἐρμηνεύων). Given that she was raised away from the palace and whatever royal education she might have received there, and that she left the country at a relatively young age, she should not have an ability to read Ethiopian. However she surely spoke it with Sisimithres and others until the day she was placed in Charikles' care and began to “drink up” the Greek language. It is a widely recognized linguistic phenomenon that children, removed from the environment in which they learned their first language, and denied the opportunity (or a reason) to speak it, can lose that language. Heliodorus would not be presenting an extraordinary situation. He would however, be presenting an Ethiopian princess who has lost all markers of her Ethiopian identity: her skin color and features through the accident of her conception and her language through the complete atrophy of her ability to speak and understand Ethiopian. Charikleia has then become entirely Greek, even as she herself finds out that she is an Ethiopian princess. She is neither bi-cultural, nor bi-lingual and her only link to Ethiopia is that her parents happen to be Ethiopian.

The second situation described above, in which Kalasiris can understand written

Ethiopian but cannot pronounce it, presents a weakened version of the same results. We can imagine in this case that while Kalasiris can convert the written (or embroidered) word to meaning, and Charikleia could convert the spoken word to meaning, neither can convert the written word to the spoken. This interesting paradox makes an Egyptian speaker of Greek the only conduit by which an Ethiopian speaker can understand an Ethiopian document. Greek then is elevated to a status of *lingua franca*, while Ethiopian is shunted off as a provincial language whose challenges must be overcome. In this situation too, Heliodorus refuses to attribute Ethiopian ability to Charikleia explicitly. Even if he allows Charikleia to retain the ability to speak Ethiopian, the text buries this detail in such a way as to force Charikleia and her communication with Kalasiris to be in Greek and for her thus to remain purely Greek.

Charikleia, then, despite her time growing up in Ethiopia, is never shown speaking or even understanding Ethiopian. She is first mute, and then monolingual in Greek, a condition she maintains through the end of the novel. The dramatic final book of the novel which takes place at the Ethiopian court unfolds almost entirely in Greek, a device which, whatever its other effects and intentions, allows Charikleia to continue to speak in Greek exclusively. This resolute monolingualism, unusual enough in the thoroughly multi-lingual world of the *Aethiopica* and downright confusing given Charikleia's complex personal story, serves to underscore her sexual chastity, which is explicitly tested in the final book as well. Indeed, Charikleia scarcely has proven herself on the gridiron when Sisimithres changes the language of the proceedings to Greek. Heliodorus' confinement of Charikleia to the Greek language alone puts her in sharp contrast with Arsake and Kybele, the sexually scheming women of the Persian court who are also emphatically multilingual. Whereas her mother Persinna learns Greek as a second language, in Ethiopia, Charikleia replaces Ethiopian with Greek as her new first and only language, learned

not from a tutor under whose influence she might be sexually corrupted but rather under the protective eye of her adoptive father as part of her chaste and priestly life at Delphi.

### ***Language and Education in the Roman Empire***

Education seems not to have been one of Heliodorus' concerns in the construction of his novels.<sup>41</sup> Although the characters display elements of erudition including not only sophisticated use of language and writing, but also allusions to such mainstays of Classical education as Homer and Euripides, we see no scenes of education nor any direct evidence of the processes by which the characters are assumed to have been educated. Given Heliodorus' thorough knowledge of Greek literature, we can have little doubt about his education. In a novel in which so much attention is given to the process of understanding, his lack of attention to schooling stands out. Two possibilities suggest themselves: 1.) that education was simply such a universally similar experience among his intended readers that Heliodorus had no need to spend time explaining how, for example, Kalasiris acquired his knowledge of Homer or 2.) that the standard models of traditional education were in fact antithetical to the view of understanding through interpretation of suggestive signs which Heliodorus develops in the novel. The two are not mutually exclusive and I suspect that both play a role. In favor of the second possibility is the fact that, at least at its most rudimentary levels, education in the ancient world relied heavily on rote memorization and did not always proceed in a straightforward way from simpler concepts to more difficult ones.<sup>42</sup> In Heliodorus, however, learning and insight come not from memorization, but from hermeneutic

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41 The important book of Lalanne (2006), lays out the ways in which the novel, as a genre, present journeys similar to Van Gennep's famous *rites de passage* and therefore constitute examples of a kind of Greek education. While there is much to recommend such a view, there remains some distance between the kind of education Lalanne discusses and the study of a foreign language in which I am most interested.

42 Cribiore (2001), p. 164-178 provides an excellent overview of the process of learning basic writing, which was divorced from reading and probably resulted in many cases in students who could recognize and write individual letters and their own names but were not capable of reading texts. She relies heavily on evidence from Egypt, but there is no good reason to believe that practice varied dramatically in other parts of the Roman empire.

interpretation.<sup>43</sup>

The fact that Heliodorus presents us with a number of well-educated, bilingual women should not be considered an unrealistic detail. Women of means were frequently educated in the ancient world, though philosophers pondered whether such a move was prudent.<sup>44</sup> One notion against the idea, put forth by satirists as well as philosophers, was that educated women were likely to be pretentious and quibble with their husbands or their friends over irrelevant details.<sup>45</sup> In favor of educating women, however, was the belief that through at least a basic education, and in some cases even a philosophical one, women could be turned away from various vices towards the attainment of virtue.<sup>46</sup> Aside from the world of philosophers, Pomeroy provides evidence from material culture that as far back as 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Athens it was not rare for affluent women to be literate, an argument she further supports by pointing to the unremarkable status of Phaedra's suicide note in Euripides' *Hippolytus*.<sup>47</sup> Although marriage and child rearing may have disrupted girls' educations at the time when they would be ready to advance from grammar school to more sophisticated studies, they might have access to education through either their husbands, private tutors or through their families' libraries.<sup>48</sup> As time went on the

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43 See Winkler (1982) *passim*.

44 On women in late antiquity generally, see Clark (1994) and Frascetti (1999). On women in the novel, see Haynes (2002).

45 See Hemelrijk (1999) p. 86-88 on Juvenal 6.448-56, Martial *Eps.* 2.90.9-10, 11.19, 12.97.3, and Musonius Rufus, fr. III.54-8. Compare also the misogynistic *sententiae* of New Comedy which students copied out as early writing exercises. One example, cited by Pomeroy (1977), p. 61 is the first one in section 3 of Jäkel's *Comparatio Menandri et Philistionis*: Γυναιῶν ὁ διδάσκων γράμματα , <οὐ> καλῶς <ποιεῖ>/ ἀσπίδι φοβερῶ προσπορίζει φάρμακον. This is found with another (this time comparing a woman's education to the sharpening of a sword) in P. Bouriant 1 (=P. Sorb. Inv. 826), folio VI, verso. Cribiore (2001), p. 77, argues that even girls being educated by writing out such lines likely internalized such values "without much resistance."

46 Musonius Rufus, fr. III and IV, in the text and translation in Lutz (1947).

47 Pomeroy, (1977) p. 51.

48 Hemelrijk (2004) provides Roman examples of (among others) the Younger Pliny's wife Calpurnia, whose education he continued p.30-6, Atticus' daughter Attica who was taught after her marriage by her father's freedman p. 36, and Cornelia mother of the Gracchi, who had access to her uncle's (L. Aemilius Paullus') library.p. 64-6. Though these examples are all Roman and of a time somewhat earlier than that of Heliodorus (as is the focus of Hemelrijk's book) the examples seem to be generalizable to a wider context with the elite circles of the Mediterranean.

trend seems to continue, and there are examples of women with remarkable educations, up to and including Hypatia, the Alexandrian philosopher and mathematician whose death came at the hands of an angry Christian mob.<sup>49</sup>

An angry mob was not, however, a common outcome of the education of women. A more common accusation ran against teachers in general: that of sexual abuse with their students.<sup>50</sup>

One teacher was so careful to inoculate himself against such ideas that he actually had it asserted on his tombstone:

*P[a]rce pudensque vixit omni tempore,  
Auruncus era[t], Fu[r]ius erat nomine  
magister ludi litterari Philocalus  
summa quom castitate in discipulos suos...*(CLE 91 = CIL 10.3969 Capua)

Modestly and moderately he lived all his time,  
He was from Aurunca, his name Furius  
Philocalus, the elementary school teacher,  
who with utmost chastity towards his students...

As Christian Laes has pointed out, such an explicit claim to chastity was a response to the semi-regular accusations of inappropriate behavior leveled at teachers.<sup>51</sup> Education had been linked with Eros at least since Plato,<sup>52</sup> and Yun Lee Too argues that because desire is always implicit in the desire to learn, it therefore must be carefully managed, arranged, and depersonalized.<sup>53</sup>

As a practical matter, teachers had privileged access to their pupils (male and female) and parents nervous about preserving their sexual integrity may have had something to worry about. Aeschines provides us with information about a law, attributed to Solon (probably erroneously), which prohibits schoolmasters and physical trainers from opening their establishments before

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49 See Ronchey (2001).

50 While “abuse” may seem an anachronistic term for teacher/student sexual relationships, the frequency of such allegations, suggests that such a relationship, especially with young freeborn men and women, and primary teachers (who tended to be of low status) was seen as an egregiously inappropriate one.

51 Laes (2007) p. 5.

52 The *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* serve as obvious starting places. See also Too (2000), *passim*.

53 Too (2000) p. 86.

sunrise or keeping them opened after sunset.<sup>54</sup> The law, he tells us, is based on parents' suspicions about what the teacher might do with their children under the cover of darkness.

Beyond this distrust of the schoolteacher who might take advantage of his charges, education might also seem to corrupt students more generally. Hemelrijk suggests that Sallust's characterization of Sempronia as a kind of counterpart to Cataline puts emphasis both on her education and her sexual licentiousness.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the elegaic staple of the *puella docta* was an ambiguous figure who might be praised for her artistic abilities and education or looked upon with moral suspicion for those same qualities. In the Greek world, education was not only the realm of the social elite, who could pursue it honorably, but also of *hetairai*, whose work made them not only musical entertainers, but also as intellectual and sexual partners to their elite clients.<sup>56</sup>

The link between learning and sexuality, then, has a long and rich history in the Greco-Roman world. In part this is because education was always linked with a (usually, but not always, male) teacher.<sup>57</sup> Studying on one's own, without a teacher does not seem to have been a strategy available in the ancient world.<sup>58</sup> In which case, studying a language implies acquiring a teacher of that language, preferably a native speaker.<sup>59</sup> While we can understand far less than we would like to about ancient education in general, our understanding of second-language education has still less to work with. It is an accepted fact that for much of the Roman republic

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54 *Against Timarchus* 9-12.

55 Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 25; Hemelrijk (2004) p. 84-6.

56 Pomeroy (1977) p. 51.

57 Cribiore (2001) p. 78-83 discusses the evidence for female teachers in Greco-Roman Egypt.

58 Although in the modern world, many people might have a casual interest or curiosity about a language and acquire a textbook with which to teach themselves the language. Text books certainly existed in the ancient world (e.g. Horace envisions his work becoming an elementary textbook in Epistle 1.20.17-18). But these were merely workbooks to be used as part of lessons with a teacher, not books from which one might teach oneself the language. For more on ancient and modern language pedagogy see Kelley (1969).

59 Native speaking proficiency has not always been a priority in teachers, although certainly most teachers of Greek to Roman children were Greek. Kelley again provides interesting insight into the modern era.

and most of the Empire, an elite male was generally expected to have at least a basic understanding of the Greek language and Greek culture. This was accomplished in childhood, side-by-side with education in Latin.<sup>60</sup> In Heliodorus, however, we see no direct evidence of the education of children.

In fact, in the *Aethiopica* second-language education seems to be largely the domain of adults in their professional capacities. Sisimithres provides unique insights as we see him at two different points in the novel which correspond both to different abilities with his second language (Greek) and different points in his career trajectory. His first appearance is in Kalasiris' account of Charikles' story. Sisimithres is described as a young adult (ἄρτι μὲν τὸν ἔφηβον), as faltering in Greek (ἔλεγεν ἐλληνίζων οὐ βεβαίως), and shortly thereafter he represents himself as a new initiate to the gymnosophists (τῶν γυμνῶν παρ' ἡμῖν σοφῶν ὣν ἀκουστῆς εἶναι χρόνοις ὀλίγω πρόσθεν ἡξίωμα).<sup>61</sup> As we have already seen, the gymnosophists and the rulers of the Ethiopians study Greek, evidently as required by their profession.<sup>62</sup> When Sisimithres returns in Book 10, he speaks Greek flawlessly, by choice instead of necessity, and has now reached the pinnacle of his career as the leader of the senate of Gymnosophists (ὁ προκαθηγητῆς τοῦ συνεδρίου Σισιμίθρης).<sup>63</sup> Given Heliodorus' attention to detail, it is impossible not to see his change in linguistic abilities as a reflection of his maturation from ephebe to middle aged man and his advancement from “student” or “listener” (ἀκουστής) to “head teacher” (προκαθηγητῆς). The gymnosophists must, then, be understood as a kind of philosophical school, in which part of the curriculum is the learning of Greek. One begins one's education as an ephebe, not as a child, and mastery can be reached a few decades later.

60 Booth (1979) p. 2, for example, in reading Horace *Satire* 1.6 infers that both languages were taught at the same period, possibly by the same *grammaticus*.

61 *Aethiopica* 2.30.1 and 2.31.1.

62 *Aethiopica* 9.25.3 (see above, p. 107)

63 *Aethiopica* 10.4.2.

The contrast between Thyamis and Kalasiris provides a similar example. Kalasiris is so proficient at Greek that he is, at least once, mistaken for a Greek even after he has started speaking.<sup>64</sup> Kalasiris had a long career as the priest of Isis in Memphis and only left it when sexual temptation became too great to stay. His son Thyamis, however, who was forced to flee from Memphis due to the intrigues of Arsake and his brother Petosiris, has only a limited command of Greek (ὁ δὲ Θύαμις οὐκ ἠκρίβου τὰ Ἑλλήνων).<sup>65</sup> Though the evidence is somewhat scantier in this case, it seems at least highly suggestive that Heliodorus imagined his priests of Isis studying Greek and that Thyamis, by fleeing from his position, also prematurely abandoned his studies.

## **Conclusion**

This diversion into the Greek studies of the male characters is meant to establish both that the situation for men is qualitatively different than for women and that it was quite normal (in Heliodorus' novel, at any rate) for characters to engage in foreign language studies not as children, but as adults who have already cemented their place in society.<sup>66</sup> It is in this context that Persinna, presumably after ascending to the throne of Ethiopia began her studies of Greek. We might be tempted to understand her as taking instruction from this college of gymnosophists. However, given her concerns over perceived infidelity with a (light-skinned) Greek speaker, I think it is more appropriate to understand a foreign private tutor. The private access such a tutor might have to the queen could always be a sensitive issue, and finding a young Greek girl to be her “playmate and companion in things Greek” might be a way of continuing her education

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64 *Aethiopica* 2.21.4.

65 *Aethiopica* 1.19.3.

66 Though most of our evidence concerns children in school, the so-called “Tomb of the Swing” from Hellenistic Cyrene shows an adult woman being educated (and counting on her fingers) by a female teacher (with a rod). See Criboire (2001) p. 79. (who refutes the argument of Harris, p. 136 that the scene “probably does not represent teaching at all”).

without exposing her to the danger of seduction.

Kybele, on the other hand, shows exactly how such a setup can go wrong. In addition to whatever language or cultural instruction she provides Arsake, she also procures for her the men who become the target for her “perverted and immoderate pleasure.” Unlike Persinna, Arsake has no cultural reason to learn Greek. Whatever the relationship between the Ethiopian royal class and Hellenism, the Persian court displays no such link—and it would be historically preposterous, I think, to imagine a Persian noble around the time of the Persian wars so devoted to the then insignificant Greeks out of pure cultural appreciation. Instead Arsake's interest in Greek is both a reflection of her interest in Greek *καλοὶ κ'ἀγαθοί* and is a tool for her to obtain those Greek men.

Charikleia's dedication to her chastity is reflected by her becoming and remaining a monolingual Greek speaker. Her relationship with Charikles is one of father and daughter, priest and priestess, and so she remains as far from even the implication of impropriety as possible. Can we assume that having returned to her home country, reintegrated herself into her family, and taken on the role of not only priestess of the moon, but also the next queen, Charikleia will now learn Ethiopian? I believe so, but at the very least this is a possible outcome of the vague ending.<sup>67</sup> If so, it is worth noting that this will occur after her marriage, after she and Theagenes have begun a sexual relationship. As she does so, she may expose herself to the same suspicions to which her mother was exposed, opening the possibility for the story to repeat itself—though given Heliodorus' strange genetics, what Charikleia and Theagenes' child might be expected to look like is far from clear. Another possibility, however, is that the ending scene presents a new hybridized society with Greek(-ish) rulers, a hybrid ruling class, and a native population, a

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<sup>67</sup> See below, p. 176.

setting underscored by the *sphragis* which ends the work by identifying the Greek author as a “Phoenician from Emesa.”<sup>68</sup> In this society we might imagine Charikleia remaining monolingual, never adopting the language of her new and native homeland. In such an epilogue, Charikleia might avoid her mother's mistake, and continue a chaste life above the suspicion which multilingual women could not avoid.

While I hope to have shown that the connection between second-language learning and (lack of) chastity is an element of Heliodorus' characterization and is consistent with long-standing strains of both Greek and Roman thought concerning education in general, this connection was not universal. We have accounts of a number of Christian women of late antiquity whose dedication to chastity and education were equally strong. Saint Melania the Younger knew not only knew Greek and Latin but also Hebrew and read the holy books in their original languages for a period of time every day.<sup>69</sup> She was married and had both given birth to children and watched them die, but she is said to have taught her husband to reject her body, that is to abstain from even the chaste sex of a married couple.<sup>70</sup> Melania was certainly not unique in this conjunction of passion for God and through him the languages of the holy books, and the rejection of physical sexuality. But she is presented as something of a paradox: a rich noblewoman and descendant of the Julio-Claudians, who strove to give away her wealth; a manly woman; a married woman who abstained from sex. Melania, and the women like her, represent a burgeoning new tradition in which Christian learning was part of a system of rejection of worldly temptation, including sex. This new tradition stands manifestly in opposition with the traditional characterization of learning as an erotically charged activity, a

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68 On the relationship between the text, the author, the Greek tradition and Hellenism, Whitmarsh (1998) is invaluable.

69 Giardina (2001) p. 203-4.

70 Giardina (2001) p. 193-5; 205-6.

characterization that Heliodorus made use of by linking his characters' sexuality with their abilities in foreign languages.

Finally, let us return to the question of the double standard that we examined briefly at the beginning of this chapter. As we have seen, Theagenes is different than his fellow novel heroes in that he reaches the end of the novel with his virginity intact. The same cannot be said about his linguistic chastity however. After the eunuch Bagoas rescues Charikleia and Theagenes from Memphis he brings them south to the Satrap, and is intercepted by an Ethiopian scouting party *en route*. Among the army was an Egyptian, who also spoke Persian and who asked who they were.<sup>71</sup> Given this set of linguistic options (Persian, Egyptian, Ethiopian), we expect that Bagoas (who knows at least Persian) will respond. Instead, the narrator tells us that:

Ὡς οὖν ὁ Θεαγένης ὑπὸ τε συνδιατιθήσεως ἤδη μακρᾶς τῆς Αἰγυπτίας καὶ βραχείας τῆς πεύσεως τὰ πρῶτα εἶναι τοῦ σατράπου Περσῶν Βαγῶαν ἀπεκρίνατο ἑαυτὸν δὲ καὶ τὴν Χαρίκλειαν Ἕλληνας γένος Πέρσαις μὲν πρότερον αἰχμαλώτους ἀγομένους τὸ παρὸν δὲ Αἰθίοψιν ὑπὸ χρηστοτέρας ἴσως τύχης ἐγχειριζομένους, ἔγνωσαν φεῖδεσθαι καὶ ζωγρία λαβόντες ἄγειν· (*Aethiopica* 8.17.3)

Theagenes, then, since his exposure to Egyptian had been long and the question had been short said first that Bagoas belonged to the satrap of the Persians and that he and Charikleia were of the Greek race, and had been captives of the Persians, but that at present in the hands of a better fate, he knew that the Ethiopian would spare them and take them away alive.

The response is a clever one by which Theagenes is able to prevent their being killed as enemies, transfer himself and Charikleia from Persian control into the hands of the Ethiopian army who bear them no ill will and will likely take them towards Charikleia's father and recognition. It remains a bit shocking, however. The narrator had given us no previous indication that Theagenes was picking up Egyptian and even if the question was short, his answer is somewhat complicated. It seems likely we are meant to infer that Theagenes learned Egyptian while he and Thyamis made their way to Memphis, and while this would make him a quick study, we should not be entirely shocked if a hero who is outstanding in every other way turns out to have a head

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<sup>71</sup> *Aethiopica* 8.17.2.

for languages too.

Theagenes' is no longer a purely Greek hero. He has lost a little of his pristine Greekness (and it is worth remembering that he is a descendant of the *original* Hellenes). He has lost his linguistic chastity and has thereby become the bi-cultural hero with the skills to achieve his heroine's homecoming. Just as Daphnis' sexual encounter with Lycanion enabled his final consummation of *eros* with Chloe, so too does Theagenes' linguistic transgression facilitate the achievement of his and Charikleia's goals.

## Chapter 4: Nonverbal Communication

The *Aethiopica* begins with a scene unparalleled in Greek literature.<sup>1</sup> Bandits look down on one of the Nile's mouths, searching for prey. What they find is a mysterious sight: a ship full of treasure, evidence of a feast-turned-massacre, and a beautiful figure they first suppose to be a goddess, but who turns out to be Charikleia, the white Ethiopian princess whose journey from Delphi back to her home in Meroe constitutes the novel's action. This opening tableau is vividly described in gorgeous and allusive Greek prose but Heliodorus' attention extends beyond language.<sup>2</sup> Eventually a second group of bandits arrives, the first flees, and Thyamis, the leader of this new group closes in to capture the heroine. Their interaction highlights an unusual and exciting aspect of Heliodorus' treatment of cross-cultural interaction:

Ὅψε δὴ οὖν ποτε πλησιάσας ὁ λήσταρχος ἐπιβάλλει τῇ κόρῃ τὴν χεῖρα καὶ ἀνίστασθαί τε καὶ ἔπεσθαι ἐκέλευεν. Ἡ δὲ τῶν μὲν λεγομένων οὐδὲν συνιῖσα τὸ δὲ προσταττόμενον συμβαλοῦσα συνεφέλικε τὸν νεανίσκον οὐδὲ αὐτὸν μεθιέντα, καὶ τὸ ξίφος ἐπιφέρουσα τοῖς στέρνοις ἑαυτὴν ἀποσφάζειν ἠπέιλει εἰ μὴ ἀμφοτέρους ἄγοιεν. Συνεῖς οὖν ὁ λήσταρχος τὸ μὲν τι τοῖς λεγομένοις, πλέον δὲ τοῖς νεύμασι...  
(*Aethiopica* 1.4.1-2)

At length the bandit chief rode close, put his hand on the girl, and ordered her to stand up and come with him. She didn't understand any of what he said, but having inferred what he ordered, she dragged the young man, who was not letting her go, with her. She put a sword to her chest, and threatened to kill herself if he didn't take them both. The bandit chief understood partly by her words, but mostly by her gestures.

It should strike us as a bit surprising that the Egyptian bandit and the Greco-Ethiopian heroine cannot understand each other when they speak. Such realistic presentation of the language barrier is extremely uncommon in Greek literature and I explore the unusual nature of Heliodorus' attention to that barrier in more detail in my first chapter. More important for this chapter's analysis of the novel is the attention to nonverbal communication which the passage emphasizes.

- 1 J. Winkler's (1982) influential analysis of the novel deals extensively with this scene. My work owes much to his groundbreaking approach to the novel. M. Winkler (2001) underscores the modernity of the scene by stressing its cinematic qualities, following up on the work of Weinreich (1960) and Bühler (1976). More recently, Whitmarsh (2011) highlights Heliodorus' interest in the paradoxical.
- 2 Telò (2011) highlights one particular nexus of allusive imagery, connecting the bandit's gaze to Odysseus' slaughter of the suitors and an eagle's gaze at its prey.

Not only does the narrator note the bandit's actions (he put his hand on the girl), but Charikleia does too. Although she fails to understand his words, she is successfully able to put together what the combination of his speech act and his action must mean. She responds in turn with a speech act (her threat) underscored by a gesture even clearer than the bandit's, putting a sword to her chest. Despite Thyamis' partial knowledge of the Greek language, it is Charikleia's gesture that is most successful in communicating her message across the language barrier.<sup>3</sup> The narrator's treatment of the scene, relegating the spoken words to indirect discourse while specifying the characters' actions, replicates this attention to the nonverbal and makes this opening scene especially important to the novel as a whole.

In previous chapters I explored the ways in which both Heliodorus and his literary predecessors represented the language barrier. Even in talking about the idea of a “language barrier,” I have emphasized the importance of spoken language as a vehicle for cross-cultural communication (or the lack thereof). Nonverbal communication, on the other hand, occupies an interestingly liminal space between full, nuanced communication and a complete communicative breakdown. Where a language barrier exists, nonverbal communication is often the only hope for understanding or making oneself understood. On the other hand, some gestures are so culturally specific that they can send disastrously wrong messages or be completely bewildering.<sup>4</sup> Heliodorus' attention to nonverbal communication is a clear outgrowth of his attention to language in general and the problematic process of interpretation which is so clearly part of his project.<sup>5</sup> The role of the nonverbal communication in the novel has not been sufficiently

3 Thyamis' knowledge of Greek is mentioned elsewhere in the novel and is a consistent part of his characterization. Given the consistency afforded to this detail and its lack of pay off, I cannot help but see it as a foreshadowed indication of his true status as displaced priest of Isis at Memphis. This is discussed more fully in chapter one.

4 One thinks of the whole genre of books dedicated to helping businessmen and travelers avoid insulting their hosts and clients through their body language.

5 Again, Winkler (1982) remains the most important exponent of this theory, though Hunter (1998), Whitmarsh (2011), and Telò (2011) are very much relevant.

explored.

This chapter will investigate the role of nonverbal communication in the *Aethiopica*. I will discuss in some detail five scenes from the *Aethiopica* that provide insight into Heliodorus' representation of the potential for nonverbal communication to work across the language barrier. The opening scene, which I will return to in short order, both emphasizes the importance of nonverbal behaviors when a language barrier is present and outlines a view that careful interpretation of nonverbal cues often leads to successful communication. The witch of Bessa's actions enable Charikleia to understand her necromantic acts as they unfold, but her treatment of her reanimated son suggests a place for gestures at an intermediate stage, between silence and language. A series of culturally specific gestures employed by Theagenes and Arsake during the Persian royal's seduction of the hero suggest the benefits and problems conferred by actions which are less than universally understood. Arsake's nurse Kybele uses an ambiguous gesture and thereby accidentally poisons herself, highlighting that while gestures can speak when words cannot, their lack of clarity bears dangerous consequences. Finally, the siege of Syene presents some of the novel's most realistic treatment of the power of body language to speak when words fail, but again underscore that even then, the interpretation of nonverbal behavior is a fraught exercise, with potentially dangerous outcomes.

Before we can proceed with these cases, I would like to clarify what I mean by “body language”, “gesture”, and “nonverbal communication”, i.e. what behaviors I will be examining. The last few decades of the twentieth century saw a tremendous boom in studies on nonverbal behavior and with this boom came an explosion of terminology, with a confusing variety of precise but not necessarily consistent definitions. Although this boom included several key works

of Classical scholarship, it is rooted in linguistic and educational literature.<sup>6</sup> When I say “nonverbal communication,” I mean any thing a character does which either the reader or another character may notice.<sup>7</sup> Under this umbrella, I locate “body language” (the ways in which the body's positioning and movements have expressive potential) and “object language” (the ways in which manipulation of things external to the body can be communicative).<sup>8</sup> “Gesture” is a particularly flexible term, but I will confine it to refer to actions that can be thought of as conventional and clearly delineated.<sup>9</sup> In my second appendix I survey the nonverbal behavior in Heliodorus' novel, including both the general categories of behavior discussed here and more specific subcategories.

Unsurprisingly, Heliodorus is not interested in the specifics of terminology and often uses the general term νεῦμα to refer to a range of different behaviors, from actual nods to Charikleia's threatening statement in object language discussed above.<sup>10</sup> Having established this terminology,

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- 6 In Classics, the standout works are Lateiner's (1987) study of the nonverbal in Homer and Boegehold's (1999) search for gestures that would help solve textual problems. Holoka (1992) helped suggest where work would be profitable and Newbold (1992) is an early example of the application to the authors of late antiquity. Much is owed to Sittl's landmark and comprehensive (if now outdated) 1890 *Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer*. Outside of Classics, the work of Fernando Poyatos (1992 and 1983) remains foundational, to whom the edited volume of Wiemann and Harrison (1983) serves as a valuable companion. The short pamphlet of Morain (1978) provides an intriguing guide to the variety of nonverbal behaviors available for study. Barbara Korte's (1997) thorough analysis of body language in a range of English literature is particularly helpful in helping apply the concepts of the social sciences to the projects of the humanities.
- 7 This broad definition is in line with Morain (1978), Poyatos (1983), Wiemann and Harrison (1983), Holoka (1992) and Korte (1997). *Pace* Newbold (1992), who prefers “nonverbal expressiveness.” I concede his point that not all communication is intentional but do not think this overly problematizes the term. Wiemann and Harrison (1983), p. 10, briefly discusses the problem with the generality of “nonverbal communication” and the tendency to strictly oppose speech and gesture rather than exploring the ways in which they interact.
- 8 Morain (1978), Korte (1997).
- 9 Morain (1978), p.11-14; Thomas (1991), p. Korte (1997), p.38. In contrast, Kendon (1983), p. 13, limits gesture to voluntary expression. In focusing on nonverbal communication, I exclude the verbal gestures of the sort discussed by Wyatt (2003) which display emotion rather than express their literal semantic content but do so through what are recognized as words.
- 10 In the passage from *Aethiopica* 1.4.1 discussed above (page 124) it refers to the gesture by which Charikleia threatens to kill herself. The Exagoge of Ezekiel, written in 2nd Century BCE Alexandria, has Moses say that someone beckoned him with a hand (δεξιᾶ δέ μοι ἔνευσε, 73). In section 26.1 of his treatise on generalship, the first-century CE philosopher Onosander includes a νεῦμα χειρὸς among the possible ways of accompanying a military password (σύνθημα) with a confirming action (παρὰσύνθημα). The qualifiers δεξιᾶ and χειρὸς in these early examples suggest that for both the word νεῦμα is being used as a somewhat live metaphor. Heliodorus' use seems to suggest that the word's range has increased to include the “nodding” of any part of the body.

I would like to revisit the novel's opening and further investigate Heliodorus' richest scene.

### ***Charikleia and the Bandits on the Beach***

The novel begins with an unidentified third-person narrator describing the actions of an unidentified group of men whose actions and clothing are the only clues to their identities:

Ἡμέρας ἄρτι διαγελώσης καὶ ἡλίου τὰς ἀκρωρείας καταυγάζοντος, ἄνδρες ἐν ὅπλοις ληστροκοῖς ὄρους ὑπερκύψαντες, ὃ δὴ κατ' ἐκβολὰς τοῦ Νείλου καὶ στόμα τὸ καλούμενον Ἡρακλεωτικὸν ὑπερτείνει, μικρὸν ἐπιστάντες τὴν ὑποκειμένην θάλατταν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐπὶ ἤρχοντο καὶ τῷ πελάγει τὸ πρῶτον τὰς ὄψεις ἐπαφέντες, ὡς οὐδὲν ἄγρας ληστροκῆς ἐπηγγέλλετο μὴ πλεόμενον, ἐπὶ τὸν πλησίον αἰγιαλὸν τῆ θεᾶ κατήγοντο.

The day was just beginning to smile and the sun to shine down on the ridges when men in bandit gear peeped over the mountain which stretched above the outpour of the Nile and the mouth known as the Heracleotic. Standing there for a moment, they traversed the sea below with their eyes, first aiming their glances at the sea, then when it was made clear that nothing was sailing which might be prey for the bandits, they were drawn up to the nearby beach by a spectacle.

The opening clause introduces both Heliodorus' attention to the nonverbal through the strange smile of “day”, the metaphorical potentiality of which is best explored by Tim Whitmarsh.<sup>11</sup> He identifies this as the first of many puzzles presented to the reader in the course of the novel, puzzles which demand to be solved. This first puzzle (“what can it mean that day—or should it be Day—is smiling?”) serves as a paradigm for the more easily deciphered nonverbal language to come in this scene and in the rest of the novel. Why are the men wearing bandit gear? Why are they peering out to sea? What spectacle is on the shore and why is it so compelling? Nonverbal communication needs to be interpreted, and by drawing our attention to the minute details of the behavior of these men Heliodorus encourages the reader both to interpret their actions and to replicate them. The description of the men's glances helps the reader see through their eyes, while watching them watch helps initiate a pattern whereby we investigate who these characters are not by what they say, but by the clues implicit in their physical actions and their relationship

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11 Whitmarsh (2005).

with their surroundings.<sup>12</sup>

The spectacle which draws the bandits eyes to shore sets up the mystery which will occupy the novel for the next five books.<sup>13</sup> They find a ship tied to the shore, but riding low in the water, from which the profiteers deduce it still holds its cargo.<sup>14</sup> When they see freshly slain human bodies on the shore they continue to play the detective, establishing the time of death based on the body language of those not quite dead:

Ὅ δὲ αἰγιαλός, μεστὰ πάντα σωμάτων νεοσφαγῶν, τῶν μὲν ἄρδην ἀπολωλότων, τῶν δὲ ἡμιθνήτων καὶ μέρεσι τῶν σωμάτων ἔτι σπαιρόντων, ἄρτι πεπαῦσθαι τὸν πόλεμον κατηγορούντων. (*Aethiopica* 1.1.3)

The shore was entirely filled with newly slain bodies, some totally dead, others only half, with parts of their bodies still struggling, which made a case that the conflict had just ended.

As with the ship, the narrator assures that we replicate the deductive process of these surveyors of the scene by providing us both with the relevant details (some men moved in their death throes) and the conclusion reached from those details (the conflict was recent). The ambiguity of the movements described is appropriate both because of the general chaos of the scene and the distance from which the men on the hill (and we readers through them) examine the beach.

As they continue to survey the scene, the narrator describes more evidence, which he explicitly marks as visible clues meant for interpretation (φαινόμενα σύμβολα, *Aethiopica* 1.1.4).<sup>15</sup> Dead men holding cups and tables that were used as bunkers testify to a feast as the setting of the slaughter; the bodies of the men suggest a variety of murder weapons, but most

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12 Telò (2011) explicates the intertextual links between this passage and the *Odyssey*, which lead to an understanding of these brigands (for they will turn out to be brigands) as not only stand-ins for the reader but also for the author.

13 M. Winkler (2001) compares the first half of the novel to a straightforward piece of detective fiction. Even the long personal narratives of Knemon and Kalasiris which function as flashbacks have their place in the genre. Winkler was preceded in this suggestion by Helm (1948).

14 *Aethiopica* 1.1.2: Καὶ ἦν τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ τοιάδε· ὀλκὰς ἀπὸ πρυμνησίων ὥρμει τῶν μὲν ἐμπλεόντων χηρεύουσα, φόρτου δὲ πλήθουσα· καὶ τοῦτο παρήν συμβάλλειν καὶ τοῖς πόρρωθεν· τὸ γὰρ ἄχθος ἄχρι καὶ ἐπὶ τρίτου ζωστήρος τῆς νεῶς τὸ ὕδωρ ἀνέθλιβεν.

15 The word συμβάλλω and related words are an important marker of the interpretive process in the *Aethiopica*. On the process of interpretation in the novel, see J. Winkler (1982).

commonly arrows. In the end, the narrator finally pulls back to suggest that the scene was like a theatrical performance staged by a deity for the men who are now conclusively identified by the narrator as Egyptian bandits.<sup>16</sup> The almost static vision, punctuated only by the dying gasps of a few men, vividly suggests the *ekkyklema* wheeled out after the violent acts in a tragedy. Without having attended the rest of the tragedy, however, the bandits are as mystified by this spectacle as we readers are. That the verbal is dismissed and the visual emphasized in this theatrical tableau is, however, a healthy reminder of what it must have been like for much of a late antique audience seeing a Greek tragedy in a provincial theater.<sup>17</sup>

As the bandits move down the hill towards the ship and site of the violence, this general emphasis on interpretation from visual cues becomes focused on the body of Charikleia, who remains as yet unnamed. Through the bandits' eyes, Heliodorus provides a rich description full of notes on posture, outfit, face and gaze:

κόρη καθῆστο ἐπὶ πέτρας, ἀμήχανόν τι κάλλος καὶ θεὸς εἶναι ἀναπίθουσα, τοῖς μὲν παροῦσι περιαλοῦσα φρονήματος δὲ εὐγενοῦς ἔτι πνέουσα. Δάφνη τὴν κεφαλὴν ἔστεπτο καὶ φαρέτραν τῶν ὤμων ἐξῆπτο καὶ τῶ λαιῶ βραχίονι τὸ τόξον ὑπεστήρικτο· ἡ λοιπὴ δὲ χεὶρ ἀφροντίστως ἀπηώρητο. Μηρῶ δὲ τῶ δεξιῶ τὸν ἀγκῶνα θατέρας χειρὸς ἐφεδράζουσα καὶ τοῖς δακτύλοις τὴν παρεῖαν ἐπιτρέψασα, κάτω νεύουσα καὶ τινα προκείμενον ἔφηβον περισκοποῦσα τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀνεῖχεν.  
(*Aethiopica* 1.2.1-2)

A girl sat on the rocks, inconceivably beautiful; one could believe she was a goddess. She was in pain at the present circumstances but with a noble pride still she breathed. She wore a crown of laurel and a quiver over her shoulder and held a bow with her left arm. The rest of the arm hung down without a thought. On her right thigh she rested the other elbow, and entrusted her cheek to her hand. She looked down at a young man, looking him over as she propped up his head.

The description is ephrastic in its details, providing a wealth of tantalizing information about the girl's body language as she sits on the rock.<sup>18</sup> Modern audiences might expect more physical

16 *Aethiopica* 1.1.6: ὁ δαίμων... καὶ τοιοῦτον θέατρον λησταῖς Αἰγυπτίοις ἐπιδείξας. Heliodorus' particular fondness for theatrical metaphors was explored by Walden (1894) and more recently by Marino (1990), Paulsen (1992) and Whitmarsh (2011). Heliodorus has both his narrator and his characters compare the events of the novel to elements of the theater.

17 This point will be underscored again in my discussion of the siege of Syene, below, p. 153.

18 I use the word “ephrastic” here in part to suggest the idea that this careful description of Charikleia occupies the place which ephrases of paintings hold in the openings of the novels of Longus and Achilles Tatius. The extensive bibliography on visibility in the novels includes Webb (2009), Morales (2004), Whitmarsh (2002), and Bartsch (1989). At least two prominent 17<sup>th</sup> century artists attempted to capture this opening scene on canvas:

details. What color is her hair? How is it styled? What color is her skin? What makes her so inconceivably beautiful? Some of these details emerge as the novel continues, but they are not essential for the bandits at the moment. Instead the description focuses on the details which are most significant to the bandits as they try to figure out who this is and whether to approach her, deal with her, ignore her, or simply cut and run. They can be reassured by her seated posture and the fact that her attention is turned to the man whose head lies in her lap. The bow and quiver, on the other hand, suggest potential danger (especially when most of the corpses around this archeress seem to have been killed with arrows). The laurel wreath combined with her divine beauty present the very distinct possibility that this girl is actually a goddess, perhaps the best reason to avoid disturbing her.<sup>19</sup>

As the bandits observe her, they do not hear (or understand) Charikleia and Theagenes exchanging vows that neither could live without the other nor do they know what to make of Charikleia's gesture to the sword on her knees.<sup>20</sup> When she jumps up from the rock, the bandits scatter and hide as if she were a sudden thunderstorm and the narrator provides an explanation for their sudden behavior:

μείζον γάρ τι καὶ θειότερον αὐτοῖς ὀρθωθεῖσα ἔδοξε, τῶν μὲν βελῶν τῇ ἀθρόα κινήσει κλαγγάντων, χρυσοῦφοῦς δὲ τῆς ἐσθῆτος πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον ἀνταυγαζούσης, καὶ τῆς κόμης ὑπὸ τῷ στεφάνῳ βακχεῖον σοβουμένης καὶ τοῖς νώτοις πλεῖστον ὅσον ἐπιτρεχούσης. (*Aethiopica* 1.2.5)

She seemed bigger and more god-like when she stood up, both because the arrows clanged with the sudden moment, and because her golden clothing seemed to outshine the sun. Below her wreath, her hair was scattered like a Bacchante's and ran as far as it could down her back.

The bandits' fear is caused by two separate but related elements here: her height and her divinity.

She is tall, taller than they had expected. Heliodorus has Charikles again remark on Charikleia's

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Abraham Bloemaert and Nicholas Knupfer. On both, see Sandy (1982), p. 120-4 and Stechow (1953).

Interestingly, neither painter depicts Charikleia in a manner consistent with Heliodorus' description.

19 Cf. Telò (2011), Haag (2004) and Whitmarsh (2002).

20 *Aethiopica* 1.2.4: δείξασα ἐπὶ τῶν γονάτων ξίφος. The gesture accompanies Charikleia's vow that she will killed herself if Theagenes should die and will be reused within a few moments to again threaten her suicide in the encounter with Thyamis with which the chapter began.

height later in the novel, suggesting that at age 7 she is as tall as a girl ready for marriage.<sup>21</sup> But the bandits are not simply scared of tall women. Instead, Charikleia's height acts to corroborate their other fears that she might be a goddess.<sup>22</sup>

The brilliant gold robe Charikleia wears, like the bow and quiver she bears, and the crown on her head hardly have a circumstantial relationship with the divine. We will later learn that these are the accoutrements of her role as priestess of Artemis at Delphi, which she has put on intending them to either be a mark of her victory or her funeral.<sup>23</sup> The brilliance of the robe is sonically enhanced by the rattle of her arrows in the quiver as she leaps up, an echo which resonates intertextually with the rattle of Apollo's arrows at the beginning of the *Iliad*.<sup>24</sup>

The word used to describe the rattle of the arrows in the quiver is the Homeric transplant κλάζω. Neither the verb itself or related words are used elsewhere in Heliodorus or the other novelists and are only used rarely in prose or anywhere but epic. The connection to Apollo is further strengthened by the appearance of forms of κινέω and φαρέτρα in both passages.<sup>25</sup> The allusion marked by this out-of-place (and somewhat onomatopoeic) word creates for the reader a noise which is associated with the majesty of the gods of Homer and is thus frightening. The circumstances too bear striking similarities: Apollo's arrows rattle as he comes down to slaughter the Greeks on the beach, while Charikleia's arrows rattle as she jumps up, having in fact been the one to slaughter so many on this beach with hers.

And yet, there is a kind of slippage here. The allusion signaled to the reader by the word

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21 *Aethiopica* 2.30.6: Ἐπειδὴ δέ μοι ὠμώμοστο ὡς ἐκεῖνος ἐπέσκηπτεν, ἄγει με παρ' ἑαυτὸν καὶ δείκνυσι κόρην ἀμήχανόν τι καὶ δαιμόνιον κάλλος, ἦν αὐτὸς μὲν ἑπτὰ ἔτη γεγονέναι ἔλεγεν ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ ὥρα γάμου πλησιάζειν ἐώκει, οὕτως ἄρα κάλλους ὑπερβολὴ καὶ εἰς μεγέθους ἔμφασιν φέρει προσθήκην.

22 One thinks of Peisistratus' use of the 6-foot tall Athenian woman Phye, whose entrance into Athens dressed as Athena was allegedly used to mark the goddess' favor for the tyrant. Herodotus finds the story incredible, and Krentz (2007) p. 724 argues that it likely represented an act of political theater rather than political persuasion.

23 The explanation is given at 5.31.2, and Charikleia repeats the action, complete with the loosening of hair at 10.9.3. There too the reaction is to see her as more like a goddess than a mortal woman. See above, p. 130.

24 *Iliad* 1.46-7. See Rattenbury, Lumb, and Maillon, (1960) v.1 p. 5 n.2

25 κινήσει (*Aethiopica* 1.2.5) and κινήθεις (*Iliad* 1.47); φαρέτραν (*Aethiopica* 1.2.2) vs. φαρέτρην (*Iliad* 1.45)

κλάζω in the narration is only signaled by a sound for the bandits. The bandits did not hear the κλαγγή of Apollo's arrows, but simply the rattle of ordinary arrows in a (only slightly more than) ordinary girl's quiver. And even if they recognized that sound as a κλαγγή, it is difficult to believe these Egyptian bandits would be capable of recognizing the Homeric allusion and thereby associating the figure in front of them with that Greek god in the moment before they dove for the bushes. And yet, that is what the scene suggests.

All the accoutrements that mark Charikleia as Artemis or her stand-in and thereby inspire a sense of divine wonder and fear in the reader familiar with Greek culture somehow manage to cross the cultural barrier and communicate the same thing to these dwellers of the Nile delta. The narrator reports both the bandits' fear and their opinions on who the girl might be:

Τοὺς μὲν ταῦτα ἐξεδειμάτου καὶ πλέον τῶν ὀρωμένων ἢ τῶν γινομένων ἀγνοία· οἱ μὲν γὰρ θεόν τινα ἔλεγον, καὶ θεὸν Ἄρτεμιν ἢ τὴν ἐγγώριον Ἴσιν, οἱ δὲ ἰέρειαν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεῶν ἐκμεμητυῖαν καὶ τὸν ὀρώμενον πολὺν φόνον ἐργασαμένην. Καὶ οἱ μὲν ταῦτα ἐγίνωσκον, τὰ ὄντα δὲ οὐπω ἐγίνωσκον· (Aethiopica 1.2.6)

All these things terrified them, but even more terrifying was their lack of understanding the things they saw happening. Some said that she was a goddess, even the goddess Artemis or the local Isis; others that she was a priestess of the gods in a possessed frenzy and that she was the one who had wrought the massacre they had seen. Those was their conclusions, but they did not yet understand the truth.

The final line, which draws the distinction between their current understanding and the truth (τὰ ὄντα δὲ οὐπω ἐγίνωσκον), helps to both emphasize the process of conjecture and maintain the suspense of this core mystery. Still, the bandits hit surprisingly close to the truth. Charikleia is both a priestess and the one responsible for the massacre, though she lacks the mania suggested by the bandits. The bandits' recognition of Artemis stretches beyond the bounds of Heliodorus' usually quite careful attention to the culturally determined, limited world views of his characters. It seems strange, however, to suggest that these Egyptians are familiar with the iconography of a Greek goddess; unlike other novels, the *Aethiopica* takes place in a clearly pre-Roman, pre-syncretistic world.<sup>26</sup> In the *Aethiopica* there is no *a priori* reason why an Egyptian bandit should

26 The glaring exception is the solar and lunar syncretism with which the novel is suffused. Charikles is a priest of

have any familiarity with Artemis.<sup>27</sup> Isis, while more plausible in terms of local knowledge, is not an entirely satisfying identification of a goddess marked by bow and arrows.<sup>28</sup> Instead Heliodorus seems to hold these bandits to a different standard of limited knowledge than he does with his other characters at other times, perhaps a result of their standing both for the confused reader and the omniscient narrator.<sup>29</sup> They seem to interpret this scene mainly through Greek eyes, as is confirmed by their reaction to Charikleia's next actions.

The heroine then turns herself back to Theagenes: she throws herself on to him; she hugs and kisses him; she weeps.<sup>30</sup> This new information causes the bandits to rethink their assessment of the girl:

Ταῦτα ὁρῶντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι πρὸς ἑτέρας ἐννοίας τὴν γνώμην μετέβαλλον, καὶ “ποῦ ταῦτ’ ἂν εἴη θεοῦ τὰ ἔργα,” λέγοντες “ποῦ δ’ ἂν νεκρὸν σῶμα φιλοίη δαίμων οὕτω περιπαθῶς;” (*Aethiopica* 1.2.7)

When the Egyptians saw all this, their minds changed to new ideas and they said “What god would act like this? How could a divinity kiss a dead body so passionately?”

Again the narrator gives us access to the brigands' thoughts through their speech and again they reveal themselves to be astute observers of body language; they pay attention not just to the

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Apollo, while Hydaspes is priest of Helios, and Heliodorus is the descendent of the sun. Charikleia is the priestess of Artemis, protected by Kalasiris, the priest of Isis, and will eventually become, like her mother, the priestess of Selene. The fact that these gods are the focus of almost all religious attention in the novel suggests a syncretism at the level of the reader and author, but within the world of the text, there is no suggestion that Isis and Artemis, for example are different names for the same thing. In fact, the bandits' suggestion that Charikleia is like one or the other argues for the Egyptians' recognition that the gods are not identical.

- 27 *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, to take one example, stands in contrast. It takes as its setting a recognizably Roman-controlled eastern Mediterranean in which religious, linguistic, and cultural barriers are all but extinguished. See Stevens (2008), and Morales (2004). One notable exception to this is Cleitophon's lament when captured by pirates, discussed more fully in chapter 1.
- 28 J. Winkler (1982) p. 99, n.11. points out that the gold of Charikleia's clothing might be the closest link to Isis, but is still a rather tenuous one. He suggests that Neith (an arrow goddess whose home city was nearby) would be much better suggestion for an Egyptian, but would have to be glossed for a Greek audience. Whitmarsh (2005) argues that the adjective ἐγχώριος is important for underscoring the bandits' limited frame of reference, which is at odds with the readers'. Slater (2005) briefly suggests that the adjective undermines the idea that the scene is focalized through the bandits. At 2.23.1 Kalasiris claims that he is pouring libations “to the gods both of this land and of Greece” (θεοῖς ἐγχωρίοις τε καὶ Ἑλληνίοις). It is possible that Kalasiris has taken the point of view of the Greek to whom he is speaking. But it is more likely, I think, that ἐγχώριος simply stands for Αἰγύπτιος. Besides Isis' generally important role as the goddess whom both Thyamis and Kalasiris serve, Charikleia's mourning over Theagenes (discussed below) is probably the clearest reason for the goddess's inclusion here.
- 29 See Telò (2011).
- 30 *Aethiopica* 1.2.6: ἡ δὲ ἄθρόον κατενεχθεῖσα ἐπὶ τὸν νεανίαν καὶ πανταχόθεν αὐτῷ περιχυθεῖσα ἐδάκρυνεν, ἐφίλει, κατέματτεν, ἀνώμωζεν, ἠπίσται κατέχουσα.

actions but to the emotions which those actions imply. They successfully recognize Charikleia's deep passion for Theagenes, even if they fail to notice that he is not actually dead. They view the scene through the lens of religion, a fact in line with the text's identification of them here not as “men” or “bandits” but as Egyptians.<sup>31</sup> This religious frame of reference, which enables them to correctly identify Charikleia as human and not goddess is predicated once again, paradoxically, on a Greek, rather than an Egyptian (or even imagined Egyptian) sensibility. Charikleia's mourning over Theagenes clearly recalls Isis' over Osiris.<sup>32</sup> While it is true that Isis does not kiss Osiris as passionately as Charikleia does Theagenes, the parallel is certainly striking, especially when some bandits had just speculated that Charikleia might, in fact, *be* Isis. Though it is an Egyptian mindset that draws them to the religious, the bandits interpret the scene with Greek eyes, and thus miss the parallel to Isis and Osiris. Their limited point of view, however, does come to the right conclusions: Charikleia is, in fact, a mortal woman and not a goddess.

They continue to gain confidence as they move towards Charikleia. Even after she notices them, they still remain cautious until she delivers a speech which is incomprehensible to the bandits because it is in Greek.<sup>33</sup> Heliodorus then tells us the bandits' response to the speech:

οἱ δὲ οὐδὲν συνιέναι τῶν λεγομένων ἔχοντες τοὺς μὲν αὐτοῦ καταλείπουσιν, ἰσχυρὰν αὐτοῖς φυλακὴν τὴν ἀσθένειαν αὐτῶν ἐπιστήσαντες, ἐπὶ δὲ τὴν ναῦν ὀρμήσαντες τὸν φόρτον ἐξήντλουν (*Aethiopica* 1.3.2)

But they, understanding none of what was said, left them there, having understood that there was safety in their weakness. They charged off to the ship and began unloading its cargo.

Whereas the bandits were fairly adept readers of the various kinds of nonverbal communication which Charikleia displayed, when confronted with her tragic monologue, they are interpretively

31 On Egyptians as experts in matters of religion see Herodotus 2.37 ff.

32 Plutarch in his treatise *On Isis and Osiris* claims that Isis fell on her husband's coffin and shrieked (τῇ δὲ σορῶ περιπεσεῖν καὶ κωκῦσαι, 357c) and later, once she was alone, opened the box put her face against his and cried (αὐτὴν καθ' ἑαυτὴν γενομένην ἀνοιῖξαι τὴν λάρνακα καὶ τῶ πρόσωπῳ τὸ πρόσωπον ἐπιθεῖσαν ἀσπάσασθαι καὶ δακρύειν). As is usually the case with Heliodorus, the Greek imagination of Egypt or its inhabitants is more relevant than the views of the Egyptians themselves.

33 *Aethiopica* 1.2.7-1.3.1, the passage is the origin of this dissertation, and is discussed in the introduction.

helpless. While they cannot understand the content, the very fact of her speaking, her speech act, reassures them that she is not in fact a goddess, that she poses neither a threat to their persons or their intentions to take the merchandise.<sup>34</sup> The bandits' actions testify to their understanding of the implications of Charikleia's speech; they turn their backs and leave her alone. Her incomprehensible speech proves to be the final piece of evidence they need to be assured that she is simply a mortal woman who could easily be overpowered if she tried to stop them or even run away.<sup>35</sup>

This first group of bandits exits from the scene when Thyamis' band shows up. They recognize that they are outnumbered, and that Thyamis has horses and so they leave everything behind and run.<sup>36</sup> The only extensive speeches thus far have been Charikleia's brief exchange with Theagenes and the speech she delivers but which the bandits fail to understand at all. The bandits' spoken (Egyptian) reactions to the nonverbal clues they see are glossed for the reader. While the reader has access to the thoughts of both the Greeks and the Egyptians through their speech, neither group can benefit from the others'. This lack of verbal communication not only sets the novel within a realistic world in which the language barrier can confound communication, but also privileges the nonverbal. This first group of bandits is largely successful in using nonverbal evidence to evaluate the dangerous but potentially profitable situation around them. Their interpretation includes an appropriate understanding of universals (such as the recognition that Charikleia is crying because she is sad, and kissing Theagenes because of her

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34 The notion that the gods have different vocal apparatus than humans is treated in chapter 1 and is based on the analysis of the divine transformations in Homer by Clay (1974), built upon the foundation of Clay (1972).

35 One might suggest that the very incomprehensibility of Charikleia's speech could act as an indication of divinity or at least mantic frenzy. Homer's gods spoke a different language than the Greeks (see Chapter 1 for more extensive discussion and bibliography), though a god's nonverbal vocal qualities could also distinguish his voice from that of a human. As for the possibility of Charikleia's Greek babble as an indication of her possession by a god, the bandits are not bothered enough by this idea to investigate further before plundering. (On the semi-babble of Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*, see Chapter 1).

36 *Aethiopica* 1.3.4

love for him) but also includes an understanding of the specifics of religious iconography and even Homeric sound that suggest Heliodorus' conception of the transcendent nature of some nonverbal communication.

The arrival of this new group of bandits puts Theagenes and Charikleia in danger once more and allows Heliodorus to repeat the scenario:

Καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀμφὶ τὴν κόρην δεύτερον ἤδη ἠλίσκοντο οὐδέπω ληφθέντες· οἱ δὲ λησταί, πρὸς τὴν διαρπαγὴν καὶ ταῦτα σπεύδοντες, ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ὀρωμένων ἀγνοίας ἅμα καὶ ἐκπλήξεως τέως ἀνεστέλλοντο. Τοὺς μὲν γὰρ πολλοὺς φόνους ὑπὸ τῶν προτέρων γεγενησθαι ληστῶν εἴκαζον, τὴν κόρην δὲ ὀρῶντες ἐν ξένη καὶ περιβλέπτῳ τῇ στολῇ καὶ τῶν μὲν προσπιπτόντων φοβερῶν ὡς ἂν μηδὲ γινομένων ὑπερορῶσαν ὄλην δὲ τοῦ νεανίου πρὸς τοῖς τραύμασιν οὔσαν καὶ ὡς ἴδιον τὸ ἐκείνου πάθος ἀλγοῦσαν, τὴν μὲν τοῦ κάλλους καὶ τοῦ φρονήματος θαύμαζον, τὸν δὲ καὶ τραυματίαν ἐξεπλήττοντο· τοιοῦτος τὴν μορφήν καὶ τοσοῦτος τὸ μέγεθος ἔκειτο κατὰ μικρὸν ἤδη πῶς ἀνειληφῶς ἑαυτὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸ σῦνηθες βλέμμα ἀποκαθιστάμενος. (*Aethiopica* 1.3.5-6)

The girl and those with her were captured once again without having been taken. The bandits, eager as they were for the plunder and the goods, were checked for a while by their ignorance and shock at what they saw. They supposed that the massacre had happened at the hands of the previous bandits, and seeing the girl in her strange and magnificent garment ignoring all the frightful things around her as if none of them existed and being entirely consumed with the young man's wounds, and suffering his pain as if it were her own, they were amazed at both her beauty and her concern. They were shocked about the young victim too. He lay there with such great size and build, having recovered a little already and returning to his accustomed glance.

Like the first group of bandits, this one too is literally stopped in its tracks by their lack of understanding of sights they see (ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν ὀρωμένων ἀγνοίας ἅμα καὶ ἐκπλήξεως τέως ἀνεστέλλοντο). Heliodorus, meanwhile, continues to toy with the difference between reality and description. The narrator draws attention to the curious paradox of the “capture” of Charikleia and Theagenes which did not move them an inch. This second capture, however, will stick and they will be led off to the bandits camp soon enough. In the meantime, the second group of bandits has done a worse job than their predecessors at unraveling the mystery of the slaughter on the beach, reasonably supposing that the first bandits had caused it. They are not entirely clueless; they recognize Charikleia's outfit as unusual and foreign (ξένη), though they do not seem tempted to make the speculations about the divine that the first group did. Charikleia's attention to the young man Theagenes also leads these bandits to notice him in a way the

previous group had not: He is a big, athletic man and Thyamis, the leader of this second group of bandits, will later enroll him in the band. This difference in attention to Theagenes perhaps explains the difference in actions between the previous band, which left the pair alone while it gathered loot, and Thyamis and his band, who directly approaches them in the passage presented at the beginning of this chapter.

That passage is worth exploring once again as a conclusion to this scene and this section of the chapter:

Ὅψε δὴ οὖν ποτε πλησιάσας ὁ λήσταρχος ἐπιβάλλει τῇ κόρῃ τὴν χεῖρα καὶ ἀνίστασθαί τε καὶ ἔπεσθαι ἐκέλευεν. Ἡ δὲ τῶν μὲν λεγομένων οὐδὲν συνιῖσα τὸ δὲ προσταττόμενον συμβαλοῦσα συνεφέιλκετο τὸν νεανίσκον οὐδὲ αὐτὸν μεθιέντα, καὶ τὸ ξίφος ἐπιφέρουσα τοῖς στέρνοις ἑαυτὴν ἀποσφάξειν ἠπέλει εἰ μὴ ἀμφοτέρους ἄγοιεν. Συνεῖς οὖν ὁ λήσταρχος τὸ μὲν τι τοῖς λεγομένοις, πλέον δὲ τοῖς νεύμασι...  
(*Aethiopica* 1.4.1-2)

At length the bandit chief rode close, put his hand on the girl, and ordered her to stand up and come with him. She didn't understand any of what he said, but having inferred what he ordered, she dragged the young man, who was not letting her go, with her. She put a sword to her chest, and threatened to kill herself if he didn't take them both. The bandit chief understood partly by her words, but mostly by her gestures.

In the contrast to the interpretive problems emphasized by Heliodorus and highlighted by my analysis above, this exchange demonstrates surprisingly effective communication. Though neither is capable of fully understanding the other's spoken language, both understand each other through body language. Charikleia first understands Thyamis' command through awareness of the situation in general and his hand on her specifically. When she includes the sword to her own chest as part of her gesture, this is a demonstration of what she has learned in these moments; her speech to the previous group failed, as did Thyamis' verbal communication with her. Her action marks the first conscious attempt in the novel to cross a recognized language barrier. That she is successful is a testament to Charikleia's resourcefulness.

When Charikleia and Theagenes are brought back to the bandits' camp, they are introduced to Knemon and have access to his services as translator. Nonverbal communication

will take back seat to the speeches both Thyamis and Charikleia will deliver to the bandits. But as they ride away, the narrator once again undercuts any notion of simple transparent interpretation by pointing out the oddity of having Charikleia and the wounded Theagenes ride while Thyamis, their master, runs beside his prisoners and attends them:

Καὶ ἦν δόξης οὐκ ἔκτος τὸ γινόμενον· δουλεύειν ὁ ἄρχων ἐφαίνετο καὶ ὑπηρετεῖσθαι ὁ κρατῶν τοῖς ἐαλωκόσιν ἠρεῖτο. Οὕτως εὐγενείας ἔμφασις καὶ κάλλους ὄψις καὶ ληστρικὸν ἦθος οἶδεν ὑποτάττειν καὶ κρατεῖν καὶ τῶν ἀύχηροτέρων δύναται. (*Aethiopica* 1.4.3)

And what happened was not entirely lacking splendor: the ruler appeared to be the slave and the captor chose to serve his captives. Thus the appearance of nobility and the sight of beauty is capable of subjugating even a brigand's heart and overpowering the worst men.

The passage pairs and contrasts Charikleia's obvious and surface-level beauty with the suggestion of her nobility which will not fully reveal itself to the reader until Book 4, when her lineage is finally made clear. While her beauty is more or less constant, perhaps enhanced by her glorious Delphic robes, her good breeding is only hinted at in her dismissal of the tragedies which beset her (ὑπερορῶσαν, see above, p.137), and most especially in her gestural threat to kill herself rather than abandon Theagenes. The inversion of master and slave and attention to beauty foreshadow Thyamis' consuming love for Charikleia, while the mention of the power of the εὐγενείας ἔμφασις hints itself at Thyamis' own priestly high-mindedness. Ἐμφασις is a word associated with allegory and thus with interpretive problems in general.<sup>37</sup> That it is invoked here at the close of the novel's opening, before the scene shifts to more straightforward plot development in the bandits' lake village, marks the moment and the theme of interpretation as particularly important. Because that ἔμφασις is conveyed by body language, we readers are encouraged to be good observers of that elusive and interpretational communicative mode as well.

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37 On allegory in Heliodorus and Heliodorus' novel as an allegory see most recently Most (2007) but also famously Merkelbach (1962). See also the valuable volume on metaphor edited by Harrison, Paschalis *et al.* (2005).

## ***Nonverbal Communication with Corpses***

On their way to Memphis, Kalasiris and Charikleia encounter a battlefield scattered with corpses outside the town of Bessa. There they meet an old Egyptian woman embracing one of the corpses, a body that belonged to her son, slaughtered by the Persians. The woman promises to escort them safely into town once she has completed some nocturnal sacrifices to the dead and asks them to withdraw from the battlefield and wait. Kalasiris falls asleep but Charikleia, unable to fall asleep, becomes a spectator of the woman's actions. Without her Egyptian guide, Charikleia cannot understand the woman's words, but her actions quickly prove to be communicative enough on their own. The woman is even concerned with the possibility of being observed, an interesting moment of her awareness of the potential danger of someone seeing her and interpreting her actions.<sup>38</sup>

The woman's first actions intertextually signal to the attentive viewer the scene to come: she digs a pit, lights a fire, pours libations of honey, milk, and wine into the pit.<sup>39</sup> The scene bears a remarkable similarity to the actions of Odysseus in the underworld in book 11 of the *Odyssey* and to the actions of Atossa, who summons Darius' ghost in Aeschylus' *Persians*.<sup>40</sup> Given the intertextual relationships activated by these similarities, the reader is likely to expect that the witch will reanimate the corpse and it will then speak. As we will see shortly, this does happen, but not immediately. The witch proceeds to perform more actions, obviously from the realm of witchcraft but less specifically intertextual: she makes a man out of dough, crowns it with

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38 *Aethiopica* 6.14.3: 'Η γὰρ πρεσβῦτις ἀνενοχλήτου καὶ ἀκατόπτου σχολῆς ἐπειλήφθαι νομίσασα... Later (6.15.4) she will be reprimanded by her dead son for allowing others (and especially Charikleia) to watch her perform unholy magic.

39 *Aethiopica* 6.14.3 (cont.): ...πρῶτα μὲν βόθρον ὠρύξατο, ἔπειτα πυρκαϊὰν ἐκ θατέρου μέρους ἐξῆψε καὶ μέσον ἀμφοῖν τὸν νεκρὸν τοῦ παιδὸς προθεμένη κρατῆρὰ τε ὄστρακοῦν ἕκ τινος παρακειμένου τρίποδος ἀνελομένη μέλιτος ἐπέχει τῷ βόθρῳ καὶ αὐθις ἐξ ἑτέρου γάλακτος, καὶ οἶνον ἐκ τρίτων ἐπέσπενδεν·

40 See Lumb, Maillon, and Rattenbury (1960) v.2 p. 107 n.1-2 on both the parallel libations and some ideas on the differences in the specific rituals. On Charikleia as an Odyssean figure, see Whitmarsh (2011), Fusillo (1989) and Telo (2011).

herbs<sup>41</sup>, throws it into the pit, calls on the moon, cuts her arm with a sword and throws the blood into the fire.<sup>42</sup>

Not everything is action, of course. The witch also “says many prayers to the moon with names barbarous and strange to the ear” (πολλὰ πρὸς τὴν σεληναίαν βαρβάρους τε καὶ ξενίζουσι τὴν ἀκοὴν ὀνόμασι κατευξαμένη, 6.14.4). In this aspect too the witch's spell is nothing strange in terms of ancient magic. Because we are watching with Charikleia and through her eyes and ears, anything this Egyptian woman says will be barbarous and strange. But lists of divine names such as these, including unusual and foreign gods were a common place in ancient magic.<sup>43</sup> The result is a kind of double foreignness; what is already incomprehensible because of the Greek/Egyptian language barrier is made even more incomprehensible by the divide between one ignorant of magic and an expert.

At this point the narrator shies away from the specifics of the ritual, merely saying that she “did (or said) other strange things besides these” (ἄλλα τε ἄττα τερατευσαμένη πρὸς τούτοις, 6.14.4). This sudden vagueness is a bit strange, given the specificity of the previous actions. Heliodorus' protestations that this act was religiously improper (οὐκ εὐαγής, 6.14.2) align his narratorial stance with the verisimilitude of Herodotus, who also retreats into holy silence when faced with supernatural rites.<sup>44</sup> The pretense suggests his readers might be encouraged to try it if all the details were given. Or perhaps some of the witch's actions were simply too small or strange for our focalizer Charikleia, sitting on a hill a good distance away, to

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41 Among literary sources, Theocritus *Idyll* 2 seems particularly relevant here.

42 *Aethiopica* 6.14.4: Ἐφ' ἅπασι δὲ ξίφος ἀνελομένη καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐνθουσιῶδες σοβηθεῖσα καὶ πολλὰ πρὸς τὴν σεληναίαν βαρβάρους τε καὶ ξενίζουσι τὴν ἀκοὴν ὀνόμασι κατευξαμένη τὸν βραχίονα ἐντεμοῦσα καὶ δάφνης ἀκρέμονι τοῦ αἵματος ἀποψήσασα τὴν πυρκαϊάν ἐπεψέκαζεν

43 On the connection of divine names to multilingualism and the problems created by the translation of these magic words, see Dieleman (2005).

44 Indeed, this passage helps align Heliodorus with Herodotus, a connection that both Elmer (2008) and Morgan (1982) have developed significantly. Herodotus also paid significant attention to nonverbal behavior, especially at climactic moments; see Lateiner (1987).

make out, even with a full moon. Whatever the explanation, these vague gestures seem to work, because after chanting an incantation into her dead son's ear, the corpse stands up.

Like the reader, Charikleia seems to be able to infer the witch's intentions from her actions. After the corpse stands up, the narrator informs us that

Ἡ Χαρίκλεια δὴ οὖν οὐδὲ τὰ πρῶτα ἀδεῶς κατοπτεύουσα τότε δὴ καὶ ὑπέφριττε καὶ πρὸς τῶν γινομένων ἀήθων ἐκδειματωθεῖσα τὸν Καλάσιριν ἀφύπνιζέ τε καὶ θεατὴν γενέσθαι τῶν δρωμένων παρεσκεύαζεν.

(*Aethiopica* 6.14.5)

At first as Charikleia watched with some alarm, then she started feeling more dread and then, utterly terrified by the strange things that were happening, she woke up Kalasiris and got him to be a spectator of this drama.

Charikleia's moves from slight fear (οὐδε ἀδεῶς), through increasing dread (the imperfect ὑπέφριττε) as the witch continues her actions, to the sheer terror (the intensive ἐκδειματωθεῖσα) that compels her to wake up Kalasiris. This transition reflects an increasing understanding of what is going on, of what the witch's actions signify. While the reader is most likely to realize what is about to happen at the beginning of the actions, via the Homeric and Aeschylean intertexts, Charikleia's knowledge comes not from instant recognition of those Greek texts but rather from a gradual and developing sense related to all the witch's actions, movements, object language, and gestures. The actions and words of magic constituted their own kind of language in antiquity that crossed other cultural and linguistic boundaries, so the scene may present a special case.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless Heliodorus has both his reader and Charikleia become able to successfully understand the meaning of the witch's body language. Unlike the bandits at the beginning of the novel, however, here the author puts a distance between the reader's understanding of the nonverbal based on intertextuality and the character's understanding based on the events as they unfold.

With the corpse now on his feet, the witch proceeds to question her son in a voice loud

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45 On magic as cross-cultural and cross-linguistic, Dieleman (2005), which focuses on the bilingual London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts is particularly helpful.

enough that Kalasiris and Charikleia can listen in. She asks her dead son about his brother, also among those rebelling against the Persians, but unlike Tiresias or Darius, this dead soul refuses to speak aloud. Instead he responds with gestures:

Ὁ δὲ ἀπεκρίνατο μὲν οὐδὲν ἐπινεύσας δὲ μόνον καὶ τῇ μητρὶ τὰ κατὰ γνώμην ἐλπίζειν ἀμφιβόλως ἐνδοῦς κατηνέχθη τε ἀθρόον καὶ ἔκειτο ἐπὶ πρόσωπον. Ἡ δὲ ἐπέστρεφέ τε τὸ σῶμα πρὸς τὸ ὑπτίον καὶ οὐκ ἀνίει τὴν πεῦσιν ἀλλὰ βιαιοτέrais, ὡς ἐῶκει, ταῖς κατανάγκαις πολλὰ τοῖς ὤσιν αὐθις ἐπάδουσα καὶ μεθαλλομένη ξιφήρης ἄρτι μὲν πρὸς τὴν πυρκαϊάν ἄρτι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν βόθρον ἐξήγειρέ τε αὐθις καὶ ὀρθωθέντος περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐξεπυθάνετο, μὴ νεύμασι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ φωνῇ τὴν μαντείαν ἀριστήμως δηλοῦν ἐπαναγκάζουσα. (*Aethiopica* 6.14.6)

He said nothing in answer, but only gestured, giving her ambiguous expectations about his knowledge and then suddenly he collapsed and lay face down. She rolled the body onto its back and did not stop her inquiry, but rather used compulsions which were more forceful, it seemed. She whispered many things into his ears again and sword in hand, leaped back and forth, toward the fire then toward the pit. She again woke him up and when he had stood up she asked him about the same things, forcing him to give a clear and plain prophecy not only with gestures but also with his voice.

The ambiguous gestures which compromise the first attempt at knowledge are revealing. It is not entirely clear whether the son is gesturing as much as he can but nevertheless failing to communicate fully or whether the ambiguity of his gestures might be intentional.<sup>46</sup> Heliodorus underscores the potential failure of gestures due to their ambiguity again at the death of Kybele.<sup>47</sup> This ambiguity speaks to a notion of spoken language as a clearer, more articulate mode of communication than gesture alone. The witch compels her son not to stop gesturing and begin speaking but rather to add vocal speech to his gestures, suggesting that gestures occupy a middle ground between speech and complete lack of communication. Speech implies gestures. Gestures complement but do not replace speech.

The boundary between living and dead, between corpse and son, represents its own kind of language barrier. Both the witch of Bessa and her son speak Egyptian—indeed, it should not be forgotten that the context of this episode is a native uprising against the foreign, Persian rulers

46 He could be hoping to spare his mother the foreknowledge of his brother's death. At 6.15.1 he claims he was merciful to her until she went beyond the pale. Had Heliodorus wanted to, the emotional *pathos* of the scene might have been highlighted. A mother who has lost one son and whose attempts to discover the fate of her other lead to her own death could make a fitting tragedy were the morality of magic in the novel not so rigid (on which, see Jones (2005)).

47 See below, p. 151.

and the witch is driven by her desire not to see her other son die in the same rebellion. Nevertheless, the witch's magic, which allows (and compels) communication across that barrier, allows gestures to cross more easily than speech, but to less effect. A message composed entirely of gestures lacks the specificity and surety of a message including actual words. Nevertheless, even a pure soul like Charikleia can recognize an Egyptian witch at work and become terribly (and appropriately) frightened by observing the body and object language of ritual.

### ***Gestures at the Persian Court***

The Persian court in the Satrap's palace at Memphis provides the setting for some of the novel's most intriguing intercultural dynamics. Except the minor rebellion of the citizens of Bessa, Heliodorus does not pay much attention to tensions between the native Egyptians and their Persian rulers. He does, however, exploit the famous tensions between the Persians and the Greeks. Charikleia and Theagenes find themselves in an oriental setting in which their wills to survive and their desires to remain true to themselves and each other are pitted against each other, and nonverbal behavior forms a significant part of the battlefield. Here too, however, nonverbal communication proves to be a reliable, if not infallible, means of transmitting and gathering information.<sup>48</sup>

Memphis becomes the novel's setting when Thyamis arrives with a band of Bessans to reclaim his priesthood and besiege the city. The episode set here will focus on Arsake's attempts to seduce Theagenes, which are set in motion the minute she spies him from the walls of Memphis. She is instantly smitten, and her eyes reveal her intentions both to the reader and eventually to Theagenes. We readers are primed to recognize these signs by the narrator's brief retreat into Arsake's past in which we are told about her seduction of Thyamis:

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<sup>48</sup> This is another sign of Heliodorus' play with hermeneutic dynamics, see Winkler (1982), discussed at greater length in chapter five.

έντυχοῦσα κατὰ τὸν νεῶν τῆς Ἴσιδος ἡ Ἀρσάκη νεανίσκῳ χαρίεντι καὶ ἀκμάζοντι καὶ πρὸς τῆς ἐν χερσὶ πανηγύρεως πλέον ὠραϊσμένῳ ὀφθαλμούς τε ἐπέβαλλεν οὐ σώφρονας καὶ νεύματα τῶν αἰσχροτέρων αἰνίγματα. (*Aethiopica* 7.2.2)

Arsake encountered him as a young man in the temple of Isis, handsome, in his prime, and even more on display for the festival at hand, and she gave him looks that were far from chaste and gestures which hinted things even more shameful.

The connection between Arsake's eyes and her lusty intentions are far from unique in the novel; sight and *eros* are intimately bound and deserve fuller treatment than can be given here.<sup>49</sup> The looks and gestures presented here are not described to the reader in detail, but were interpretable enough that not only did Thyamis catch on (as was Arsake's intention), but Petosiris also understood them and used them to frame his brother.<sup>50</sup> Given that these two Egyptian priests recognized the lust which a lady of the Persian royalty wished to convey, it is perhaps not surprising that Theagenes will be able to do the same. The gestures (νεύματα) are explicitly described as enigmas (αἰνίγματα), puzzles that ask to be solved, and which are therefore more hermeneutically complex than the rather straightforward eye behavior, but less scandalous than the behavior at which the νεύματα αἰνίγματα hint. Arsake emerges as one of the most fully developed characters in the *Aethiopica*, and this moment is no exception. She is fully adjusted to the stringent limitations her position in the royal court puts on her actions and desires, and has a number of ways of pushing back against those limitations. Her maid Kybele is one major aid, but another is her smart attention to body language.

At first, Theagenes is focused on the impending duel and pays no notice to the fact that, as he sits down to observe the fight, he presents himself for Arsake to stare at and enjoy.<sup>51</sup> As the

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49 For examples of similar sight behaviors that signal *eros*, see Demainete's looks at 1.9.3, Rhodopis' glances at 2.25.1, and the mutual stares of Theagenes and Charikleia at 3.5.5. Dickie (1991) points out the connections between Heliodorus' and Plutarch's handling of "the evil eye", while Yatromanolakis (1988) discusses the parallels between the evil eye and *eros* in the novel. Charikleia's eyes are particularly interesting and seem qualitatively different than those of the novel's other characters (See my discussion of Sismithres' eyes in chapter two). Jones (2005) argues that Heliodorus wishes us to associate Charikleia with the divine in a platonic hierarchy.

50 *Aethiopica* 7.2.4

51 *Aethiopica* 7.6.1: καὶ τῇ Ἀρσάκῃ παρεῖχεν οὐκ εἰδῶς ἐντρυφᾶν αὐτοῦ τῇ θεᾷ παντοίως αὐτὸν

city celebrates after Kalasiris' unexpected appearance ends the duel Arsake too participates in such a way as to seem to be rejoicing like the rest of the city, but really to stare at Theagenes.<sup>52</sup>

As they all depart, Arsake turns repeatedly to stare at Theagenes for as long as she can.<sup>53</sup> Nor does all this staring go unnoticed. After Kybele brings Theagenes and Charikleia to the palace and attempts to win them over, the narrator describes Theagenes' understanding of the situation:

Τοῦ δὴ Θεαγένους τὰ εἰρημένα παρὰ τῆς Κυβέλης τοῖς πεπραγμένοις τῇ προτεραίᾳ παρὰ τῆς Ἀρσάκης παράλληλα καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀντεξετάζοντος, καὶ ὡς ἀτενὲς αὐτῷ καὶ ἰταμὸν συνεχῆς τε καὶ τῶν ἀπρεπεστέρων δηλωτικὸν προσέβλεπεν ἐννοοῦντος καὶ ἀγαθὸν οὐδὲν ἐπὶ τοῖς μέλλουσι καταμαντευομένου μέλλοντός τε ἤδη τι λέγειν πρὸς τὴν πρεσβύτιν, ἡρέμα προσκύψασα πρὸς τὸ οὖς ἢ Χαρίκλεια “Τῆς ἀδελφῆς” ἔφη “μέμνησο ἐφ' οἷς ἂν λέγῃς.” (*Aethiopica* 7.12.7)

Theagenes put the things Kybele had said side by side with the things Arsake had done the day before. He had noticed how intensely and boldly she had stared at him, in a way that indicated things that were more inappropriate, and predicted that the future held nothing good. He was about to say something to the old woman when Charikleia leaned over to his ear and whispered “Remember your sister in whatever you say.”

This is the first indication that Theagenes had noticed Arsake's stares and it is not clear which moments of staring he recalls, but nevertheless, he both observes the behavior and correctly divines Arsake's mental state. Moreover, he is able to use that knowledge to recognize that his being taken in to the palace and cared for is part of Arsake's plan, rather than the blessing it first appeared.

Charikleia's suggestion that he lie about their relationship implies that she too has made sense of this situation. She gave the same lie to Thyamis and his men after Thyamis revealed his intention of marrying her on the assumption that Theagenes would be safer if not viewed as a romantic rival.<sup>54</sup> Previously, Kalasiris called them both his children, and thus siblings, in the house of Tyrrhenos, a fiction which is continued among the Phoenicians and pirates with whom

περισκοπούση καὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς τέως ἀπολαύειν τῆς ἐπιθυμίας ἐπιτρεπούση.

52 *Aethiopica* 7.8.6: Οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ ἡ Ἀρσάκη κατόπιν ἐλείπετο τῶν δρωμένων, ἀλλ' ἴδιον δορυφόρημα καὶ πομπεῖαν καθ' ἑαυτὴν ὑπέρογκόν τινα σοβοῦσα ὄρμους καὶ πολὺν χρυσὸν ἐνέβαλεν εἰς τὸ Ἰσεῖον, οὕτως μὲν δοκεῖν δι' ἅπερ καὶ ἡ λοιπὴ πόλις, ἐκ μόνου δὲ τοῦ Θεαγένους τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν ἀναρτήσασα καὶ πλέον τῶν ἄλλων τῆς ἐκείνου θέας ἐμφορομένη

53 *Aethiopica* 7.9.1: οἱ λοιποὶ δὲ εἰς οἴκησιν ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀπεχώρουν· ἀπεχώρει δὲ καὶ ἡ Ἀρσάκη μόλις μὲν καὶ πολλάκις ἀναστρέφουσα καὶ πλείονι θεραπείᾳ δῆθεν τῇ περὶ τὴν θεὸν ἐναλύουσα πλὴν ἀλλ' ἀπεχώρει γε ὁπότε καὶ θαμὰ πρὸς τὸν Θεαγένην ἕως ἐξῆν ἐπιστρέφουσα.

54 *Aethiopica* 1.21.3

they sail to Egypt.<sup>55</sup> By the time they have their audience with the king of Ethiopia, they have told the lie so many times that Theagenes seems to repeat it once more out of force of habit rather than any clear strategic aim.<sup>56</sup> Charikleia's insistence that Theagenes call her his sister seems to be based on a recognition that Arsake desires Theagenes, a recognition that must be based, at least in part, on Charikleia's reading of Arsake's body language.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the episode in which Theagenes is brought into court in the presence of the Persian officials and I would like to return to that scene now in the context of nonverbal communication and especially gestures. Theagenes has been well prepared for his entrance to the court. Kybele has warned him how to act in Arsake's presence.<sup>57</sup> Charikleia has begged him to comply and put up a polite front.<sup>58</sup> The eunuchs who lead him to Arsake have instructed him on how to greet her and that *proskunesis* was customary.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, upon seeing Arsake and her retinue Theagenes decides to ignore all this advice:

ἀλλ', ὡσπερ τῶν συγκειμένων αὐτῶ πρὸς τὴν Χαρίκλειαν ὑπὲρ τῆς θεραπευτικῆς ὑποκρίσεως ἐπιλεησόμενος, ἀντεξανέστη πλέον εἰς μεγαλοφροσύνην πρὸς τὸ ἀλαζονικὸν τῆς Περσικῆς θέας, καὶ οὔτε ὀκλάσας οὔτε προσκυνήσας ἀλλ' ἀπ' ὀρθῆς τῆς κεφαλῆς “Χαῖρε” ἔφη “βασιλεῖον αἶμα Ἀρσάκη.” Τῶν δὲ παρόντων ἀγανακτούντων καὶ θροῦν τινα ὅτι μὴ προσεκύνησε καταστασιαστικὸν τοῦ Θεαγένους ὡς τολμηροῦ καὶ θρασέος ἀφιέντων, ἡ Ἀρσάκη μειδιάσασα “Σύγγνωτε” εἶπεν “ὡς ἀπίρω καὶ ξένω καὶ τὸ ὅλον Ἕλλησι καὶ τὴν ἐκείθεν ὑπεροψίαν καθ' ἡμῶν νοσοῦντι.” (*Aethiopica* 7.19.2)

But, as if he had forgot his promises to Charikleia about pretending to be servile, he rebelled in pride against the arrogance of the Persian spectacle and without crouching or prostrating, with his head held high, he said “Hello, Relative of the King, Arsake.” Those present were irritated and raised a clamor because he had rebelliously not prostrated and because he was brash and reckless. Arsake smiled and said “Forgive him, he's both inexperienced and a foreigner, Greek through and through, and suffers from his land's contempt for us.

Theagenes' pride and refusal to abase himself functions as a gesture which symbolizes to the reader his constancy and nobility. He is too much his own man to even feign servility. He does

55 *Aethiopica* 5.18.7

56 *Aethiopica* 9.25.2; Johnson remarked on the title character of Richardson's *Clarissa* that “there's always something which she prefers to the truth.” Doody (1996) p. 92 would not unreasonably expand this to Charikleia. While it's true that Charikleia does have a penchant for a good white lie, these lies are, however, always strategically motivated, unlike Theagenes' claim here which seems unmotivated and in fact complicates their situations somewhat.

57 *Aethiopica* 7.17.4

58 *Aethiopica* 7.18.3

59 *Aethiopica* 7.19.1

not, however, insult Arsake or deny her power; in fact, he addresses her respectfully with the appellation βασιλειον αἶμα.<sup>60</sup>

The courtiers around Arsake who, unlike Arsake, do not know Greek, perceive the gesture but do not understand his address and therefore fail to properly contextualize it.<sup>61</sup> They recognize his refusal to prostrate himself as a gesture of its own and correctly understand that the act is symbolic of his refusal to admit inferiority to Arsake or to Persia. As such, they consider the act offensive because politically rebellious (καταστασιαστικὸν) and we should understand that they are bothered not so much by the personal slight to Arsake as to the political system she represents. Despite language and cultural barriers, however, they do properly understand Theagenes' refusal as a refusal (and not simply an omission). He is not ignorant of how to behave; he is intentionally misbehaving.

Arsake, on the other hand, is misled by her affection for Theagenes. She blames the procedural flub on two contradictory things: his inexperience and his Greekness.<sup>62</sup> While Theagenes has, in fact, not been around Persians very long, given all the preparation Theagenes was given we know better than to accept Arsake's claim that he is simply inexperienced, which seems intended to placate the angry courtiers. Despite his inexperience, Theagenes' gesture is calculated to display the contempt he feels, as the narrator notes and as Arsake herself suggests in the second half of her brief speech. Arsake recognizes the contempt implied by Theagenes' (non-)gesture as an intrinsic part of his Greekness, an interesting statement on the Greco-Persian

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60 The same phrase is used by the Ethiopian people in reference to Charikleia at 10.17.1: σῶζε τὸ βασιλειον αἶμα (Save the daughter of the king!). It is possible that Theagenes' use of the phrase is ironic, but headstrong as he is, he is not (yet) suicidal.

61 On Arsake's linguistic abilities and the problematic sexuality associated with them, and for more on this episode, see Chapter 2.

62 Arsake's double determination of actions is parallel to the narrator's own double determination, which Morgan (1982) famously associated with the non-omniscient historian's verisimilitude. The Ionian serving girl who accidentally poisons Kybele also doubly determines her crime (see below, p. 151).

relations which lie quietly in the novel's background.

Both Arsake and her courtiers successfully understand Theagenes' decision to keep his head upright and to not prostrate, though they disagree on the significance of this action. In this case, however, it seems clear that the gesture only takes on this meaning in the context of the Persian court. Only when *proskunesis* is expected is not prostrating an action in itself. In front of a powerful Greek ruler, Theagenes upright bearing would only indicate his nobility. In fact, both times Theagenes and Charikleia are led to Hydaspes in chains, before and after the siege of Syene, neither of them bows and no offense is taken.<sup>63</sup> This case presents an important exception to the idea of the universality of gestures in the novel. While *proskunesis* would be universally recognized as a sign of submission and abasement, not prostrating is only a sign of arrogance to specific people in the specific circumstances of the Persian court.

Arsake responds to Theagenes' insult with a gesture whose meaning is so culturally specific that the narrator must gloss it:

Καὶ ἅμα καὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς τὴν τιάραν ἀφεῖλε, πολλὰ τῶν παρόντων κωλυόντων—τοῦ γὰρ ἀμείβεσθαι τὸν ἀσπασάμενον σύμβολον τοῦτο πεποιήνται Πέρσαι—καὶ «Θάρσει, ὦ ξένη» εἰποῦσα διὰ τοῦ ἑρμηνέως συνιεῖσα γὰρ τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλωτταν οὐκ ἐφθέγγετο, “καὶ λέγε τίνος χρήζεις, ὡς οὐκ ἀποτευξόμενος” ἀπέπεμπε, νεύματι τοῦτο πρὸς τοὺς εὐνούχους ἐπισημήνασα. (*Aethiopica* 7.19.3)

As she said these things she took off her *tiara*, despite the protestations of the others there—The Persians do this as a sign that a greeting is returned—and said “Fear not, foreigner!” through the interpreter, for though she knew Greek, she did not speak it, “Say what you want; you will not lack it.” and she sent him a way, having given the eunuchs the message with a gesture.

The removal of her *tiara* is presented as a standard Persian gesture, one with which the Persian court, at any rate, is intimately familiar. We are given no information on Theagenes' reaction to the gesture, or his understanding of it. I know of no other place where the gesture is discussed in

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63 *Aethiopica* 9.1.3 and 9.25.1 The situations are not exactly parallel; Theagenes is brought into the Persian court as a guest of honor, while Theagenes and Charikleia are prisoners of war at Syene and are in shackles in front of Hydaspes. Nevertheless, they have reason to believe they are held in a place of honor (their golden shackles, which are a mark of their selection as sacrificial victims). In contrast, at 10.25.1 Merebos' gladiator bows down before Hydaspes upon entering into his presence.

antiquity and certainly Heliodorus feels the need to explain it to his audience (though this need not be proof of his inventing it). The courtiers' reaction to the gesture (πολλὰ τῶν παρόντων κωλύόντων) suggests their belief that the gesture would be understood accurately, namely that Theagenes would feel welcomed and his insolence would be rewarded rather than punished. It is not at all clear that this would be the case. It seems more likely that Theagenes would be aligned with the Greek reader of the novel in needing a gloss on this action, if he even recognized it as a meaningful gesture. The courtiers' view helps characterize them; they (foolishly) believe that their culturally specific gestures are universal.

Arsake proves her familiarity with Greek customs and thereby demonstrates another example of culturally specific nonverbal communication through a gesture meant to subtly demonstrate her affection for Theagenes. Theagenes has been made Arsake's cup bearer and wine mixer and has, without benefit of training, mixed a delicious batch of wine. After he gives her the cup, the narrator describes the wine's effect on Arsake:

Ἐκείνην μὲν οὖν πλέον ἢ πρότερον τὸ ποτὸν ἐξεβάκχευσεν, ἐπιρροφοῦσάν τε ἅμα καὶ ἀκλινῶς εἰς τὸν Θεαγένην ἀτενίζουσαν καὶ τοῦ ἔρωτος πλέον ἢ τοῦ κράματος ἔλκουσαν καὶ τὴν φιάλην ἐπίτηδες οὐκ ἐκπίνουσαν ἀλλὰ σὺν τέχνῃ καὶ διὰ μικροῦ τοῦ λειψάνου τῷ Θεαγένει προπίνουσαν. (*Aethiopica* 7.27.3)

The drink made her more intoxicated than she was before and as she drank she also stared constantly at Theagenes, drinking up more desire than drink and intentionally not finishing the cup but skilfully toasting Theagenes by leaving a little wine at the bottom.

As Morgan notes, the gesture described is one of toasting one's friend's health by both drinking from the same cup.<sup>64</sup> Arsake's gesture is one sided; Theagenes may receive the cup to refill it, but he doesn't drink from it. Though we are not told of Theagenes' reaction to this gesture, he is clearly intimately familiar with the custom. Earlier in the novel, Kalasiris tells of a symposium at which Theagenes, though suffering badly from his love for Charikleia, toasted everyone there including Kalasiris. When Kalasiris politely refuses the cup (because as a priest he abstains from

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<sup>64</sup> Morgan (2008), p. 514, n. 181.

alcohol), Theagenes glares at him angrily in response to the insult he believes is implied by Kalasiris' rejection of the custom.<sup>65</sup> Theagenes, of course, is in no position to drink from the cup even if he wants to do so. This is not a Greek symposium and he is not a guest but rather a slave of a Persian royal in her court. One can only imagine the bluster of the courtiers if Theagenes dared to accept this toast by sipping from the royal cup. Arsake's gesture, however, is clear in its intentions and it seems likely Theagenes would be able to infer its meaning (especially combined with her lustful staring yet again). This gesture has its power precisely because only she and Theagenes would be able to notice it easily and even if a courtier were to pay attention, this Greek gesture would be meaningless to a Persian less familiar with Greek ways than Arsake.

One last set of gestures at the Persian court is worth our consideration. Arsake has decided to torture Theagenes until he complies with her desires and he responds to the torture with equanimity, finding all the solace he needs in the repetition of Charikleia's name. This leads Kybele to persuade Arsake of the hopelessness of their situation so long as Charikleia is alive and they decide to poison her so as to avoid a protracted trial. However the imprecision in Kybele's gestures to the Ionian serving girl leads to a misunderstanding and thereby to Kybele's demise:

Κατακλινεῖσαι τοῖνον εἰσιῶντο· καὶ τῆς διακονουμένης ἄβρας οἴνου κεκραμένου κύλικας ἐπιδούσης, προτέρᾳ τῇ Χαρικλείᾳ προσφέρειν ἢ Κυβέλη νεύσασα μετ' ἐκείνην αὐτὴ λαβοῦσα ἔπινε. Καὶ οὕτω τὸ πᾶν ἐκπέποτο καὶ ἰλιγγίαν ἐφαίνετο ἢ πρεσβῦτις, τὸ τε περιττεύσαν ὀλίγον ἐκχέασα δριμύ τε εἰς τὴν θερᾶπαιναν ἐνεώρα καὶ σπασμοῖς τε καὶ σφακελισμοῖς ὀξύτατοις ἐπιέζετο. (*Aethiopica* 8.7.7)

[Kybele and Charikleia] then lay down and began eating. And when her favorite slave, who was waiting on them, was giving them cups of mixed wine, Kybele gestured for her to serve Charikleia first and after her Kybele took the cup and drunk. She hadn't yet finished it all when the old woman seemed to be dizzy. She poured out the little that was left and glared bitterly at the servant and then was afflicted with terribly sharp spasms and convulsions.

The morality of the scene is clear: like the witch of Bessa, Kybele is done in by her own evil

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65 *Aethiopica* 3.11.2: ὡς δὲ εἰς ἐμὲ περιῆλθεν, “ἔχω τὴν φιλοφρόνησιν” εἰπόντος ὑποδεξαμένου δὲ οὐδαμῶς, ὀξύ τε καὶ διάπυρον ἐνειδεν, ὑπεροῤῥᾶσθαι προσδοκήσας.

plans. But how exactly Kybele's gesture leads to her demise is less clear. Shortly later, when the serving girl confesses to the crime, she suggests two possible reasons:

αὐτὴ δεδωκέναι διωμολόγει τῇ Κυβέλῃ τὸ φάρμακον εἰληφέναι δὲ παρ' αὐτῆς ἐκείνης ἐφ' ᾧ δοῦναι μὲν τῇ Χαρικλείᾳ, προληφθεῖσαν δὲ εἴτε ὑπὸ θορύβου τῆς κατὰ τὴν πράξιν ἀτοπίας εἴτε καὶ συγχεθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τῆς Κυβέλης προτέρᾳ δοῦναι τῇ Χαρικλείᾳ νεουούσης, ἐναλλάξαι τὰς κύλικας καὶ τῇ πρεσβύτιδι προσενεγκεῖν ἐν ᾧ ἦν τὸ φάρμακον. (*Aethiopica* 8.9.3)

She conceded that she had given Kybele the poison and that she had taken the same poison from her to give to Charikleia, but that before she could do so, she mixed up the cups, either due to her confusion because of the wickedness of the deed or because she was confused by Kybele's gesture to give the cup to Charikleia first and that therefore she handed the cup with the poison to the old woman.

The serving girl refuses to specify whether she was confused by the wickedness, the gesture, or some combination of both, and we can imagine why. An appeal to the wickedness of the crime proves her distaste for it and thus her innocence as anything but the instrument of delivery. But without knowing Arsake's role in this plot, she smartly hedges her bet and suggests a problem caused by a misunderstanding of body language. For her to make such a claim, however, she relies on Arsake's belief in a basic fact: Gestures can be ambiguous in a way that spoken language cannot. Furthermore, Heliodorus here makes clear the extent to which gestural communication, with all its ambiguity, can be a dangerous medium.

At least on the superficial level, however, it is clear from these two passages that the gesture was essentially received correctly. Kybele wanted Charikleia served first, and the serving girl understood that and proceeded to serve Charikleia first. Why Kybele should make such a gesture is unclear. Did she believe that the serving girl had the wrong glass? Did she just want to make Charikleia feel honored and thereby less suspicious? We are not told. Presumably even if Kybele had actually said “Serve her first,” the result would not have been substantially different. The action can either be read as the mistake of a befuddled and nervous servant or as the intentional murder of a wicked old woman for which the ambiguity of the gesture presents a means of legal self-defense. This ambiguity is perhaps heightened by a cultural gap between

herself, a young Ionian girl, and the old woman, who came originally from Lesbos but who has since become thoroughly Persian.

Kybele's dying gestures are sufficiently clear to the Persians at the court:

ἡ γοῦν Κυβέλη καὶ ἐκθνήσκουσα οὐ μεθίετο τῶν πανουργημάτων ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν νεύμασι τὰ δὲ παραφθεγγομένη Χαρίκλειαν εἶναι τὴν ἐπιβουλεύσασαν ἐνεδείκνυτο. Καὶ ὁμοῦ τε ἡ γραῦς ἀπέπνει καὶ ἡ Χαρίκλεια δεσμῶτις εἶχετο καὶ παρὰ τὴν Ἀρσάκην αὐτίκα ἤγετο (*Aethiopica* 8.8.2-3)

Kybele, though, even as she was dying did not stop her villainy. Instead she accused Charikleia of being the conspirator using both gestures and broken speech. And even as the old woman exhaled for the last time, Charikleia was put in chains and brought straight to Arsake.

Gestures are instrumental to Kybele's accusation, at least as much as the few words she is able to choke out as the poison works on her body. The quick response of the Persians indicates that this message is not ambiguous or confusing, unlike the serving girl claims Kybele's previous one was.

The situation at the Persian court at Memphis, then, complicates the picture of nonverbal communication in the novel. Here, at least, some actions have the potential to be understood only by those with the appropriate cultural training. Thus, Arsake's Greek toast can be clear to Theagenes but not the Persian court, while Theagenes' refusal to prostrate himself means different things to different Persians, depending on their knowledge of Greeks. The last scene we will explore will reaffirm once more the more generalized notion of the near-universality of nonverbal communication.

### **Gestures in War**

In some of the scenes we have explored nonverbal communication in some way supplemented spoken language. In our last scene, however, communication via spoken language is prevented not only by the language barrier between the Persian citizens of Syene and the Ethiopian army by whom they are besieged, but also by physical barriers: the town wall, the Nile

which has been diverted to turn the town into an island, and the distance that these two barriers necessarily put between the groups. While the siege of Syene sees the main characters largely off-stage and can be seen as a kind of digression before the climax of the final book, Heliodorus presents a view of war very much fraught with the same concerns as elsewhere in the novel: how to communicate and how to ensure that one's message is correctly received.

After the Ethiopian army conducts an extensive digging project, the Persian residents of Syene find their town under siege, its walls collapsing, and beg the Persian Satrap, Oroondates, to negotiate with the Ethiopian King, Hydaspes. He agrees but soon realizes that he has no way to open negotiations:

Ὁ δὲ ἐπειθετο μὲν, δοῦλος καὶ ἄκων τῆς τύχης γινόμενος, ἀποτετειχισμένος δὲ τῶ ὕδατι καὶ ὅπως ἂν τινα διαπέμψαιτο ὡς τοὺς πολεμίους ἀδυνατῶν ἐπίνοιαν ὑπὸ τῆς ἀνάγκης ἐδιδάσκετο· γραψάμενος γὰρ ἃ ἐβούλετο καὶ λίθῳ τὴν γραφὴν ἐναψάμενος σφενδόνῃ πρὸς τοὺς ἐναντίους ἐπρεσβεύετο διαπόντιον τὴν ἰκεσίαν τοξευόμενος· ἦνυε δὲ οὐδέν, ἐλαττουμένης τοῦ μήκους τῆς βολῆς καὶ τῶ ὕδατι προεμπιπτούσης. (*Aethiopica* 9.5.2)

He tried to obey, but he was an unwilling slave to Fortune. Walled off by the water in such a way that he couldn't send anyone to the enemy, helpless, he was taught an idea by necessity. He wrote what he wanted to say and tied the writing to a stone and tried to negotiate with the enemy by sling, shooting his supplication across the waves. It didn't work at all. The distance of the shot wasn't far enough and fell into the water.

Distance prevents spoken conversation and spoken conversation's usual proxy, written conversation, is likewise stopped. The written message is even presented as an act rife with nonverbal associations; he shoots his supplication (ἰκεσία) across the water. While the written word might replace the prostration or grasping of the knees expected in a face-to-face meeting, neither will work here. The Persians continue trying to get their message across the water but it is simply too far and eventually they switch tactics.

Although the wail of despair from Syene reaches the Ethiopian army, more meaningful communication is still blocked. Heliodorus then describes the Persians' attempts to communicate as a kind of dumb show eagerly watched by the Ethiopians on the opposite shore:

Τέλος δὲ τὰς χεῖρας εἰς τοὺς πολεμίους ὀρέγοντες, τοῖς χώμασιν ἐφειστώτας καὶ θέατρον τὰ πάθη τὰ

ἐκείνων ποιουμένους, ἐλλεινοῖς τοῖς σχήμασι τὸ βούλευμα τῶν τοξευμάτων ὡς δυνατὸν ἔφραζον, νῦν μὲν ὑπτίως προτείνοντες εἰς ἰκεσίας ἔμφασιν, νῦν δὲ κατὰ νώτων πρὸς δεσμὸν περιάγοντες εἰς δουλείας ἐξομολόγησιν. (*Aethiopica* 9.5.3)

In the end, they stretched out their hands to the enemy, who were standing on the earthen mounds and were making the Persians' sufferings a theatrical event. With their pitiful gestures they displayed as best they could the archers' intentions; they alternated stretching their hands out, palms up, to communicate their supplication and bringing them behind their backs for chains in acceptance of their slavery.

Again nonverbal communication becomes an allegory. This time, however, gestures actually become an allegory for other gestures. The word ἔμφασις marks the allegorical relationship whereby the people's stretched out hands take the place of the conventional gestures of supplication which they could (and presumably would) perform were physical contact a possibility. Likewise, because they cannot put themselves in chains, they instead cross their hands to signal what they would do if the Ethiopians were there to shackle them.

The theatricality of the scene is striking; the Ethiopians sit on the mounded bank of the river as if on the hill of a Greek theater; they see the gestures which are described here in theatrical terms (σχήματα) amplified by that key term from Aristotle's *Poetics*, “pitiful” (ἐλλεινός). That gestures unaccompanied by comprehensible words so strongly evoke the theater is again evocative of the theatrical experience for those who did not speak Greek. The specific gestures are generic enough that we can easily believe they will be understandable, and yet Heliodorus does not simply allow us to explain the gestures from our own cultural (or universal) knowledge. He instead defines the gestures as he describes them ensuring we understand both the action and its intent. Hydaspes, however, without benefit of the narrator's definitions of the gestures' intent clearly understands them and responds nobly.<sup>66</sup>

This moment of perfect communication through body language is followed by a kind of stand-off in which neither side can figure out the next step. Hydaspes sends soldiers across the lake in boats to bring the Syenians to safety but the Syenians think the boats are on the attack and

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<sup>66</sup> *Aethiopica* 9.5.4: Ὁ δὲ Ὑδάσπης ἐγνώριζε μὲν σωτηρίαν αἰτοῦντας καὶ παρέχειν ἦν ἔτοιμος

therefore fire missiles at them. The Ethiopians in the boats return fire, because they did not yet understand the Persians' intentions.<sup>67</sup> Now that they are left with pure actions to judge rather than clear attempts to communicate, neither side is able to easily interpret the other's intentions. A nameless elder persuades the Syeneans to let the men land and explain their intentions before continuing to attack them and so to signal their decision the Persian army physically withdraws from the walls and grounds their weapons, while the Syenean populace waves pieces of linen used as white flags.<sup>68</sup> These intentionally communicative gestures once again succeed; soon the men land and the Ethiopians and the Persians are able to talk.

The scenes surrounding the siege of Syene suggest the power of nonverbal communication to overcome not only linguistic barriers but also physical barriers and space as well as the ability to trump mutual suspicion. Yet, nonverbal communication is far from flawless. Gestures performed with care and intentionality can be understood, but other actions are easily liable to misunderstanding, especially given the heightened emotions of war, siege, and potential death. Nevertheless, the linguistic and cultural differences are not a problem for these armies' nonverbal communication. They rely consistently on a set of apparently universal gestures based in part on standard convention (white flags as a sign of surrender), in part on mimetic value (showing hands chained behind the back suggests acceptance of slavery), and in part on something like human universals (grounded weapons signal lack of aggression; stretched out, obviously empty hands signal submission).

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67 *Aethiopica* 9.5.8: Ἀντετόξευον δὲ καὶ οἱ Αἰθίοπες καὶ ἄτε εὐσκοπώτερα τέ βάλλοντες καὶ οὐπω τῆς τῶν Περσῶν γνώμης συνιέντες δύο πού τινος καὶ πλείους διαπεύρουσιν...

68 *Aethiopica* 9.5.10-9.6.1: Πᾶσιν εὖ λέγειν ἔδοξεν, ἐπήνει δὲ καὶ ὁ σατράπης· καὶ τοῦ κατηρειπωμένου τῆδε κάκεισε μεταστάντες ἐν ἀκινήτοις τοῖς ὅπλοις ἡσύχαζον. Ὡς δὲ ἐκενώθη τὸ μεταπύργιον τῶν ἐφεστῶτων ὁ τε δῆμος ὀθόνας κατασειῶν ἐπιτρέπειν τὸν ὄρμον ἐνεδείκνυτο...

## **Conclusion**

To return to the question with which we began this chapter then: How *does* Heliodorus present nonverbal communication? The answer is a complicated one. While spoken language is usually straightforward and only fraught with interpretive difficulties in situations like oracles and prophecies, nonverbal communication regularly relies on the process of interpretation.<sup>69</sup> This reliance on interpretation explains the attention to the nonverbal in Heliodorus' novel, especially in the paradigmatic opening scene. The focalization of the early scene forces the reader/viewer's attention to a full range of nonverbal cues: characters' gestures and object language (Charikleia pointing the sword at her chest), at their appearance (her bow and arrows and golden raiment), their physical attributes (her beauty and height) as well as their eye behavior and facial expressions (Charikleia's stares at Theagenes and lack of distress at her surroundings).

While characters are largely successful at understanding body language across the language barrier, the *Aethiopica* does not present nonverbal communication as completely universal. Some actions and gestures have meanings so specifically culturally determined that they are opaque to the uninitiated. The sympotic custom of drinking one's health, or the Persian removal of the tiara cannot be expected to cross the language barrier, a fact which Arsake, for one, manages to exploit. It is no accident, I think, that this nonverbal language barrier is centered around the Persians, whose status as prototypical other Heliodorus' novel confirms, while assigning Egypt and Egyptians to liminal categories.

The primary failure of of the nonverbal, one which recurs throughout the novel lies in its potential ambiguity. While spoken language can be lengthy and precise, nonverbal communication, as presented in the novel, is only capable of transmitting short and simple

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<sup>69</sup> While spoken language is usually straightforward, one thinks of Thyamis' mistaken slaughter of Thisbe based on her speaking Greek (1.30.7-1.31.1) and of Knemon's comic fainting at Nausikles' identification of Charikleia as Thisbe (5.3.1)

messages--“We give up,” not “we're sending a landing party to open negotiations.” And while there are advantages in not giving orders to poison Charikleia in spoken Greek in her presence, the ambiguity created by a gesture or a nod offers Fate an opportunity. This ambiguity, the paradoxical idea of communication which, though often clear, always has the potential to be misunderstood, is perhaps the best explanation for Heliodorus' focus on the nonverbal and aligns his treatment of these behaviors with the established paradoxical features of his novel.<sup>70</sup>

While a modern novel might stress the difficulty in communicating across a language barrier with gestures alone, Heliodorus' position is not so strong. The *Aethiopica* emphasizes that the language barrier can be crossed by nonverbal means, and fairly reliably, if not without potential dangers, perhaps a testament to life on the ground in 4<sup>th</sup> century CE Roman Syria.

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70 See Whitmarsh (2011) and Telò (2011) on Heliodorus' delight in paradox.

## Chapter 5: Interpreting Ethiopia and Heliodorus' Languages

Eight books seems to be the standard length of a romance so Heliodorus' last books hold a special place; The final book is, as David Elmer has noted, a book marked for existing at all.<sup>1</sup> The ninth book is a clear set piece, marking the transition to Ethiopia by dwelling on the battle for Syene. Ethiopia itself forms the setting for the tenth book, and if ancient readers knew this text as the *Aethiopica*, this would add further weight to the notion that this book reaches the heart of the novelist's project and the climax of the characters' stories. There is always danger in reading teleologically, in assuming there is one main point (*telos* in the sense of "goal") which the final portions of the novel will help clarify and drive home, and yet Heliodorus encourages a teleological reading of his novel.<sup>2</sup> Not only does he name his novel for the location of its last book, he also structures Charikleia's journey (and thus the plot of the novel) in a linear way from Delphi to Ethiopia. Unlike the haphazard adventures of Xenophon's Anthia and Habrocomes or Chariton's Callirhoe and Chaereas, Theagenes and Charikleia undertake a journey whose destination is clear to Kalasiris, and thereby the reader, if not immediately to Charikleia and Theagenes themselves.<sup>3</sup> The journey may be valuable too, but the destination is clearly of great import to Heliodorus' novel.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Elmer (2008a). Chariton's novel has eight books as does Achilles Tatius'. Both Xenophon's and Longus' are significantly shorter (five and four, respectively).

2 Whitmarsh (2011) ch. 5, entitled *Telos*, presents a lucid analysis of endings in the novels. Nimis (1999) explores the ways in which novels problematize their own endings by leaving things not completely sewn up and on p. 229 finds similarities in the ways Winkler, Morgan, and Merkelbach believe Heliodorus has a "main point" and believe the ending is instrumental in discovering that point. Fusillo (1997) p. 226 notes that Heliodorus clearly constructs the endings of his books carefully, with the second and fourth books having suspenseful cliffhanger endings while the sixth and eighth have proleptically happy endings. Morgan (1989) p. 299 provides a concise sentiment on the importance of endings in literature as in life: "meaning flows back from the ending."

3 Anthia and Habrocomes are a particularly illustrative example because they are sent out by their home community with no particular destination in mind. Other novelistic heroes spend much of their time chasing their beloveds.

4 The *Aethiopica* itself, however, is crafted to be of a different sort than its own plot. The motion of the plot maybe a straight line extending southward but the telling of that plot, from the *medias in res* start to the the *mise en*

Furthermore, as Winkler has noted, references to the languages and the problems of communication are particularly common in the last book.<sup>5</sup> This collocation of emphasis supplied by the final book and density of reference to languages suggest that a close analysis of these linguistic phenomena will provide insight into their role in the novel as a whole. In what follows I will analyze two closely related aspects of the appearances of the language barrier in the novel's final chapter: the reactions and vocalizations of the Ethiopian crowd which range from incomprehensible chaos to uniform approbation and Hydaspes' and Sisimithres' alternation between Greek and Ethiopian speech in an effort to manage the comprehension of their different audiences. My analysis will demonstrate that Ethiopia is no linguistic utopia, nor a place of "universal translatability" but rather represents in miniature the problems and opportunities presented by the language barrier.

### ***The Crowd Speaks and Transcends Speech***

One of the remarkable facets of Heliodorus' final scene is the presence of a massive crowd of Ethiopian men, who have turned out to welcome the victorious Hydaspes home and take part in the victory sacrifices.<sup>6</sup> This crowd's constant presence and involvement in the novel's resolution is a familiar way of raising the dramatic stakes. Charikleia's salvation will be brought to pass (or potentially not brought to pass) in front of a mob of her fellow countrymen and future subjects. The crowd is described as terribly enthusiastic to attend the gathering, many

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*abyme* narrators, is anything but straightforward.

- 5 Winkler (1982) p. 297 suggested that references to the language barrier are particularly common in the last book in part because the language barrier's function is to "underscore the cross-purposes, complications and dénouements of [the] plot." In response, Morgan (1982) p. 260 suggests that the language barrier is so prominent in the book because it is here that Theagenes and Charikleia most extensively deal with non-Greek speakers. More on both scholars below.
- 6 The absence of women in the crowd is made explicit at 10.4.5, where the narrator asserts that "it is not lawful for the female sex to join," the sole exceptions being the priestess of Selene, Persinna, and the prisoners of war to be sacrificed (including Charikleia). The only obvious effect this has is to increase Charikleia's isolation and modesty. As in the congress of the bandits, she professes a reluctance to speak out among men. While in book one, this is more of a rhetorical point than an actual roadblock, in book ten it remains a problem.

leaving the night before to arrive early.<sup>7</sup> The narrator scrupulously describes the impromptu sacred space set up in the center, surrounded by the crowd, as well as the sacrifices of horses and cattle, but his description and the events themselves are interrupted by the shouting of the rowdy crowd:

Καὶ ἔτι τούτων δρωμένων βοή τις ἀθρόον ἠγείρετο συμμιγῆς τε καὶ ταραχώδης καὶ οἷα εἰκὸς ὑπὸ πλήθους ἀπέρου συγκλύδων ἀνθρώπων, “Τὰ πάτρια τελείσθω” τῶν περιεστώτων ἐκβοώντων, “ἡ νενομισμένη θυσία λοιπὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους τελείσθω, αἱ ἀπαρχαὶ τοῦ πολέμου τοῖς θεοῖς προσαγέσθωσαν.” (*Aethiopica* 10.7.1)

While these things were still under way, a disorderly cry rose up from all over the crowd, as one would expect from an immense crowd of men thrown together. Those standing around the outside shouted “Let the traditional rites be performed!” “Let the customary sacrifice be carried out, then, for our people's sake! Let the first fruits of the war be dedicated to the gods!”

The men's interruption of the ceremonies spills over and becomes an interruption of Heliodorus' text. It would be tempting to read this crowd as a stand-in for the reader anxious to move on from general descriptions to the matter of the imminent sacrifice of Charikleia and Theagenes.<sup>8</sup> The reader need not share the bloodlust of the crowd to share the same desire to hurry to the end and frustration with delay. As we will see, this same crowd will often offer models for the reader, but this time any such identification is immediately problematic. The narrator's description of the men clearly describes the crowd as a negative force, “common rabble” (σύγκλυς), and the cry itself as “disorderly” (ταραχώδης), a swift condemnation of any reader who wishes for too hasty a resolution.

Futhermore, the cry itself is described as arising from throughout the crowd (συμμιγῆς, περιεστώτων). Throughout the scene, the crowd acts as a mass of people rather than a collection of individuals (even when individual differences are evoked). In its first appearance, Heliodorus already lays the groundwork for a presentation of this crowd which juxtaposes the

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<sup>7</sup> See *Aethiopica* 10.4.6.

<sup>8</sup> The reader knows that Charikleia and Theagenes are dedicated to be sacrificed, while the crowd only knows that a sacrifice should happen. On internal readers and audiences in Heliodorus, Morgan (1991) is valuable.

mob and its individual components. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy, particularly in comparison to moments later in the scene, that the cries of the crowd are expressed articulately and in perfectly good syntax. The narrator even comments that Hydaspes understood them, the indisputable mark of successful communication.<sup>9</sup> As we will see, the crowd alternates between clearly articulated speech and various kinds of wordless reactions, some of which are nevertheless communicative. Heliodorus not only uses the crowd as a kind of stand-in for the reader, but also to blur the boundaries between the categories of language, paralinguage, and gesture. The crowd demonstrates that for Heliodorus, the medium is not the message. Interpretation and understanding happen across and despite language barriers of all kinds.

After the Ethiopians begin to test the purity of those to be sacrificed, Charikleia dons her Delphic robe and rushes forward to stand on the gridiron and prove her chastity. The crowd's reaction is again universal but less articulate than the previous cries:

Θάμβος γούν ἅμα πάντας κατέσχε· καὶ βοῆν μίαν ἄσημον μὲν καὶ ἀναρθρον δηλωτικὴν δὲ τοῦ θαύματος ἐπήχησαν τῶν τε ἄλλων ἀγασθέντες καὶ πλέον ὅτι κάλλος οὕτως ὑπεράνθρωπον καὶ τὸ ὥριον τῆς ἀκμῆς ἄθικτον ἐτήρει καὶ ἔχειν ἐνεδείκνυτο σωφροσύνη πλέον ἢ τῇ ὥρᾳ κοσμούμενον. (*Aethiopica* 10.9.4)  
Everyone was astonished. They shouted a single, indistinct, and inarticulate cry, which nevertheless was communicative of their wonder. They were in awe generally but even more so because the beauty which so surpassed human beauty and was at the peak of ripeness was kept chaste and was proven to be better decorated by her chastity than by her youth.

The crowd's reaction to the sight of Charikleia and demonstration of her chastity produces a single, transcendent moment in which speech fails. The characteristics of the cry are contrasted explicitly, if paradoxically, with μέν and δέ. An inarticulate (ἀναρθρον) cry suggests that there were no words or even letters or sounds to be separated, no individual parts to the cry but rather one continuous shout. It is not immediately obvious how a cry can be both ἄσημος (un-signing, non-signifying) and δηλωτικὴ (indicative, expressive). The paradox is part of the intended effect of the narration, reproducing the paradox of the sexually stunning and yet somehow still virginal

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<sup>9</sup> *Aethiopica* 10.7.2: Συνεῖς οὖν ὄΥδάσπησ ὅτι τὴν ἀνθρωποκτονίαν ἐπιζητοῦσιν.

Charikleia. And yet, like Charikleia, the paradox can be explained. The lack of communicative intent indicated by the βοή ἄσημος is what makes it δηλωτική τοῦ θαύματος. The crowd is literally rendered speechless and this in turn is communicative to the narrator and the novel's readership of their internal emotions. As such, this paralinguistic vocal cry becomes essentially, a kind of audible body language, blurring the boundary between speech and gesture, as well as hinting at the “readability” of vocal production outside of language, even across language barriers.

In contrast to the crowd, Persinna is provoked by the same emotional reaction to speak (articulately and with full intent) to Hydaspes. She laments that Charikleia, “who exalts in her chastity” (τῆ σωφροσύνη σεμνυνομένη) will be lead to her death, underscoring the irony of the situation by reminding the reader that it was Persinna's own call to chastity that helped bring Charikleia to this situation.<sup>10</sup> The difference between the crowd's inarticulate cry and Persinna's plea for charity toward the chaste represent the differences not only between a queen and her people but also between a single person capable of speech and a crowd rendered speechless.

As part of Charikleia's attempt to persuade Hydaspes of their relationship, the painting of Andromeda which was involved in Charikleia's unusual conception is brought forth and the crowd reacts as a group again:

Ἐκόμιζον ἀράμενοι τὴν εἰκόνα προσταχθέντες οἱ ὑπηρέται καὶ πλησίον τῆς Χαρικλείας ἀντεγείραντες τοσοῦτον ἐκίνησαν παρὰ πάντων κρότον καὶ θόρυβον, ἄλλων πρὸς ἄλλους, ὅσοι καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν συνίεσαν τὰ λεγόμενα καὶ πραττόμενα, διαδηλούντων καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἀπηκριβωμένον τῆς ὁμοιότητος σὺν περιχαρείᾳ ἐκπλαγέντων, ὥστε καὶ τὸν Ὑδάσπην οὐκέτι μὲν ἀπιστεῖν ἔχειν, ἐφεστάναι δὲ πολὺν χρόνον ὑφ' ἠδονῆς ἅμα καὶ θαύματος ἐχόμενον. (*Aethiopica* 10.15.1)

The servants who had been ordered to get the icon and bring it there did so and they erected it beside Charikleia, thereby creating such applause and clamor from everyone—those who understood even a little of what was said and done made it clear to others and everyone was struck with such joy at the exactness of the resemblance—that even Hydaspes could no longer remain in disbelief. He stood there for a while in the grip of pleasure and wonder.

Heliodorus again plays with the relationship between individuals in the crowd and the crowd as a

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<sup>10</sup> Persinna cautions Charikleia to value her chastity via the letter on her band, read by Kalasiris at *Aethiopica* 4.8.7.

whole. The entire crowd participates in the chaotic and jubilant noisemaking prompted by the unlikely wonder but, in fact, the crowd's understanding of the situation is anything but universal. Some in the audience seem to understand at least some of what was said (τὰ λεγόμενα), while others, perhaps more adept than their compatriots at reading nonverbal cues, are capable of inferring something of the events from what was done (τὰ πραττόμενα). There are a range of abilities, both linguistic and visually interpretive in this crowd, a noteworthy mark of realism.

In the light of Winkler's suggestion that Heliodorus' attention to the language barrier in this book is implicated in his general strategy of accentuating the hermeneutic process, it is worth noting that the crowd here successfully interprets the data available to them, scanty as it may be.<sup>11</sup> Those who understood even a little (ὅσοι καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν συνέσαν) seem to reach the correct conclusion, or at least a conclusion correct enough to respond in the appropriate way. The divide in means of interpretation produces no divide in observable behavior or understanding, thanks in part to the crowd's willingness to help each other understand. The author might have reasonably noted that, given their limited understanding of the Greek in which the preceding discussions have unfolded, some misunderstood.<sup>12</sup> And yet he does no such thing. The crowd understands well enough to respond not only appropriately but in such a way as to bring Hydaspes to the truth. The king is unwilling to believe the conclusively stated proof and is only brought to do so by the crowd's reaction. Hydaspes' reluctance to believe complicates the notion of Ethiopia as an interpretive utopia.<sup>13</sup>

When Persinna and Hydaspes finally recognize Charikleia as their own daughter, their family reunion is marred both by Hydaspes' resolve to see to the human sacrifice required and by

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11 Winkler (1982) p.297 ff.

12 Morgan (1982) p. 260 suggests that Heliodorus' tendency towards naturalism gets him in trouble here. I discuss this further below.

13 See below, p. 177.

the crowd's ambiguous vocalization:

Οὐ μὴν εἰς τὸ παντελές γε ἐξεκρούσθη τῶν πρακτέων, ἀλλ' ὀλίγον ἐπιστάς τόν τε δῆμον κατοπτεύσας ἀπὸ τῶν ἴσων παθῶν κεινημένον καὶ πρὸς τὴν σκηνοποιίαν τῆς τύχης ὑφ' ἡδονῆς τε ἅμα καὶ ἐλέου δακρύνοντας ἤχην τέ τινα θεσπεσίαν ἄχρισ αἰθέρος αἴροντας καὶ οὔτε κηρύκων σιγὴν ἐπιταττόντων ἐπαίοντας οὔτε τὸ βούλημα τοῦ ταραχῶν προδήλως ἐκφαίνοντας, τὴν χεῖρα προτείνας καὶ κατασειῶν πρὸς ἡσυχίαν τὸ κλυδώνιον τοῦ δήμου κατέστειλε· (*Aethiopica* 10.16.3)

Nor was Hydaspes entirely put off of the things he had to do, but he stood there for a moment, and looked at his people who were as moved as he was by the emotions and in reaction to Fate's stage management were weeping with pleasure and pity. They raised a supernatural cry up to the heavens. They did not stop it even when the heralds ordered silence, nor did they make fully clear the intention of the disruption. Hydaspes raised his hand and made a motion with it and thereby quieted the crowd's flood of noise.

The crowd's reaction is ambivalent. At first, seems to feel that the crowd and he are finally emotionally synchronized. They have all been witness to a kind of tragic performance, and respond appropriately, with pity and pleasure.<sup>14</sup> Hydaspes, however, knows that the play is not over; there is still the tricky matter of the customary human sacrifice. The people's cry to the heavens, however, is precisely opposed to their previous vocalizations. Whereas their previous cry was ἄσημος but δηλωτική, so that Hydaspes could understand what the crowd wanted (ἐπιζητοῦσιν), the intentions of this cry are completely opaque (οὔτε τὸ βούλημα τοῦ ταραχῶν προδήλως ἐκφαίνοντας). It is tempting to ascribe this difficulty of interpretation to Hydaspes, who is otherwise plagued with difficulty making sense of the unfolding situation, but the narrator offers the readers no further clue as to why the crowd are crying out. Likewise, the crowd fails to listen to (or at least fails to obey) the heralds' for quiet, making their scream a double failure of communication. If the previous cry demonstrated how communication could transcend language, this cry proves that in their messy jumble emotions can frustrate communication.

In this context, the gesture Hydaspes uses to quiet the crowd is a remarkably simple and effective reassertion of not only his control over the situation, but also of signifying codes over

14 Interestingly “pleasure” (ἡδονή) takes over the place of “fear” from Aristotle's famous dictum at *Poetics* 1449b27 etc. that tragedies should produce in their audiences “pity and fear” (ἔλεος καὶ φόβος). No doubt this is because Charikleia's tragedy is the kind with a *Deus Ex Machina* happy ending.

the chaos of uninterpretable emotions. The metaphor Heliodorus uses is also remarkable. Not only is it “rather audacious” in its novelty, it casts Hydaspes as a semi-divine figure, with power to control nature.<sup>15</sup> Hydaspes reasserts the place of language and culture (here in the guise of nonverbal communication) over nature and unclear messages.<sup>16</sup>

Having regained control of the proceedings, Hydaspes launches into a long speech of carefully crafted rhetoric in which he professes to be devoted to his duty to his country, even if it means putting his daughter under the knife. His reassertion of the place of language is so successful that the people are made to respond in a single, unified, and clearly expressed voice:

Τὸ δὲ πλῆθος τῶν Αἰθιοπίων ἐσειόθη πρὸς τὰ εἰρημένα καὶ οὐδὲ πρὸς βραχὺ τῆς Χαρικλείας ἀγομένης ἀνασχόμενοι μέγα τι καὶ ἄθρόον ἐξέκραγον “Σῶζε τὴν κόρη” ἀναβοῶντες, “σῶζε τὸ βασιλείον αἷμα, σῶζε τὴν ὑπὸ θεῶν σωθεῖσαν· ἔχομεν τὴν χάριν· πεπλήρωται ἡμῖν τὸ νόμιμον. Ἐγνωρίσαμεν <σε> ὡς βασιλέα· γνώριζε καὶ σὺ σαυτὸν ὡς πατέρα. Ἰλήκοιεν οἱ θεοὶ τῆς δοκούσης παρανομίας. Πλέον παρανομήσομεν ἀνθιστάμενοι τοῖς ἐκείνων βουλήμασι· μηδεὶς ἀναιρείτω τὴν ὑπ’ ἐκείνων περισωθεῖσαν. Ὁ τοῦ δήμου πατήρ, γίνου καὶ κατ’ οἶκον πατήρ.” Καὶ μυρίας ἐπὶ τούτοις καὶ ὁμοίας φωνὰς ἰέντες τέλος καὶ ἔργω τὸ κωλύειν ἐπεδείκνυντο προιστάμενοί τε καὶ ἀνθιστάμενοι καὶ διὰ τῶν ἄλλων θυσιῶν ἰλάσκεσθαι τὸ θεῖον αἰτοῦντες. (*Aethiopica* 10.17.1-2)

The crowd of Ethiopians was shaken by what was said and would not allow Charikleia to be led a step closer. They cried out loudly and as a group, “Save the girl!” “Save the royal line” they shouted “Save the girl who has been saved by the gods! We have had our satisfaction, we consider the customs fulfilled. We recognize you as king, now you recognize yourself as father! May the gods be kind on this alleged breaking of the customs; we would break the customs even more if we opposed their will. No one should kill the girl whom they have saved. Father of your people, now be father in your own house!” They threw out thousands of similar such statements on top of these, finally even showing that they would prevent the deed by both guarding her and taking their stand against him, all the while begging him to seek divine favor through some other kind of sacrifice.

There is some tension in the description here, which simultaneously seems to suggest the uniformity of the crowd's voice, described here as ἄθρόον “as a crowd,” and the representation of this voice in the text by a lengthy series of independent statements. While it is easy enough to imagine the crowd as emotionally unified, it is preposterous to suppose that they literally all

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15 Rattenbury and Lumb (1960) v.3 p. 96 call the phrase “La métaphore plutôt audacieuse.” It is tempting to see in the metaphor an allusion to Moses' separation of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15-23) or Jesus' calming of the storm (Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-5, Matthew 8:23-27). Moses in particular accomplishes this by stretching his hand out over the sea. If we believe the story that Heliodorus had a Christian background, the images will of course take on special relevance, but even without, they function to assimilate Hydaspes with prophets with god-given powers.

16 On the relevance of language to the nature/culture dynamic see Gera (2003).

shout as one the 62-word quote that Heliodorus gives us in direct speech, let alone the myriad other things which are not directly reported, but are mentioned by the narrator. The crowd might chant “Save the girl!” or “Father of the people, now be father in your house,” but it stretches the bounds of believability if they shout in unison the full speech put into their mouths. Even if we were to take ἀθρόον to mean something closer to “one immediately after the other” or “in a crowd of shouts,” we must still notice that Heliodorus represents the shouts as coming from the crowd as a whole, not from scattered individuals. No doubt Heliodorus intends us to be astounded by the people's sudden reversal of opinions, the bloodthirsty mob begging him to spare his daughter's life, a change wrought by Hydaspes' effective rhetorical performance. The superhuman vocal unity of this mob presents an idealized vision of the effect of calculated rhetoric. In the face of this mob, Hydaspes happily concedes defeat, a decision which whips the crowd into a happy frenzy, but Hydaspes abandons further attempts to control them and as they continue shouting and cheering, he turns his attention to his daughter.

As events develop, the cries of the people continue to insert themselves into the unfolding action, at one point even (unintentionally) preventing Charikleia from finally revealing her relationship with Theagenes (the final unsolved piece of the puzzle).<sup>17</sup> When an escaped bull causes a commotion and Theagenes heroically brings the creature down, the crowd demonstrates a power beyond speech once again, a power which this time is described musically:

Ἀντήχει δὲ καὶ ἡ τοῦ δήμου βοή, τρανὸν μὲν οὐδὲν εἰς τὸν ἔπαινον διαρθροῦσα, κεχρηνῶσι δὲ ἐπὶ πολὺ τοῖς στόμασιν ἕξ ἀρτηρίας μόνης τὸ θαῦμα ἐξεφῶνει, χρόνιον τε καὶ ὁμότονον εἰς οὐρανὸν παραπέμπουσα.  
(*Aethiopica* 10.30.5)

The cry of the crowd answered the bull's bellowing, but not articulated clearly into praise, but rather they opened their mouths and sounded their amazement straight from their tracheae, holding a single note and sending it to the heavens.

This cry, which serves as a kind of answer to the unmusical, inarticulate lowing of the bull,

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<sup>17</sup> *Aethiopica* 10.30.1: Ταῦτα εἶπε, καὶ βουλομένη τὰ ὄντα ἀνακαλύπτειν αὐθις ἐξεκρούσθη βοῆς πολυηχεστάτης πρὸς τοῦ πλήθους ἀρθείσης.

demonstrates both the bestial side of non-language vocal performance, and the transcendent superhuman side, which rises to the heavens. We should note here, however, that although it lacks words, the cry is communicative, and successfully expresses the crowd's wonder (at least through the medium of the narrator's description.)

Still later, Theagenes' ability to take down the Nubian giant in the wrestling ring once again whips the crowd into a frenzy:

Μιᾶς δὴ οὖν βοῆς ἐπὶ τούτοις καὶ γεγωνοτέρας ἢ τὸ πρότερον ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους ἀρθείσης, οὐδὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκαρτέρησεν ἀλλ' ἀνήλατό τε τοῦ θρόνου καὶ “ὦ τῆς ἀνάγκης” ἔλεγεν· “οἶον ἄνδρα καταθύειν ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου πρόκειται.” (*Aethiopica* 10.32.3)

In response to Theagenes' victory, a single cry rose from the people, even louder than before and the king could no longer contain himself. He leaped from his throne and said “What a man necessity and custom have appointed us to sacrifice!”

Again the crowd cry out as a single body, unified by the thrill of watching Theagenes, perhaps a suggestion of the power of rooting for a hero to succeed—as, perhaps, the readers of a novel do—to form the bonds of community. Furthermore, once again we see Hydaspes as driven to action (or speech, at any rate) by the unified voice of his people. The relationship between king and people is particularly striking; Hydaspes acts not in unison with his people but after and because of them, at least when he agrees with their opinions. When he does not, he is able to rhetorically manipulate them into taking a new perspective and then appears to follow them. The resulting government appears something less like a monarchy than like a democracy run by a benevolent demagogue.

The arrival of Charikles further stirs up the crowd, and again it makes little difference whether the members of the crowd actually know the Greek that Charikles and Hydaspes speak to each other:

Ἐσεισθησαν πρὸς τὰ γινόμενα σύμπαντες, τὰ μὲν ῥήματα οἱ συνιέντες τὰ ὀρώμενα δὲ οἱ λοιποὶ θαυμάζοντες. (*Aethiopica* 10.35.2)

Everyone was shaken by the events, those who understood what was said were amazed by that, while everyone else was amazed at what they saw.

At first glance it appears that words are somehow superfluous and the moment truly stretches credulity. **Everyone** (σύμπαντες) is shaken and **everyone** is amazed (θαυμάζοντες). The parallelism of the subjects of the μὲν and δὲ clauses underscores the ways in which the parts of the crowd share the same emotional reaction even as they possess quite different sets of information. As at 10.15.1, discussed above, the words and observation of actions are introduced as the two bodies of evidence which are available to the crowd, but unlike the previous passage, Heliodorus gives no hint that those in the crowd with the ability to understand Greek are helping their neighbors arrive at the understanding.

These different sets of information however, produce amazement for different reasons. For those without access to Greek, Charikles simply appears, prostrates himself before Hydaspes and and kisses his feet, hits himself, runs to the altar, and lassoes Theagenes with his cloak.<sup>18</sup> His actions seem to be those of a madman and the crowd would no doubt be amazed (as well as confused) at this sudden intrusion into the proceedings. To those who are not stranded by the language barrier, on the other hand, Charikles' actions are reasonable, and he is clearly not mad. Their amazement, however, stems from Tyche's stage management, the sudden appearance of a man who seems to know Theagenes and accuses him of kidnapping. It is indeed remarkable that in this scene members of the crowd reach the same emotional conclusion despite different information and observation. It is tempting to read the crowd as standing for the novel's readership and thereby to see the statement as a claim to the ability of literature to provoke similar reactions in different kinds of readers by different means, a view that would have particular relevance for those who see in Heliodorus' work an extended allegory.<sup>19</sup>

The final moment of significant involvement on the part of the Ethiopian crowd before

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18 Aethiopica 10.34.5-10.35.1.

19 On allegory in Heliodorus' novel, see Most (2007).

the key figures return to speaking Ethiopian occurs when Charikleia runs forward and falls at Charikles' feet and apologizes to her foster father. While Persinna shares Charikleia's confession with Hydaspes, the narrator informs us of the crowd's reaction:

Ὁ δῆμος ἐτέρωθεν σὺν εὐφήμοις ταῖς βοαῖς ἐξεχώρευε, πᾶσα ἡλικία καὶ τύχη συμφώνως τὰ γινόμενα θυμηδούντες, τὰ μὲν πλείστα τῶν λεγομένων οὐ συνιέντες, τὰ ὄντα δὲ ἐκ τῶν προγεγονότων ἐπὶ τῇ Χαρικλείᾳ συμβάλλοντες, ἢ τάχα καὶ ἐξ ὀρμῆς θείας ἢ σύμπαντα ταῦτα ἐσκηνογράφησεν εἰς ὑπόνοιαν τῶν ἀληθῶν ἐλθόντες. (*Aethiopica* 10.38.2)

The people, on the other hand, broke into dance and auspicious cries, with every age and lot in life harmoniously rejoicing at what had happened. Most of them didn't understand what was said, but were able to infer the truth from what had already happened to Charikleia, or perhaps they came into suspicion of the truth with the help of the divine force which staged all these events as a show.

It is here that Heliodorus asks the most suspension of disbelief from his readers. That the crowd reacts with amazement at Charikles' appearance is reasonable, but their being able to decipher the mime unfolding before them without reference to language forces even Heliodorus to countenance a divine explanation (which is to say, the god of the text, the author himself).<sup>20</sup> He might have again relied on the device used at 10.15.1 (see above) and had those with some Greek ability explain to their neighbors. Given that we readers already know that some in the audience speak Greek, and he has already made use of this device, it would stretch credulity far less to employ it again. Instead, the impression that remains suggests that Heliodorus wanted this final moment of understanding, the final step of solution of the mysteries of book ten, not to be a matter of prosaic linguistic translation but of transcendent, inspired interpretation.

### ***The Uses of Languages***

One of the most unusual features of this final book is that although the setting is maximally geographically distant from Greece, the Greek language plays a surprisingly large role in the unfolding of the events. This seems to be an unusual state of affairs for the Ethiopian state, but one well within their capabilities. We remember that both the rulers of the country and the gymnosophists study Greek, though the reason for this is never explicitly stated in the text.<sup>21</sup>

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20 On the final scene heavy with elements of pantomime, see Elmer (2008b).

21 The fact that they do so, however, is made emphatically clear at 9.25.3.

Realism may be one explanation, as I argued in my introduction. Likewise, the cultural status of the Greek language as a marker of cosmopolitan sophistication may be at play as well. The text specifically provides two instances in which members of the Greek-speaking class of Ethiopians utilize their special skills. The first is Sisimithres' conversations with Charikles in which he entrusts Charikleia to the Greek priest.<sup>22</sup> The second are the events of book 10.

The events begin, as we would expect, in Ethiopian which is surely what Hydaspes speaks when he makes a short speech to the crowds before the sacrifice.<sup>23</sup> The change from Ethiopian to Greek is effected by Sisimithres, in response to comments from Hydaspes.

Charikleia's brazen moment of glory on the gridiron causes its powerful reaction in the crowd as well as for Persinna, but Hydaspes is focused on the business at hand:

Καὶ ἀποστρέψας τὸν λόγον πρὸς τοὺς Γυμνοσοφιστάς, “Ἄλλ’ ὦ σοφώτατοι” ἔφη “πάντων ἠὲ τρεπισμένων τί οὐχὶ κατάρχετε τῶν ἱερῶν;” Καὶ ὁ Σισιμίθρης “Εὐφήμησον” ἀπεκρίνατο, ἐλληνίζων ὥστε μὴ τὸ πλῆθος ἐπαίειν, “ικανῶς γὰρ καὶ μέχρι τούτων ὄψιν τε καὶ ἀκοὴν ἐχράνθημεν. Ἄλλ’ ἡμεῖς μὲν εἰς τὸν νεῶν μεταστησόμεθα θυσίαν οὕτως ἔκθεσμον τὴν δι’ ἀνθρώπων οὔτε αὐτοὶ δοκιμάζοντες οὔτε προσίεσθαι τὸ θεῖον νομίζοντες (ὡς εἶθε γε ἦν καὶ τὰς διὰ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων θυσίας κεκωλύσθαι) μόναις ταῖς δι’ εὐχῶν καὶ ἀρωμάτων καθ’ ἡμέτερον νόον ἀρκουμένους. Σὺ δὲ ἐπιμένων (ἐπάναγκες γὰρ βασιλεῖ καὶ ἄκριτον ἔστιν ὅτε πλήθους ὀρμὴν θεραπεύειν) ἐπιτέλει τὴν οὐκ εὐαγῆ μὲν ταύτην θυσίαν διὰ δὲ τὸ προκατειληφὸς τοῦ Αἰθιοπικοῦ νόμου πάτριον ἀπαραίτητον, καθαρσίων εἰσαῦθις δεησόμενος, ἴσως δὲ καὶ οὐ δεησόμενος· οὐ γὰρ μοι δοκεῖ πρὸς τέλος ἤξειν ἢ δεῖ ἢ θυσία τοῖς τε ἄλλοις ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ συμβόλοις τεκμαίρομένῳ καὶ τῷ περιλάμποντι φωτὶ τοὺς ξένους, ὑπερμαχεῖν τινα τῶν κρειττόνων διασημαίνοντι.” Καὶ ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἅμα καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις συνέδροις ἀνίστατο καὶ πρὸς τὴν μετάστασιν ἐρρυθμίζετο. Ἄλλ’ ἦ γε Χαρίκλεια καθήλατό τε τῆς ἐσχάρας καὶ προσδραμοῦσα προσπίπτει τοῖς γόνασι τοῦ Σισιμίθρου, τῶν ὑπηρετῶν παντοίως ἐπεχόντων καὶ τὴν ἱκεσίαν παραίτησιν εἶναι τοῦ θανάτου νομιζόντων, καὶ “ὦ σοφώτατοι” ἔλεγε “μικρὸν ἐπιμείνατε” (*Aethiopica* 10.9.6-10.10.1)

[Hydaspes] turned to address the gymnosophists and said “Why aren't you very wise men starting the sacrifices? Everything is prepared!” Sisimithres answered “Keep quiet,” speaking Greek so that the crowd couldn't understand, “we have been polluted enough so far by what we have seen and heard. Now we shall retreat into the temple, since we cannot sanction so unholy sacrifice as that of humans ourselves nor do we think that the divine accepts it. If only it were possible to prevent animal sacrifice too; we prefer only that prayers and incense be offered. But you stay here (for a king must reserve judgment when he is tending to his people's impulses), and carry out that sacrifice which is inappropriate but cannot be avoided due to the ancestral precedence of Ethiopian law. You will be needing purification later, or maybe you won't, for it seems to me that this sacrifice will not reach completion, judging based on other signs from the divine. And the light illuminating these foreigners signals that they have a divine patron.” Having spoken thus, he stood up along with all the other members of the council and prepared for their departure but Charikleia jumped down from the gridiron, ran up to Sisimithres and fell at his knees, though the servants, supposing she was supplicating him to prevent her death, tried their best to

<sup>22</sup> *Aethiopica* 2.30.1 ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Aethiopica* 10.6.4: Μικρὰ δὲ δὴ προδιαλεχθεὶς πρὸς τὸν δῆμον ὁ Ὑδάσπης καὶ τὴν τε νίκην καὶ τὰ ὑπὲρ τοῦ κοινοῦ κατορθωθέντα καταγγείλας.

prevent her. She said “Wise men, please wait a moment!”

Sisimithres' switch to Greek is marked as an explicit strategy with a specific purpose. The gymnosophists, already irked by the nature of the sacrifice to be performed, and now provoked by the impatient king, decide to register their disdain and to leave. Sisimithres delivers this message in a language mutually understood by the parties in power, but mostly not understood by the crowd at large, a decision which seems to be rooted in a desire to avoid publicly disagreeing with the king or embarrassing him. The technique is one familiar to everyone who finds himself in a situation in which those around him are ignorant of a language he and his friends or allies know. It is, in fact, the strategy employed by Mitranes upon his rescue of Charikleia.<sup>24</sup> This shift provides one possible explanation for why the ruling class of Ethiopia should bother knowing Greek: possessing this language provides them with the opportunity to converse privately in public and thus better to govern their subjects.

Moreover, if this switch to Greek highlights the possibility of communication designed to be less than transparent, we should also notice the appearance of a number of interpretive processes within the same passage. Sisimithres presents his suppositions on what the divine does and does not like to receive as sacrifices. He makes predictions (τεκμαιρομένω) based on unspecified signs from the divine (ἄλλοις ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ συμβόλοις) and on a divine aura or halo he sees around Charikleia and Theagenes which he takes as a sign (φωτὶ... διασημαίνοντι). Even the servants who try to stop Charikleia do so based on their attempts to infer her intent through her actions (ἰκεσίαν παραίτησιν εἶναι τοῦ θανάτου νομιζόντων). The switch to Greek demands that the non-Greek-speaking Ethiopian audience begin to engage their own interpretive processes, discussed at greater length above, and also makes Sisimithres an unwitting ally to the

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24 See chapter two.

Greek girl.<sup>25</sup> The predictions themselves, moreover, gives us a way of understanding the relationship between the divine principles at work and the events about to unfold. This connection between language alternation and other kinds of signification figure importantly into the argument of Winkler, to which I responded more fully in my introduction.

Finally, Sisimithres' switch to Greek launches Charikleia into sudden action, prompting her to descend from the gridiron which should spell her doom and rush to the knees of Sisimithres who will prove her advocate and savior.<sup>26</sup> The content of Sisimithres' speech, namely his opposition to human sacrifice, surely makes him a potentially powerful ally to Charikleia but it is the language that he speaks which pushes Charikleia to act. Her speech to him, which begins by asking him to wait is presented without reference to its language and must clearly be Greek. Again Mitranes' rescue of Charikleia proves to be an interesting antecedent. Just as before Charikleia entrusts herself and her fate to the man whom she hears speaking her language. Sisimithres' switch to Greek becomes its own kind of interpretable symbol, an unintentional sign of his ability to understand and potentially translate, and perhaps even more importantly, a sign that he may be a trustworthy ally.<sup>27</sup>

As the trial takes shape and unfolds, the narrator forgoes for some time further comment on the language in which Sisimithres, Hydaspes and Charikleia talk. We surely are meant to understand that they continue to speak in Greek, the only mutual language. When Hydaspes calls

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25 His desire to avoid blood sacrifice in general, a characteristic shared by the vegetarian Kalasiris, also puts him on the side of the most enlightened Greek philosophical thinking.

26 And indeed, father figure. In scholarship about Charikleia's father figures in the novel, attention is usually drawn to the three who correspond to the three nations of the novel's plot: the Ethiopian Hydaspes, the Greek Charikles, and the Egyptian Kalasiris. Sisimithres not only is the man to rescue Charikleia from abandonment, pick her up (an important act in the life of a child of suspicious heritage), he raises Charikleia himself for the first 7 years of her life, and also helps her in her quest to win back her birth father through his advocacy in this book. In many ways, the priestly Sisimithres has more in common with the priests Charikles and Kalasiris than does Hydaspes.

27 On the link between language, race, and culture in the novel, see Perkins (1999). Here, with Sisimithres in what is clearly a religious sphere of action, his bilingualism marks him not as an untrustworthy bilingual (as he appeared to Charikles upon their first meeting) but as a trustworthy bilingual interpreter of both terrestrial languages and divine will.

Sisimithres by name, at any rate, Charikleia understands and is able to reconcile that name with the name of the man who had raised her and provided her to Charikles.<sup>28</sup> Even when the band which contains Persinna's confession written in Ethiopian is introduced into evidence, there is no further indication of any alternation in the language. The entire scene in which Charikleia's identity is being proved takes place in Greek, as further evidenced by the crowd's reliance on nonverbal cues.

Finally, after recognizing Charikleia as his daughter, Hydaspes addresses his people in a lengthy and carefully rhetorically crafted speech. The language in which the speech is delivered is not explicitly commented on but cannot be Greek. He confirms that he is Charikleia's father and swears to obey the law even at the expense of his own pain, suggesting that it will be painful for him to lose his daughter and painful for his wife, but that they should continue with the sacrifice as planned.<sup>29</sup> He turns to Charikleia and tells her to go to her death with the nobility of a princess before finally lamenting his fate to the gods.<sup>30</sup> As he somberly makes a show of leading Charikleia towards the altar, the narrator tells us that “a smoldering fire burned his heart and he prayed for the success of his speech, which was a kind of rhetorical ambush.”<sup>31</sup> Hydaspes' speech, constructed so as to fail at its ostensible purpose and to force the people to demand that he spare Charikleia, must be in Ethiopian. It even seems to be the case that the portion addressed to Charikleia is in Ethiopian and therefore incomprehensible to her, simultaneously sparing her the pain of the ruse while ensuring the understanding of the Ethiopian public. While it is both clear and sensible that Hydaspes switches to Ethiopian for the speech, the lack of comment in the text itself, while not terribly problematic, does suggest that Heliodorus has other intentions than

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28 *Aethiopica* 10.11.1-2.

29 *Aethiopica* 10.16.4-8.

30 *Aethiopica* 10.16.9-10.

31 *Aethiopica* 10.17.1: πλείονι δὲ αὐτὸς πυρὶ τῷ πάθει τὴν καρδίαν συμχόμενος καὶ τὴν ἐπιτυχίαν τῶν ἐνηδρευμένων τῇ δημηγορίᾳ λόγων ἀπευχόμενος.

merely to provide a careful transcript noting every linguistic alteration.

This lack of explicit comment on the language barrier continues for some time. At 10.18.1 Hydaspes addresses Charikleia directly in what must be Greek, because Charikleia answers him in the following section. When Hydaspes receives his nephew Meroebos and promises him Charikleia's hand at 10.24.1-2, he evidently does so in Ethiopian, because he is perplexed at 10.33.2 when he suspects that Theagenes knows of the engagement. At 10.31.1, when Hydaspes first addresses Theagenes directly, the narrator makes it explicit that he does so “in Greek” (ἑλληνίζων). Speech in Ethiopian is generally unmarked (except in the novel's final chapters) while the first time a conversation breaks out in Greek between two characters it is noted and thereafter assumed to apply to their interactions. This has the result of keeping linguistic realism at a maximum without cluttering the text with constant reference to the language being spoken.

The end of the book and the conclusion of the novel is conspicuously marked by the return to Ethiopian. Sisimithres' final speech in which he not only sums up the windfall and ushers the events to their conclusion but also eliminates the practice of human sacrifice is delivered “not in Greek, but in Ethiopian so that everyone might hear” (οὐχ ἑλληνίζων ἀλλ' ὥστε καὶ πάντας ἐπαίειν αἰθιοπίζων, *Aethiopica* 10.39.1). Hydaspes too switches to his native tongue for his final speech.<sup>32</sup> Sisimithres' decision to speak Ethiopian for the purpose of being generally understood is a clear undoing of his earlier switch into Greek and helps mark the end of Charikleia's and Theagenes' salvation.<sup>33</sup> For all intents and purposes, the Greeks are now off the stage, as is their language. Charikleia and Theagenes are now Ethiopians and there is a

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32 *Aethiopica* 10.40.1: τὴν ἐγγώριον γλώτταν καὶ αὐτὸς νῦν ἰεῖς.

33 Charikleia, Theagenes, and Charikles, not yet being speakers of Ethiopian, are unable to understand Hydaspes' and Sisimithres' announcement of these moral and legal changes, something which we can assume will be remedied in the time after the novel's end.

suggestion in this doubly-marked emphatic switch back to Ethiopian that the Ethiopian language also figures in their futures in an important way. Charikles recalls the prophecy of Apollo at Delphi that the couple will receive a “crown of white on brows of black” (Λευκὸν ἐπὶ κροτάφων στέμμα μελαινομένων). Surely at least one way in which Charikleia and Theagenes “turn black” (μελαίνω) is their adoption of Ethiopian language and culture.<sup>34</sup> This change is subtle and only in its beginning stages when we leave the characters on the novels final pages. Although I find the idea attractive, I cannot find support in the text for a notion that the heroes miraculously gain skill with Ethiopian. It may not be a coincidence, however, that we leave these Greek characters right as they begin the process of becoming foreigners.

The alternation of languages in the novel's final book, then, acts on several levels. Sisimithres switches to Greek for reasons of political expediency, thereby providing one explanation for the prominence of Greek within Ethiopia's upper political/religious classes. Heliodorus is able to motivate Charikleia's choice of the moment to intervene in the proceedings based on this switch, suggesting not only a solution to the practical problem of making herself understood, but also an ideology whereby she conflates Greek-speakers with allies. Hydaspes' marked and unmarked alternations of spoken language prove him to be a sensitive handler of the proceedings, able to tailor particular kinds of speech to particular people. This alternation implicitly too makes a multivalent case for the power and value in maintaining this institutional bilingualism in Ethiopia, while suggesting that the system will not change under Theagenes and

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34 In line with Morgan (1989) p. 318 who assumes that the darkness is a metaphor. For Bartsch (1989), p. 102 n.9 the blackening temples are those of Charikleia's parents. Whitmarsh (2011) p. 204 underscores the way in which the lack of resolution of the prophecy is a “residue of indetermination, a sign that literary meaning is not fully determined even in closure.” It is remarkable that Heliodorus brings up the prophecy and then abstains from resolving its final sentiment. Whitmarsh must be right that Heliodorus intends us to notice that the story is, in fact, not completely over. Our time with the characters is done but they live on. We should note too that if the blackening temples are meant metaphorically, this is the only metaphorical part of the oracle; a magical transformation whereby they become black Ethiopians is certainly imaginable, even if Heliodorus had no means to incorporate this explicitly in his text without completely sacrificing realism. I am by no means convinced that such is what we are meant to imagine, but neither am I completely convinced by any other explanation.

Charikleia; they too must continue Ethiopia's diglossic tradition.

### ***The Land of Universal Translatability***

Niall Slater has suggested that Ethiopia represents Heliodorus' ideal, a land where problems of terrestrial languages are set aside and people can understand each other across language barriers.<sup>35</sup> While I agree with Slater that the crowd's remarkable feats of understanding are in need of explanation, Heliodorus' representation of Ethiopia is far from an interpretive utopia.<sup>36</sup> Persinna, Hydaspes, and Charikleia, three of the four main actors in the novel's final book are plagued by problems of interpretation. Only the pious Sisimithres is able to perform successful interpretation throughout the book.

Near the beginning of the final book, Persinna demonstrates that her ability to interpret dreams is no better than Theagenes' or Thyamis'.<sup>37</sup> When two messengers arrive with a letter announcing Hydaspes' imminent arrival, Persinna shares her dream with the messengers and (mis-) interprets it for them:

Τούτων κομισθέντων τῶν γραμμάτων, ἡ μὲν Περσίinna “Τοῦτ’ ἦν ἄρα” ἔφη “τὸ ἐνύπνιον ὃ κατὰ τὴν νύκτα ταύτην ἐθεώμην, κύειν τε οἰομένη καὶ τίκτειν ἅμα καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν εἶναι θυγατέρα γάμου παραχρῆμα ὠραίαν, διὰ μὲν τῶν ὠδίνων, ὡς ἔοικε, τὰς κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἀγωνίας διὰ δὲ τῆς θυγατρὸς τὴν νίκην αἰνιττομένου τοῦ ὀνείρατος...” (*Aethiopica* 10.3.1)

When they brought the letters to her, Persinna said “I see: that's what the dream I had last night was about! I seemed to be pregnant and instantly gave birth and the baby was a daughter who was immediately ready for marriage. Through the labor pains the dream riddlingly signified the agonies of the war, and through my daughter, our victory...

The meaning of the riddle is immediately obvious to the reader: Charikleia will appear to her, fully grown and marriageable. That Persinna does not reach this conclusion proves merely that she is as fallible as the other characters in the novel; she believes her daughter to be nearly two decades dead, and has no reason to suspect that she is not only actually alive and well, but is in

<sup>35</sup> Slater (2005), See also introduction, p.17.

<sup>36</sup> On Ethiopia as a Utopia, or possessing utopian elements, see Futre Pinheiro (1989), Berry (2000), and Alvares (2003).

<sup>37</sup> Both of whom have dreams which they interpret in conspicuously wrong ways, Thyamis's dream is at 1.18.3-5 and then reinterpreted at 1.30.4. Theagenes misinterprets his dream at 8.1.3-4 and is immediately reprimanded by the more sensible Charikleia.

fact being led into her kingdom. Heliodorus' inclusion of the dream and its interpretation functions on a few levels, however. First, like much of the action of book ten, it signals to the reader that the end is in fact near and thereby heightens the reader's excitement and expectations. Secondly, it demonstrates that Charikleia's appearance will be a surprise to her mother, for whom the dream reference to a daughter does not immediately conjure up reminiscences of her abandoned daughter. Thirdly, it establishes Persinna as a fallible interpreter of the divine, a stark contrast to the gymnosophists whose appearance shortly thereafter draws attention to their ability to accurately interpret divine will.<sup>38</sup> The line between successful interpreters and failed interpreters does not correspond to Ethiopian geography, but rather to the special relationship with the divine to which only the gymnosophists and Kalasiris have access. Even though Persinna is also the priestess of Selene, she does not have the gift of interpretation.

Nor is Hydaspes any more successful an interpreter, though his interpretative tasks focus on the human realm rather than the divine. As Charikleia attempts to prove her identity and thus her relationship with Hydaspes, he remains cautiously distant and demands absolute proof before finally recognizing her as his daughter. But this reluctance is actually quite reasonable; Charikleia's claims are exceptional and Hydaspes refuses to be duped, especially on matters of his own lineage.<sup>39</sup> More strikingly, however, Hydaspes proves himself to be a dismal solver of Charikleia's riddling words regarding Theagenes.

After Hydaspes accepts Charikleia as his daughter, he cleverly asserts that she must have lied about Theagenes being her brother and demands to know the truth.<sup>40</sup> Charikleia's answers

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38 See Chapter four.

39 Even Sisimithres confirms the necessity of absolute proof by turning the court's attention to Charikleia's birthmark at 10.15.2, even after the painting of Andromeda had proved the case's most difficult claim, the circumstances of Charikleia's strange conception. Hunter (1998) points out how Hydaspes is nevertheless convinced of things beyond what is absolutely proven.

40 *Aethiopica* 10.18.1-2.

constantly deflect the question. First she blushes and lowers her eyes as she tells him that she lied, signals which at first seem to indicate her shame at having been dishonest, but quickly become part of a pattern; Charikleia's modesty endangers Theagenes' life.<sup>41</sup> When Hydaspes dismisses her and decides to continue with the sacrifice, Charikleia sets out to obviate the need for her to be explicit about her relationship with Theagenes by “slithering stealthily towards her mark” (ὑφεῖρπε τὸν σκοπὸν).<sup>42</sup> Her plan is to hint at her relationship in hopes that her father will pick up on it, beginning by claiming that killing him would kill her too. When this line fails, she begs to be the one to kill him. When he refuses by asserting that she must be married, she claims she is essentially married. The clues themselves are fairly subtle, but they build in a way that makes the reader assume Hydaspes will solve the riddle at any moment, especially given the reader's knowledge of the puzzle's solution.<sup>43</sup> Hydaspes, however, grows increasingly perplexed and frustrated by the piling up of paradoxes.<sup>44</sup> Finally, he finds a solution to the puzzle of the evidence he sees, if one that is ultimately incorrect; he decides that she must be mentally ill (παράφρων), at least temporarily insane.<sup>45</sup>

Charikleia's riddling speech should be addressed here too. For Charikleia, the events of the final book are not so much a puzzle that she must decipher, but rather a message that she must figure out how to deliver in coded signs. She aims to bring both her parents to recognition of her status and to save Theagenes from sacrifice. The first of these is relatively easy, even if it proves somewhat more complicated than the wealth of evidence available to her might suggest.

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41 *Aethiopica* 10.18.2: Καὶ ἡ Χαρίκλεια σὺν ἐρυθήματι κατανεύσασα “Τὸν μὲν ἀδελφὸν ἐψευσάμην” ἔφη “τῆς χρείας τὸ πλάσμα συνθείσης...”

42 *Aethiopica* 10.19.1.

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44 When Charikleia asks to be the one to hold the knife, Hydaspes is described as διαταραχθεὶς (thoroughly confused, 10.21.1), and when Charikleia is finally driven to speak out the truth, Hydaspes' frustration boils over and he interrupts her. (10.22.1)

45 *Aethiopica* 10.22.1.

As Charikleia remarks to Theagenes, neither her story nor her recognition tokens will prove sufficient without Persinna's maternal recognition.<sup>46</sup> Saving Theagenes, however, proves unexpectedly difficult.

Essentially all Charikleia need do is announce her relationship, but this public declaration of her erotic status conflicts with her devotion to modesty and chastity. Charikleia raises the problem first in response to Thyamis' proposal, prefacing what turns out to be a sizeable speech, with a modest apology for that speech: "I think that among men silence is proper for a woman and answers are proper for a man." (πρέπειν γὰρ οἴμαι γυναικὶ μὲν σιγὴν ἀνδρὶ δὲ ἀπόκρισιν ἐν ἀνδράσιν· *Aethiopica* 1.21.3). Were it not for this subsequent bout of modesty, we might suspect that Charikleia was merely playing the blushing bride to help her cause with the bandits, but the situation in the novel's final book is much the same. Again Charikleia is surrounded by a large crowd of men, the only exceptions being herself and her mother. Again she must speak out concerning her desire to marry. In fact, although Charikleia remains emphatically monolingual throughout the course of the novel, her fundamental problem for much of the tenth book can be thought of as learning to speak as a woman, learning how to express her sexuality as befits a lady of her station. Throughout almost the entire novel (and indeed, her entire life) Charikleia has been chaperoned by men, most often father figures. She was raised without a mother and although she was a member of the priesthood of Artemis, the text provides no hint at any female friends or acquaintances. Rather she is established as being close to her adoptive father and to the λόγοι who surround her at Delphi.<sup>47</sup> In contrast, the other female characters express their sexuality among their female acquaintances (usually slaves). One thinks of Arsake and Kybele, Demainete and Thisbe, even Persinna and the slave who was to be her companion in τὰ

<sup>46</sup> *Aethiopica* 9.24.3-8. In fact the unexpected and crucial piece of evidence is the testimony of Sisimithres who knows both of her birthmark, and how she arrived in the care of Charikles.

<sup>47</sup> *Aethiopica* 2.33.7.

Ἑλλήνων.<sup>48</sup> Charikleia has no such female bond and therefore never learns that such relationships allow for the expression of otherwise inappropriately expressed desires. Denied the opportunity for the safe expression of her sexuality within the bounds of female homosocial bonds, Charikleia is trapped by the situation she is put in at the novel's end until finally she is removed from the gaze of the crowd and her father inside the pavilion alone with her mother.<sup>49</sup> It is behind the curtains of this pavilion that Charikleia learns from her mother how to speak like and to a woman, finally confesses the truth to her mother who is then able to relay the truth to her husband.<sup>50</sup> At least part of the problems of the final book can be attributed to Charikleia's inability to solve the riddle of how a woman is to speak about sensitive topics, with whom and in what circumstances.

Hydaspes, then, is not the ideal interpreter of texts. He is slow on the uptake and at almost every turn his moments of understanding and action are prompted by the reactions of the people at large. Combined with Persinna's inability to interpret her own dream and Charikleia's inability to signal her situation effectively, it becomes clear that for Heliodorus, Ethiopia is not a land of universal understanding and translatability. What understanding there is lies first and foremost with the college of gymnosophists who are quick to understand every occurrence, in part because of their specialized knowledge of the future obtained via their connection with the divine and in part because of Sisimithres' particular knowledge of Charikleia's story. The bloodthirsty and common rabble are at least as quick at understanding as Hydaspes and Persinna, despite their near lack of linguistic knowledge and their being somewhat removed from the family drama that

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48 Namely Thisbe at first, and upon her loss, Charikleia.

49 Hydaspes sends the women into their tent at 10.22.5. It should be noted that the reader is also barred from this conversation, an intriguing hint that Heliodorus conflates his readers with the men of the scene, an interesting if small piece of evidence toward the controversial topic of the gender(s) of the novel's readership.

50 *Aethiopica* 10.38.2: Ἡ Περσίννα καθ' ἕτερον μέρος τὸν Ὑδάσπην ἐνηγκαλίζετο, καὶ “Πάντα οὕτως ἔχειν, ἄνερ, πίστευε” πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔλεγε “καὶ νυμφίον εἶναι τοῦ θυγατρίου τὸν Ἕλληνα τουτονὶ εανίαν ἀληθῶς γίνωσκε, ἄρτι μοι ταῦτα ἐκείνης καὶ μόλις ἐξαγορευσάσης.”

unfolds. Facility with the Greek language then has no obvious bearing on the ability to perform interpretative tasks nor does being Ethiopian *per se*. It is connection with the divine, not Ethiopian status that makes the difference.

The crowd's remarkable understanding can be perhaps explained with reference to their special status as reader figures.<sup>51</sup> Just as the gymnosophists are aligned with the authorial divine through their knowledge of the resolution of the plot, the reader too knows how the story should end. The reader, able to remember that he is reading a work of fiction, knows that Charikleia and Theagenes must win out, no matter how coy the author plays. The crowd of course does not literally have this same knowledge but the miraculous understanding granted to them by divine providence both turns them into reader figures and allows those readers to figure in the text the expected extra-textual reaction of the reader, jubilant to find his (or her) protagonists getting their happy ending at last. Even if Ethiopia cannot conform to Slater's vision of utopian interpretability, the novel's final moments seem to promise that kind of vision for authors and readers, a bold suggestion of the power of communication between an author and his readers.

### **Conclusion**

Heliodorus' final book is a powerful display of his desire to force the reader to wrestle with the narrative's loose ends.<sup>52</sup> He reminds us of the oracle given about Charikleia and Theagenes at Delphi, but fails to explain the final line. He gives us no indication of what will become of Charikles, who travels to the ends of the earth to find his daughter, only to have her lost to marriage. Nor is it clear what becomes of Theagenes, who is not an Ethiopian but who is now marrying the future queen of Ethiopia. Will he assimilate into this foreign culture? Will he

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51 This is in line with Morgan's (1991) p. 92 suggestion that the crowd's reaction is meant "to validate the reader's responses." I would however, quibble with Morgan's overhasty dismissal of the in-text rationale for the switch to Greek. Nimis (1999) p. 234, in contrast, sees "a hint of authorial surrender" and suggests this "flies in the face of what the novel has led us to believe about human understanding."

52 Again, Nimis (1999) on open-endedness and Whitmarsh (2011) on endings are crucial.

learn Ethiopian? What about Charikleia, who despite her breeding is still very much the Greek girl we first met on the beach in book one? Heliodorus provides no easy answers.

The Ethiopian crowd, standing in for the reader, proves itself capable of both dramatic leaps of understanding and interpretation, in part through the help of the divine. They also provide a window on the limits and transcendence of language. Especially when confronted with emotionally charged, miraculous situations, the crowd's ability to produce articulate speech disappears and they simply open up their mouths and let the emotion pour forth in an unarticulated, paralinguistic noise which acts much the same as the body language we examined last chapter, often interpretable across language barriers, but occasionally confusing because unspecific.

The alternation between the Greek and Ethiopian tongues demonstrates Heliodorus' attention to the possibilities of language. Sisimithres makes use of the institutional diglossia of the Ethiopian court to attempt to control his audience, though of course, the crowd's ability to understand Greek and nonverbal cues renders this irrelevant. The linguistic switch, however, proves its worth as Charikleia quite sensibly waits until there appears on the scene some sign that she will be understood when she speaks. Hydaspes likewise alternates his speech in accordance with his intentions, somewhat more successfully, allowing his Ethiopian rhetoric to shift the crowd's will even as he speaks Greek to Charikleia.

The vision of Ethiopia with which Heliodorus ends his novel is not one in which one language (Greek) is seen as an inherently superior tool, certain to surpass and eliminate its rivals. Nor is it, I think, a multicultural celebration of linguistic pluralism. It is merely a facet of the world in which both the author and his characters live. Characters smartly deploy their linguistic abilities in their attempts to effect their desired outcomes. Heliodorus likewise deploys these

abilities in the service of his ends, a complex and interesting novel, full of tension, miracles and realism, rife with puzzles both solved and unsolved.

## Conclusion:

Although his novel seems to suggest that Heliodorus had a number of goals in mind for the inclusion of language in his novel, these are both elusive and at times contradictory. There can be little doubt that Heliodorus aims at verisimilitude in the ways that Morgan has outlined, even if the novelist is not entirely consistent. The first chapter of this dissertation showed that in Heliodorus' novel, characters are rarely given linguistic abilities which are not accounted for either explicitly through the voices of the narrator or the characters or implicitly through reliance on the reader's familiarity with who in the ancient world was likely to know which language and why. As Morgan points out, given that an author has godlike powers to make even impossible things so, his choice to ground the linguistic abilities of his characters in their particular experiences and in familiar patterns from the real world must be recognized as the result of a conscious choice. Likewise, Heliodorus' insistence that characters must possess a common language to have unproblematic communication is not only a dramatic departure from nearly all his literary predecessors, but also and therefore, an emphatic statement that his novel plays with different rules than the rest of literature. There are moments when the linguistic realism so carefully crafted throughout the rest of Heliodorus' novel falls away and we are presented with something which stretches credulity—the crowd's comprehension of the events in Ethiopia, for one. We should not see these as lapses in the author's skill or unfortunate byproducts of conflicting agendas. Instead, I believe that we are meant to understand them as miracles of the sort that might happen, but are incredibly rare. Just as black parents might produce a white child (given Heliodorus' optical theory) and just as a father might return from his self-imposed exile at precisely the right moment to prevent his sons from slaughtering each other, unbelievable leaps of understanding and communication can, very rarely, happen. Rather than miracles being seen

as failures of naturalism, we should consider the naturalistic novel to stand as proof for the miraculous. The attribution of such moments to fate, chance or the divine is both its own kind of explanation—a benevolent power brought to pass things that would be unlikely to happen on their own—and a sly wink to the power of the author in a genre which takes as its form a series of improbable events.

Language is also implicated in Heliodorus' general tendency to draw attention to interpretive processes. This is especially true with body language, gestures, and other types of nonverbal communication. Less clear is the place of spoken language. Spoken languages share with nonverbal communication, dreams, and oracles the same potential to signal ambiguously, to be only partially understood, or even to be misunderstood. Unlike nonverbal communication, dreams, and oracles, however, spoken language is never made to do so in the *Aethiopica*. This powerful fact, I think, is conclusive proof that Heliodorus' use of language is not actually part of the category of things in need of interpretation to which Winkler rightly draws our attention. Rather than the complicated hermeneutic process which the production and understanding of language actually requires, Heliodorus presents a vision of speaking abilities with only a few possibilities: One can be a fluent speaker, communicative but inelegant, or a non-speaker.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, listeners can either understand perfectly, understand the general gist of what is said, or fail to understand. While it is true that Heliodorus presents a more nuanced picture of the range of possibilities of communication than any other Greek author, his treatment of phenomena like dreams and oracles shows what he might have done with language and chose not to do. Winkler's hypothesis, in short, cannot explain Heliodorus' treatment of the language barrier.

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1 The only time a character's ability to express his thoughts is possibly limited by his grasp of the language is Thermouthis' grieving at 2.12.4. He repeats the name of the dead Thisbe over and over and the narrator informs us that is the only word of Greek he knows. Interestingly enough, it is hard to imagine what the Egyptian would say other than Thisbe were his Greek up to the standard of, say, young Sisimithres or Bagoas.

One aspect of Heliodorus' use of the language barrier largely undiscussed in other studies of the subject is the way language factors into character. The use of linguistic abilities to contribute to characterization depends largely on the world outside the text with which Heliodorus could expect his readers to be familiar. In my second and third chapters I argued for two related ways in which language contributes to the characterization in the novel. Bilingual characters are endowed with special knowledge and capabilities which makes them potentially either experts to be trusted or treacherous liars to be treated circumspectly. Likewise, these general issues of trust get compounded when it is a woman who is bilingual. Because chastity is one of the chief things with which women are trusted, this general potential for distrust becomes a specific anxiety. The most striking case of this is Charikleia whose ability with Ethiopian must be lost in order for her to become the chaste, monolingual, Greek heroine that the genre demands. Another novelist might have had Charikleia understand her language when Kalasiris reads the band to her, and thus have her reclaim her Ethiopian identity more fully. Instead, Heliodorus gives us a character who remains Greek in affect, dress, and language through the novel's end. The specific aspects of characterization which I have outlined are by no means the extent of possible study. I hope that my analysis of Heliodorus' use of language attitude for characterization will contribute to our broader knowledge of language attitudes in the ancient world and that as we understand those attitudes better, we will become better readers of the moments in which cross-linguistic phenomena pop up. For our understanding of language in the *Aethiopica*, however, the use of language as a marker, not only of ethnic identity, but also of sexual fidelity (or lack thereof), and of trustworthiness (or lack thereof) is a technique which must be considered alongside Winkler's hermeneutics and Morgan's realism.

Heliodorus' novel is an enigma in many ways. It presents elements of mystery in both the

modern and ancient senses. It not only both fulfills and plays with generic expectations, it also transcends them. It is steadfastly committed to an engagement with both the content and form of classical Greek literature, even as it employs a starkly unusual and non-classical approach to the representation of non-Greek speakers. Cross-language communication in the novel clearly needs to be explained and no single explanation will suffice for its many instances in this rich and nuanced novel. Many are clearly rooted in the author's desire for the world of the text to appear to have the same rules as the external world. The importance of nonverbal communication both reflects this desire and Heliodorus' interest in the interpretive process. Finally by depicting characters with fleshed out linguistic abilities, Heliodorus not only gives his characters an additional layer of nuance, but also helps to subtly draw out the tensions at play in the world of his novel.

## Appendix 1: The Semantic Evolution of Δίγλωσσος

As I argue in brief in my second chapter, the word δίγλωσσος undergoes a powerful semantic shift over the course of the Greek language. While early texts use the term to mean “speaking two languages,” later authors need help to understand this meaning and instead use the term mostly to mean “duplicitous” or “deceitful.” This appendix traces the history of the term and argues that this shift is the result not of a calque or imported word, but rather of a long-standing cultural distrust of bilingual individuals, amplified by the Judeo-Christian imagery of the deceptive two-tongued snake.

Thucydides, the first extant author to use the word uses it to mean the same thing as English's “bilingual.” Thus, when Tissaphernes, the satrap of Caria, sends an ambassador named Galites to the Spartan admiral, Astyochus, Thucydides describes Galites as “a bilingual Carian (Κᾶρα δίγλωσσον).”<sup>1</sup> The word is regularly used of bilinguals and interpreters in later prose, especially by historians.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to this familiar definition however, stands another meaning of the word for which our earliest evidence is the Septuagint, through which it seems to have taken firm root in the Christian tradition. The earliest attestation of this meaning is the Septuagint translation of the book of Proverbs which provides the proverb ἀνὴρ δίγλωσσος ἀποκαλύπτει βουλάς ἐν συνεδρίῳ, / πιστὸς δὲ πνοῇ κρύπτει πράγματα. (The δίγλωσσος man reveals plans in council, but the trustworthy in spirit hides actions, 11.13). The context clearly requires

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1 Thucydides, 8.85.2.

2 No doubt, historians are well represented given the need for bilingual individuals in the unfolding of certain kinds of historical events. In addition to the passage cited above and Thucydides 4.109.4, Diodorus Siculus uses the word at 11.60.4, 12.68.5, and 17.68, as does Arrian in his *Alexandria Anabasis*, 3.6.6. Outside of history, sources include Dio Chrysostom *Orationes* 10.24, 11.22b, 53.6, Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum* 1.101, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanes* 1.25.3, Galen *De Differentia Pulsuum* 8.585, Plutarch *Alexander* 1.4, *Crassus* 24.4 and 28.5, *Themistocles* 6.3.2, Polyaeus *Strategemata* 3.11.7, 7.14.7, and Strabo 7.7.8.

an opposition between the ἀνήρ δίγλωσσος and the πιστός πνοῆ, and LSJ suggests “double-tongued, deceitful,” but some further explanation is merited.<sup>3</sup>

On the one hand, this “deceitful” definition of δίγλωσσος plays on the same metaphors as the English phrases “to speak with forked tongue” or “to have two faces,” the operative idea being that when one says different things to different people one is being deceptive. “Speaking with forked tongue” compounds the tricky deception of double-talk with the slippery deceptiveness (and lingual anatomy) of a snake, a collocation which made as much sense to the Byzantine mind as it does today.<sup>4</sup> If the metaphor implied by this secondary meaning of δίγλωσσος is unremarkable, however, it is more remarkable that this definition seems to take over so firmly after its appearance.

One indication of the wild success of this later meaning of δίγλωσσος is the inclusion of the word in several reference works. Julius Pollux lists δίγλωττος among many words for interpreters and multilinguals.<sup>5</sup> A scholiast to Thucydides helpfully (if somewhat ethnocentrically) defines δίγλωσσον as καὶ τὴν βάρβαρον καὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα γλώσσαν ἐπιστάμενον.<sup>6</sup> Although Hesychius glosses δίγλωσσον at one point as διχόμυθον, clearly pointing at the “deceptive” meaning, at another time he explains διγλώσσους with the synonym διφώνους, indicating the “bilingual” meaning.<sup>7</sup> The Suda defines the term in much the same way as the scholiast: Δίγλωσσος: ὁ δύο γλώσσας ἐπιστάμενος.<sup>8</sup> Two facts about these glosses

3 On this definition, LSJ s.v. ii.

4 Thus, Eustathius, *Epistula ad Timotheum scholasticum de duabus naturis adversus Severum* line 967 calls Severus Σευῆρος ὁ δίγλωσσος ὄφις, whose double tongue is both deceptive and stands in opposition to his rejection of the dual nature of Christ.

5 *Onomasticon* 2.108 and 5.154.

6 At 8.85.2. On the other instance of the word in Thucydides at 4.109.4, the scholiast writes about διγλώσσων (somewhat less helpfully) ἀντὶ τοῦ πολυγλώσσων. On Greek Ethnocentrism generally, see Coleman (1997) in Coleman and Waltz (1997).

7 Hesychius, Δ 1483 and 2005 respectively.

8 *Suda* Δ 854. Here, as elsewhere, the prototypical example is that of the Scythian lawgiver Anacharsis, whose Greek mother and Scythian father helped make him bilingual.

should be emphasized. First, the overwhelming tendency is to define the early, original definition of the word, which suggests that Hesychius and the author of the Suda both felt that that definition was both more classical and more opaque to their audiences. Secondly, the scholiast is less than confident that his readers would understand the word correctly without his gloss, and the word and definition are unusual enough for comment. We cannot and should not conclude that δίγλωσσος was simply uncommon and had passed completely from readers' mental lexica; the authors of Christian texts who were these authors' contemporaries used the word if not commonly, then at least regularly in its “deceptive” sense. Instead, we should understand these glosses to be needed precisely because the reader needed to be steered away from the meaning that was more familiar and returned to the original meaning, especially when he was reading classical texts.

On the other hand, the origins of the use of δίγλωσσος to mean “deceptive” are less than clear. The appearance of the word in the Septuagint translation of the Book of Proverbs discussed above seems to be one of the chronologically first instances and the word is used three more times in the Septuagint translation of the book of wisdom literature known as Ecclesiasticus or Siracides, based on the teachings of the Jewish scribe Jesus ben Sirach. For example, one extended passage on the virtues of self-control and honesty in speech reads:

εἰ ἔστιν σοι σύνεσις, ἀποκρίθητι τῷ πλησίον·  
εἰ δὲ μή, ἡ χεὶρ σου ἔστω ἐπὶ τῷ στόματί σου.  
δόξα καὶ ἀτιμία ἐν λαλιᾷ,  
καὶ γλῶσσα ἀνθρώπου πτώσις αὐτῷ.  
Μὴ κληθῆς ψίθυρος  
καὶ τῇ γλώσσει σου μὴ ἐνέδρευε  
ἐπὶ γὰρ τῷ κλέπτῃ ἐστὶν αἰσχύνη  
καὶ κατάγνωσις πονηρὰ ἐπὶ διγλώσσου.  
ἐν μεγάλῳ καὶ ἐν μικρῷ μὴ ἀγνόει  
καὶ ἀντὶ φίλου μὴ γίνου ἐχθρός·  
ὄνομα γὰρ πονηρὸν αἰσχύνῃν καὶ ὄνειδος κληρονομήσει·  
οὕτως ὁ ἀμαρτωλὸς ὁ δίγλωσσος. (*Sirach 5:1-15*)

If you have wisdom, answer your neighbor with it,

But if not, your hand should be on your mouth.  
 There is reputation and dishonor in speech  
 And a man's tongue is his downfall.  
 Do not be called a slanderer  
 And don't get caught by your tongue  
 Since the cheater gets shame  
 and judgment is harsh on the deceitful. (δίγλωσσου)  
 Do not be ignorant on matters big or small  
 and don't be an enemy instead of a friend,  
 For the one called wretch inherits shame and reproach,  
 likewise the sinner and the deceitful. (δίγλωσσος)

It is tempting, in the light of the evidence, to suspect that behind this sudden and consistent use of the word δίγλωσσος in this negative sense lies a calque or other artifact of translation, borrowed from the original Hebrew text and imposed upon Greek. This view is made more difficult by the fact that Sirach never earned a place in the Hebrew bible and therefore only survived in Hebrew in Talmudic quotes until the 1896 discovery of portions of the book from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Cairo geniza and the later discovery of the dead sea scrolls.<sup>9</sup> The portions of the text that survive bear some overlap with the Greek and thus permit a side-by-side comparison. Such a comparison reveals that in Sirach δίγλωσσος stands fairly consistently for בַּעַל שְׁתַּיִם (ba`al-šəttayim), literally “master of two” or more freely “one who has two.”<sup>10</sup> While the context indicates that in the Hebrew too this clearly means “deceptive,” it is not immediately obvious over which “two” things such a one would be the master.<sup>11</sup>

Semitic versions of the the passage from Proverbs cited above preserve a different word corresponding to δίγλωσσος. Both the Aramaic *Targum* translation and the Syriac *Peshitta* translation use a word or phrase to mean “morsel-eater” which stands as an idiom for “informer.” Although both these translations were likely made later than the Septuagint Greek, their similarity to each other strongly suggests that the Hebrew text upon which the Greek based was

9 Rey and Joosten (2011).

10 I am deeply indebted to Justin Mansfield and Roger Black for their generous help with the Hebrew text here.

11 “Tongue”, a masculine word in Hebrew, would not agree with the feminine gender of “two,” and while “lip” is feminine and can be used to refer to languages, the fact that most everyone has two lips makes that an unsuitable solution.

in no way a literal translation.

Instead, I believe the best explanation for the consistent use of δίγλωσσος in these Jewish Greek passages is that the term had already come to mean something like “deceptive” in a colloquial sense and it is this already established sense that the seventy scholars relied upon in making their translations. Such an explanation would be sensible enough both for the metaphorical reasons discussed above (speaking with forked tongue) and from the presence of deceptive bilingual individuals in the milieu of Hellenistic Alexandria.

Latin came to have a similar duality with the word *bilinguis*, which Ennius could use to mean “bilingual” while Plautus has the slave Sagaristio say of Paegnium *tamquam proserpens bestias bilinguis et scelestus*, (he crawls like a dirty beast with forked tongue, *Persa* 299) clearly employing the word in its snakey, deceptive sense.<sup>12</sup> Whether this Latin meaning is calqued from a colloquial Greek term or an independent formation is not clear. If the former, it attests to the origin of δίγλωσσος in this sense independent of the Septuagint translation. If the latter, it at least testifies to the likelihood of such a semantic development happening. Furthermore, Plautus connects multilingualism and suspicion in the prologue of his *Poenulus*. The Carthaginian Hanno is described, among other things, as a gifted linguist: “He knows every language, but he pretends he doesn't/ He's perfectly Phoenician.”<sup>13</sup> Later in the play, After Hanno's extended speech in “Punic,”<sup>14</sup> the slave Milphio berates Hanno for his bilingualism in terms that recall the line from the *Persa* discussed above, describing him as having “a forked tongue, just like a reptile.”<sup>15</sup> That

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12 Ennius, *Annales* 496. While it is interesting that this metaphor appears in the *Persa* with a connection to the Near East (through the foreign characters), Plautus again uses *bilinguis* in its negative, deceptive sense at *Truculentus* 781, with no such connections.

13 *Poenulus* 112-3: *et is omnis linguas scit, sed dissimulat sciens/ se scire: Poenus plane est.*

14 Scholarly consensus has not been reached on whether this section represents real Punic (however garbled by manuscript tradition, or problematic understanding by the author) or whether it is so much Punic-sounding gobbledygook. See Faller (2004), Franko (1996), and Gratwick (1971) which indicates the outlines of the previous century or so of scholarship on the passage.

15 *Poenulus* 1034: *bisulci lingua quasi proserpens bestia.*

such suspicions come to the fore in relation to Carthage is no accident; Hannibal and the Carthaginians were thought to have deployed multilingual soldiers for devious purposes in the course of the Punic wars, as for example at Livy 26.6.11.<sup>16</sup>

Although he does not employ the term δίγλωσσος, Josephus provides further evidence of negative attitudes toward multilingualism among the Jewish community of his day, claiming that “among us, they do not approve of those who learn the languages of many peoples, because they consider this a common pursuit, not only to free people, but also to slaves who wish to do so.”<sup>17</sup> Although Josephus' evidence points most directly at a class distinction, rather than one based exclusively on trust, the connection between class or slave status and trustworthiness is not far under the surface.

Josephus, Plautus, and the Septuagint can hardly be thought to be completely independent points of data, and yet they cannot be simply disregarded as a single, local phenomenon of one group at one time. Taken together, they suggest a broad cultural attitude towards bilinguals and bilingualism. While paucity of sources prevents a definitive explanation of the origins of δίγλωσσος, what I hope to have made a convincing case for is the possibility that the shift in the term's semantic field from simply “knowing two languages” to “deceptive/duplicitous” was based in part on the biological metaphors implicit in the term and in part from the connection between suspicions about historical bilinguals of the class to which both Nausikles and the *Acharnians'* Ambassador belong. Heliodorus wrote several centuries into this transition in the dominant meaning of the word δίγλωσσος, and was experienced with the cultural attitude

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16 See Adams (2003) p. 206 n.381 and Rochette (1997) p. 157.

17 *Antiquitates Judaicae* 20.264: παρ' ἡμῖν γὰρ οὐκ ἐκείνους ἀποδέχονται τοὺς πολλῶν ἔθνῶν διάλεκτον ἐκμαθόντας διὰ τὸ κοινὸν εἶναι νομίζειν τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα τοῦτο μόνον οὐκ ἐλευθέρους τοῖς τυχοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν οἰκετῶν τοῖς θέλουσι. See Sevenster (1968) p. 65-71 on this passage, though in the light of the association in Heliodorus between ἀκριβόω and characters' ability with language, I find Sevenster's argument about the word in Josephus less than satisfying.

which lay behind that new meaning. Later accounts that identify the novelist Heliodorus with the bishop of Trikke of the same name present an even more tantalizing, if less likely, possibility that Heliodorus' treatment of bilingualism and bilingual characters stems in part from the Christian ambivalence towards the word δίγλωσσος.

## Appendix 2: A Survey of Nonverbal Behavior in the *Aethiopica*

It is not remotely possible to do justice to the nuance and variety of nonverbal behaviors indicated in the *Aethiopica* in the context of this project. Our focus must remain on the behaviors in which language and cultural barriers are implicated. It will be useful, however, to briefly survey these nonverbal behaviors in order to establish that these behaviors are in no way limited only to scenes of cross-cultural interaction, nor to the types which I examined at greater length in my fourth chapter.

Defining the boundaries of nonverbal communication is an impossible task, as almost any action has expressive potential. It seems silly to say that a person lifting a spoonful of cereal to his mouth in the privacy of his own kitchen, to take one example, is engaged in nonverbal communication. Yet if he was anorexic or allergic to wheat, that same action might communicate quite a lot to the reader of his story. I have tried to keep a broad enough definition so as not to exclude any meaningful actions, but narrow enough that the list is still useful. I have also limited myself to places where the narrator (or a character) specifies that an action with the potential for nonverbal communication has taken place. An attentive and/or creative reader could supply many more places where other actions might be supplied.<sup>1</sup> The examples are meant to be suggestive of the whole corpus and are certainly not exhaustive.

### 1. Body Language:

- a) **movement:** Given the geographical range of the novel, it's not surprising that motion is quite common, accounting for nearly 20% of the non-verbal behavior in the novel.

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<sup>1</sup> Boegehold (1999) provides both a methodology for understanding where we might expect such gestures and a large selection of convincing examples. Because texts of post-Classical periods are not as clearly meant to be conceived of as transcripts of oral performances (rather than written documents), Boegehold ends his study with the Classical period. The fact that the *Aethiopica* is so heavily dominated by characters speaking and telling stories presents the tantalizing possibility that Boegehold's approach could be productive for Heliodorus as well.

Bandits dive into the bushes (ὑπεδύετο, 1.2.5), Kalasiris paces quickly (ἀντιπαρέθει, 2.21.3), the mob rushes out of the theater (δρόμος ἀκάθεκτος, 4.21.2), Kalasiris fakes a limp (τοῖν σέλοιιν θάτερον παρεσύρετο, 6.11.4), Oroondates forces his army to march so fast that they run out of breath (δρόμου τε εἶχε καὶ ἄσθματος ἦγεν τὸν στρατὸν, 9.11.2) and the Ethiopian wrestler swaggers into the arena (πλατυνομένοις ἐναλλάξ τοῖς ἀγκῶσι τοὺς πῆχεις ὑποσοβῶν, 10.30.8) Speed is a consistently common factor; characters leap, hurry, or run as often as not, a fact which contrasts their quick movement to the long, measured strides of a Homeric hero or the temperate walk of a gentleman of fifth century Athens.<sup>2</sup> The novel is not a leisurely stroll or a soldier's brusque swagger, but one emergency after another.

- b) **Posture:** Heliodorus is quite concerned to let us know about his character's body positions as well. The opening of the novel (discussed above, chapter four) includes a description of Charikleia that is almost ecphrastic in the details of her posture. Elsewhere characters fall to their knees in grief (εἰς γόνυ τε ὀκλάσας, 2.3.3), or in supplication (Ἐδεῖτο ὑποπεσῶν, 2.13.4), or collapse in fear (ἄθρόον ἐπὶ τὴν εὐνήν καταφέρεται, 5.3.2). Alternatively, they insist on maintaining their proud posture by refusing to prostrate themselves (Theagenes at 7.19.2, discussed above, chapter four), or supplicate others (οὐδὲ ὀκλάσω οὐδὲ εἰς ἰκεσίαν τρέψομαι, 10.16.7).<sup>3</sup>
- c) **Facial Expressions:** While a modern reader may tend to think of the face as one of the primary places for nonverbal expression, it is somewhat less common in Heliodorus than one might expect (roughly 50 references throughout the novel, several less than explicit).

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2 On the resonances of different kinds of walking in the Greek world (with particular emphasis on the Archaic and Classical periods) see Bremmer (1991) p. 16-23.

3 Sittl (1890) p. 147-174, which despite its age is still a monumental and helpful catalog of Greek and Roman body language, discusses gestures of obeisance at length, as well as prayer postures p. 191.

It is tempting to associate this lack of emphasis on the face with the limited range of facial expressions available in ancient (masked) drama.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Knemon smiles (ἐπιμειδιάσας, 2.7.1), Charikles looks unhappy (σκυθρωπὸς καὶ σύννους, 4.14.1), Charikleia and Theagenes try to hid their true emotions by distorting their facial expressions (πρὸς τὸ σύνηθες σχῆμα καὶ βλέμμα διαπλάττειν ἔσπευδον, 7.17.1), and Sisimithres' face (among others) reveals a shifting mix of emotions (μυρίας τροπὰς τῆς διανοίας ἐκ τῶν ὄψεων ἐμφαίνοντα, 10.13.3)

d) **Eye Behavior:** Stares and glares play a significant role at key moments in the novel. In addition to the novel's opening scene, which programmatically establishes the importance and fallibility of visual judgments, the eyes and their behavior are tied closely to the erotic.<sup>5</sup> Stares reveal internal desires throughout the novel; one example of which is Arsake's staring at Theagenes which I explored in chapter three. After describing Charikleia's and Theagenes' intense stares into each others' eyes (τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἀτενεῖς ἐπὶ πολὺ κατ' ἀλλήλων πῆξαντες, 3.5.5), Kalasiris explains that sight is instrumental in the kindling of love (ἡ τῶν ἐρώτων γένεσις, οἷς τὰ ὀρώμενα τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐνδίδωσι, 3.7.5). Charikleia's eyes shine particularly brightly and intensely and are even compared to those of a gorgon (μέγα τι καὶ θεῖον τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐξέλαμπεν, οὕτω μοι περισκοποῦντι γοργόν τε καὶ ἐπαγωγὸν ἐνεῖδε, 2.3.11). Charikleia's eyes are consistently exceptional, particularly intriguing, and may implicate Charikleia in the novel's religious hierarchy.<sup>6</sup>

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4 Newbold (1992) points to the theatricality of late antiquity, especially as developed by Macmullen (1964).

5 On the opening scene, see below, chapter 4, above and Telo (2011). On sight, the evil eye, and *eros* see Yatromanolakis (1988).

6 See Jones (2005), who connects Charikleia's intense eyes with Kalasiris' description of the gods' eyes, and thereby suggests that Charikleia is connected to a kind of divinity.

e) **Touch:** Touch behavior in the novel is mostly repetitive and rarely revealing of character or of internal states. Most of the main characters embrace each other at some point in the course of the novel, though Theagenes and Charikleia do so most often (e.g.:

περιπλοκῶν τε καὶ φιλημάτων ἐνεπίμπλαντο, 5.4.4). When Theagenes holds Arsake's hands and tries to kiss them, she one-ups him and changes the meaning by kissing him on the lips ( Ἡ δὲ προσκύψασα καὶ τὸ στόμα ἀντὶ τῶν χειρῶν προβαλοῦσα ἐφίλησε, 7.26.7). Touch behavior is not limited to the erotic; kissing the head is a sign of thanks, as when Nausikles kisses the head of the Persian general, Mitranes (ἐφίλει τε πολλὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ Μιτράνου, 5.8.5). It is safe to say, however, that touch in the novel rarely occurs in the absence of affection, and when it does, it is usually violent, as when Knemon's father punches him (οὐδὲν εἰδότα πύξ τε ἔπαιε, 1.11.1)

f) **Gesture:** Although the novel is full of gestures, the category shows significant overlap with the categories sketched above. Certainly Theagenes' attempt at kissing Arsake's hands is a gesture, as is falling to the knees in supplication, or kissing a loved one.<sup>7</sup> Heliodorus tends to not be specific in presenting gestures. He is no Quintillian, interested in the precise configuration of body parts.<sup>8</sup> Instead he finds it sufficient to merely say that Charikleia shakes her head (in some, unspecified way) to signal that Kalasiris does not know what is really wrong with her ( Ἡ δὲ πυκνὰ τὴν κεφαλὴν ἐπέσειε...με...τὴν νόσον ἀγνοεῖν ἐνδεικνυμένη, 4.5.4) or that Arsake signals her eunuchs to escort Theagenes away with a gesture (ἀπέπεμπε, νεύματι τοῦτο πρὸς τοὺς εὐνούχους ἐπισημήνασα, 7.19.3).<sup>9</sup> One exception is Knemon's betrothal, where the narrator specifically indicates

7 These are what Lateiner (1998) calls “ritualized and conventional gestures.” Their continuity from Homer through Heliodorus suggests just how ritualized and conventional they were.

8 On Quintillian, see Corbeill (2004) p. 2-6 and, more extensively, Graf (1991).

9 *Νεύμα* is a vague term which must, in certain circumstances at least, denote gestures other than those of the head. See above p. 127.

that Knemon's extension of his right hand signals acceptance of the proposal ( ἄμα τὴν δεξιὰν προτείνουντι τὸ θυγάτριον ὁ Ναυσικλῆς ἐνεχειρίζε, 6.8.2).<sup>10</sup>

g) **Automatic Responses:** Involuntary responses to situations (e.g.: blushing, twitching, crying, and shivering) are among the body language which speaks the most in Heliodorus, in part because it so often emerges in the absence of speech, when emotions are overwhelming, or when modesty prevents straightforward speech. Charikleia blushes when she is forced to speak at the bandits' gathering, embarrassed by the public discussion of her marriage (πεφοίνικτο τὴν παρεῖαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων πλέον ἢ σύνηθες, 1.11.3). Kybele chokes and her heart skips beats when she realizes Theagenes will not easily acquiesce to Arsake's wishes (πνιγμὸς τοίνυν εἶχε τὴν γραῦν καὶ οἶον ἔλυζε τὴν καρδίαν, 7.19.8). Weeping is very common in the novel, and not just among the female characters; the stakes are so high that even the largely stoic Hydaspes has to work hard to fight back tears (τὸ ὄμμα δὲ οἰονεὶ κέρας ἢ σίδηρον εἰς τὰ ὀρώμενα τείνας εἰστήκει πρὸς τὰς ὠδῖνας τῶν δακρύων ἀπομαχόμενος, 10.16.2).

2. **Object Language:** Given the prominence of the *Aethiopica's* intertextual relationship with the *Odyssey*, it is hardly surprising that the use of clothing as marker of status, and especially to disguise status is among the most common uses of object language in the novel. Thus, for example, Charikleia and Kalasiris disguise themselves as beggars to protect themselves and acquire food more easily.<sup>11</sup> The disguises work splendidly and Kalasiris' sons fail to recognize him, just as Theagenes fails to recognize Charikleia.<sup>12</sup>

Charikleia also dresses to impress. She puts on her golden Delphic robe and other

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10 Sittl (1890) p. 129-147 discusses gestures of the right hand extensively, including this one which is depicted artistically and has parallels in Roman *manus* marriage.

11 *Aethiopica* 6.10-11

12 *Aethiopica* 7.7.2-3, 7.7.6-7

accoutrements of her position as priestess of Apollo at climactic moments where her life is on the line. In preparation for the battle at the beach, the aftermath of which opens the novel, she dresses in her finest, claiming it to be a mark of her victory or a funeral shroud (ἱερὸν ἔσθῆτα ἡμφίεστο ὡς ἢ νικητήριον ἢ ἐντάφιον ἔσομένην, 5.31.2). The message of her clothing will be ambiguous until the battle's outcome is determined, but the action of putting the robe on is itself communicative. She does the same before running onto the gridiron and initiating her recognition scene, for presumably the same reasons.

Theagenes also participates in this kind of clothing-centered object language when he is forced to be Arsake's cup-bearer and to wear the Persian uniform associated with his position, a luxurious get-up with gold straps and a gem-studded collar.<sup>13</sup> After discharging his duty successfully, Theagenes levies Arsake's affection for him to obtain permission to only wear the outfit while working, a clear statement of his submission to his circumstances but unswerving commitment to Greek culture and its distaste for Persian luxury.

One final example marks the importance of object language in the novel: the crowning of Theagenes and Charikleia. Once Hydaspes recognizes Theagenes and Charikleia as married, he deems them eligible for the priesthood, and to signify this, he takes the priestly miter from his head and puts it on Theagenes, while Persinna puts hers on Charikleia.<sup>14</sup> This investiture marks the fulfillment of the Delphic prophecy given at 2.35.5, and thereby the couple's assimilation into Ethiopian, though this assimilation is still problematic.<sup>15</sup> The coronation cannot fail, either, to suggest the ascension to king and queen which awaits

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13 *Aethiopica* 7.27.1

14 *Aethiopica* 10.41.2

15 The prophecy speaks of “a white wreath on blackening temples” (λευκὸν ἐπὶ κροτάφων στέμμα μελαινομένων). The miters are confirmed to be white at 10.41.3, but how are their temples black (or blackening)? I analyze this question at the end of chapter five.

Charikleia and Theagenes in their “happily ever after.”<sup>16</sup>

3. **Paralanguage:** Extra-linguistic sounds and silences appear throughout the novel. Characters wail, sigh, and groan in despair (Charikleia at 1.8.2: Πολλὰ δὴ οὖν ἀνοιμώξασα καθ’ ἑαυτὴν; and again at 3.18.1:συνεχῶς ἐπιστένοντα; Demainete at 1.9.2: προόδοις τε τούμου πατρὸς ἐπιστένουσα; the witch of Bessa at 6.12.2: παντοίους ἐγείροντι θρήνους; and the people of Syene at 9.5.1:οἰμωγὴ τε συμμιγῆς ...ἐγίνετο). Certainly important differences could be found among these expressions of pain and discontent, but they are universally recognized as expressions of pain and not, for example, happiness. Audible expressions of happiness are a bit more ambivalent, including the Memphites' roar of approval when Arsake decides to settle a revolution through *monomachia* (ἀνεβόησαν καὶ τὰ εἰρημμένα ἐπήνουν, 7.5.1). Only context indicates this cry is of joy rather than of woe.

Such non-verbal expressions are particularly common when emotions are overwhelming. At 10.16.1 Persinna bellows like a cow (μυκηθμῶ τιμι προσεοικὸς), an effect described as the regular result of excessive joy (ὑπερβολὴ γὰρ ἡδονῆς). Then the people of Meroe are so jubilant at Theagenes' bull wrestling that they simply scream<sup>17</sup>:

Ἀντήχει δὲ καὶ ἡ τοῦ δήμου βοή, τρανὸν μὲν οὐδὲν εἰς τὸν ἔπαινον διαρθροῦσα, κεχηνόσι δὲ ἐπὶ πολὺ τοῖς στόμασιν ἐξ ἀρτηρίας μόνης τὸ θαῦμα ἐξεφώνει, χρόνιον τε καὶ ὁμότονον εἰς οὐρανὸν παραπέμπουσα. (*Aethiopica* 10.30.5)

The cry of the populace echoed, not articulated into clear praise; rather their astonishment rung out from their windpipes with mouths wide open, sounding that one note to the heavens for a long time.

This paralinguistic expression is scene as a kind of proto-speech, which, even if it acts as a poor replacement for speech because it lacks clear articulation, acts as a kind of replacement, nevertheless, at times when speech is impossible.

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16 Nimis (1999) argues for a more open-ended vision of the finish, in which Heliodorus' abrupt ending with several loose ends is a signal that things are not, in fact, tidy.

17 This scene too is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

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