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Kalasis and Charikleia: Mentorship and Intertext in Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
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by

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Kalasis and Charikleia: Mentorship and Intertext in Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*

Odyssean and more broadly Homeric intertext figures largely in Greco-Roman literature of the first to third centuries AD, often referred to in scholarship as the period of the Second Sophistic.¹ Second Sophistic authors work cleverly and often playfully with Homeric characters, themes, and quotes, echoing the traditional stories in innovative and often unexpected ways. First to fourth century Greek novelists often play with the idea of their protagonists as wanderers and exiles, drawing comparisons with the *Odyssey* and its hero Odysseus. Heliodorus, the fourth century novelist, also participates in this trend, and uses many themes from the *Odyssey* and characteristics of its hero to construct some key features of his own novel the *Aithiopika*. He does this especially with the characters of Kalasis and Charikleia. Over the course of the paper, I argue that Heliodorus constructs the relationship of Kalasis and Charikleia to mirror the relationship of Athena and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*.

Intertext, Homer, and the Second Sophistic

Heliodorus, the fourth century A.D.² novelist, wrote a novel called the *Aithiopika* or *Ethiopian Story*. The *Aithiopika* is an adventure and love story that features two stunningly beautiful romantic heroes, Theagenes and Charikleia, who fall in love in Delphi. Soon after they fall in love, Charikleia learns that she is the daughter of the Ethiopian king and queen. With the help of a crafty Egyptian priest named Kalasis, the pair journey first to Egypt and then to

¹ In my own work on the *Odyssey* in the Second Sophistic, I am indebted to Montiglio's work, *Wandering in Ancient Greek Culture*, Hartog's *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece*, and Tim Whitmarsh's extensive work on the subject, especially *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*.

² Second, third or fourth century? According to Whitmarsh, most scholars estimate a fourth century date, but others disagree. Incidentally, a tradition exists that Heliodorus was a third century Christian bishop whose vocation conflicted with his passion for creative writing, but whether any truth exists in that tradition or not, this paper does not attempt to answer. (Whitmarsh 2011, p. 262)

Ethiopia. After encountering many difficulties and obstacles, they arrive in Ethiopia, where Charikleia reveals her true identity to her parents and marries Theagenes.

When writing his novel, Heliodorus built upon a long-established tradition present in the Second Sophistic. Many authors in this period wrote with creative references to and reflections of the great authors from the past. Their writings reflect, intentionally or unintentionally, themes and characters with which the present-day culture would have been embedded.³ Such authors include Lucian, Philostratus, Dio Chrysostom and the ancient novelists – Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Achilles Tatius, and Heliodorus, the focus of the current study. The novelists do not always specifically reference Homer or the *Odyssey*, (although they sometimes do, Heliodorus most of all), but they do write stories of heroes and heroines who find themselves as exiles on seemingly endless journeys like Odysseus.

Lucian satirizes Homer both through his *Dialogues of the Dead* and *A True Story*. His *Dialogues of the Dead*, which follows the progress of the Cynic philosopher Menippus through the underworld, involves many comical conversations with famous people. These include characters from Greek mythology, historical figures such as Socrates,⁴ and characters from the Homeric epics. He mocks Alexander the Great, for instance, for his belief in his own divinity in a conversation between Alexander and Diogenes.⁵ Some of those dialogues feature or discuss Homeric characters, such as *Menippus and Hermes*, where the speakers make fun of the Greeks’

³ Whitmarsh addresses the idea of *mimesis* as a literary form in the Second Sophistic in *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*. His goal here is to argue against the view of Second Sophistic authors as unoriginal on account of their tendency to reference the past.

⁴ See Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead* 6.1, where Lucian jokingly emphasizes the point that Socrates really did not know anything.

⁵ Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead* 13.1, which begins with Diogenes asking, “What’s this, Alexander? You dead too, just like all the rest of us?”

decision to go to war over Helen, who, being dead, has now lost all of her beauty.⁶ Moreover, as part of larger theme of the entire work, Lucian generally scorns the pretensions of all those who in life were famous either because of beauty, fame, or riches. When Menippus first meets the prominent characters of the *Iliad*, he exclaims “So much for you, Homer! All your principal characters lying unknown and unrecognizable on the ground! They’re ‘strengthless heads’ and no mistake.”⁷

Lucian’s most blatant satire of Homer comes in *A True Story*, his parody of the many famous mythological stories and famous authors of the past. In this unfinished novel, the narrator and his companions embark upon a fantastic voyage. The narrator’s assertion at the beginning of the work that nothing that he says will be true – as opposed to other authors and poets whose works are full of lies but are presented as the truth – gently mocks Homer and especially the more fantastical elements of Odysseus’ voyage.⁸ During his journeys, the narrator finds Homer on the Island of the Blest where he asks him questions about his poetry.⁹ When passing the Isle of the Damned – where liars are punished – it is not Homer who is sentenced to be there but Herodotus!¹⁰ The implication seems to be that Homer, as a poet, does not necessarily expect his audience to believe the wilder myths in his poetry, whereas Herodotus presents his own stories as history.

As part of his satire of Homer, Lucian pokes fun at the *Odyssey* and Odysseus in particular. The *Dialogues of the Dead* includes a conversation between Ajax and Agamemmon,

⁶ Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead* 18.1-3. In Lucian’s underworld the dead appear as skeletons, leading Lucian to make jokes not only about Helen’s now lost beauty, but also about beauty contests among the dead, in which everyone either looks alike or the dead attempt to draw distinctions from the shapes of each other’s skulls.

⁷ Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead* 6.1

⁸ Lucian, *A True Story* 1.1-4

⁹ Lucian, *A True Story* 2.6, 2.15, 2.20

¹⁰ Lucian, *A True Story* 2.30-31

in which Agamemnon laughs at Ajax for refusing to even acknowledge Odysseus during his visit to the underworld. Ajax complains about losing armor that should have rightly been his to Odysseus and makes a snarky comment about Athena's favoritism to Odysseus.¹¹ In *A True Story*, the narrator not only experiences many wild and strange adventures as does Odysseus, but he meets Homer, Odysseus, and other Homeric characters themselves on the Isle of the Blessed. Contrary to Homer's Odysseus who chooses – and desperately wishes – to return home rather than to stay on Calypso's island and live forever, Lucian's Odysseus has reconsidered that decision. Odysseus, after making sure to escape the notice of Penelope, gives the narrator a letter to take to Calypso, in which Odysseus says that he regrets not taking the goddess' offer of immortality.¹²

While Lucian jests at Homer, Philostratus competes with him. He does this by introducing his own new twists on familiar themes of Homeric poetry briefly in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* and more extensively in his *Heroikos*. Philostratus enjoys telling, through the mouth of his main characters, the stories of the Trojan War and Odysseus' wanderings not told in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. These include the claim that Polyxena, madly in love with Achilles, killed herself after his death. The story of Polyxena contradicts a more popular tradition, not found in the Homeric poems themselves, that the Greeks sacrificed Polyxena at the tomb of Achilles.¹³ The *Heroikos* contains a far more detailed treatment of the Homeric heroes, told through the mouth of a vinedresser. In this work, Philostratus portrays Odysseus as a treacherous villain, particularly with regard to his role in the murder of Palamedes. When, in the

¹¹ Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead* 29.1-2. For other examples of the use of Homeric characters, see 15 (Achilles and Antilochus), 19 (Aeacus and Protiselaus, which also features Menelaus and Paris), 20.1-2 (Menippus and Aeacus; the beginning speaks a little of Homeric characters), 23 (Protesilaus, Pluto, and Persephone) and 25 (Nireus, Thersites, Menippus).

¹² Lucian, *A True Story* 2.29-36

¹³ Philostratus, *Heroikos* 51.1-6, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 4.16.4

course of their discussion, the vinedresser and the traveler arrive at the subject of Odysseus, the vinedresser gives a colorful, if unflattering, portrait of Odysseus, in which he says:

He [Odysseus] was extremely skilled in public speaking and clever, but he was a dissembler, a lover of envy, and praised malice. His eyes were always downcast, and he was the sort of person who engages in self-examination. He appeared more noble than he was in military matters; surely he was not well versed in preparing for war, in commanding naval battles, sieges, or in drawing of spear and bows.... Odysseus, he [Protesilaus] says, was too old for amorous affairs, was somewhat flat-nosed, short, and had shifty eyes because of his schemings and insinuations... Therefore, Protesilaos aptly teaches that a man like Odysseus killed a man like Palamedes, who was both more clever and more courageous than he.¹⁴

Philostratus comes to his most outrageous or humorous (depending on how the audience would have read it) claim about Homer and the *Odyssey*: that while Homer was gathering material for his poems, he went to Ithaca. Odysseus' ghost agreed to give Homer information about the Trojan War, with one condition: that Homer whitewash the character of Odysseus and omit from his epics the murder of Palamedes.¹⁵

Dio Chrysostom, a 1st c. AD self-portrayed orator turned philosopher, treats Homer with both reverence and irony. His discussion of Odysseus himself proves to be similarly ambivalent. Since Domitian exiled Dio from Italy and Bithynia (although Trajan later remitted his exile), Dio often ties a connection between his own exile and wandering and that of Odysseus. Dio's self-

¹⁴ Philostratus, *Heroikos* 34.1, 5-6

¹⁵ Philostratus, *Heroikos* 43.12-16

representation is a curious combination of a man with the education in the elite intellectual culture and the values of a Cynic philosopher who dismisses the world, pleasure, and power.

Dio's tendency to speak of Odysseus is part of a broader trend in his own orations to reference great authors of the past, notably Homer. In the second *Kingship Oration*, a dialogue between Philip II of Macedon and his son Alexander, the latter says that "The poetry of Homer, however, I look upon as alone truly noble and lofty and suited to a king, worthy of the attention of a real man."¹⁶ After the interlocutors establish the belief that, of poets, Homer is the most fitting for the instruction of kings, they go on to discuss appropriate virtues and behaviors for any leader. The author shows familiarity with the Homeric epics, both referencing and directly quoting them many times. Dio argues from evidence within the *Iliad* that Homer would have approved of kings learning the art of rhetoric and cites Diomedes, Odysseus, and most importantly Nestor as examples of good leaders who played crucial roles in the Greeks' victory over the Trojans. Rather than drawing attention to the might and skill of Achilles, Dio, through his mouthpiece Alexander, praises more highly the men with wisdom and counsel. Odysseus and Nestor, he points out, with their speaking abilities, persuaded the Achaeans not to flee when the whole army fell into chaos.¹⁷ While Philostratus denigrates Odysseus' talent for speaking and intelligence as related to his ability to deceive and to scheme, in the *Kingship Orations*, Odysseus' talent for speaking counts as a positive good and a useful quality for a commander and king.

On the other hand, in the *Trojan Oration*, Dio humorously argues that Homer falsified the major points of his epics. In his alternative version, which the author claims he received

¹⁶ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 2.6

¹⁷ *Il* 2.155-332, Dio *Or* 2.19 – 24

from an Egyptian priest, Helen and Paris legally married, Troy won the war, and Odysseus returned home late not from any disasters at sea, but from sheer embarrassment at losing the war. Agammemnon's murder upon his return home, argues Dio, makes much sense in light of this other "true" series of events. Not only does Dio claim that Homer told such blatant lies, but he draws most of his evidence from within the epics themselves. That Odysseus, one of Homer's most prominent characters, is given to telling lies, points to Homer's capacity for falsehood. "Odysseus," says Dio, "at any rate, whom he [Homer] praised most highly, he [Homer] has represented as telling numerous falsehoods."¹⁸

Dio even argues from evidence within the *Iliad* that Homer was an incredible liar. For instance, he draws attention to Helen and Priam's conversation in Book 3, when Helen, surveying the assembly of Greek heroes, wonders where her brothers are.¹⁹ Since, according to Dio's version of events, Helen and Paris legally married, Helen's brothers did not fight at Troy since they themselves supported the marriage. Moreover, since her brothers Castor and Polydeuces had rescued Helen immediately from her earlier abduction by Theseus, the king of Athens, it is improbable that, if Helen was truly abducted, they would have hesitated to rescue their sister from Troy. Homer, according to Dio, inserts this conversation to explain away the Dioscuri's absence; yet its very inclusion points to Homer's own falsehood.²⁰

Lawrence Kim gives a complex interpretation of the *Trojan Oration*.²¹ He rightly points out that Dio's oration can hardly be taken as entirely sincere. On the one hand, one can see Dio's oration as a playful sophistic exercise in which he cleverly subverts Homer, a traditionally

¹⁸ Dio, Or. 11.17

¹⁹ *Il.* 3.234 -244

²⁰ Dio Chrysostom *Or* 11, Lawrence Kim, *Homer Between History and Fiction in Imperial Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 120-121

²¹ Kim 138-139

accepted authority. However, Kim argues that on a deeper level one can read the *Trojan Oration* as Dio's critique not so much of the specific details of Homer's account of the Trojan War, but rather of a non-critical acceptance of Homer's traditional authority.

Dio's orations strikes a chord with the *Odyssey* in his portrayals of himself as a wandering exile and in his direct comparisons of himself with Odysseus. His use of travel and exile, for example, appear in his first *Kingship Oration*. There, Dio speaks of how during his exile he travelled to the shrine of Herakles. He meets a woman who prophesies his meeting with Trajan and tells him a myth of Herakles. In that myth, Hermes shows Herakles the female personifications of Royalty (Βασιλεία) and Tyranny (Τυραννίς) to illustrate the nature and qualities of virtuous instead of despotic rule.²² His journey – and by extension, the exile which prompted his journey – functions as the means through which he gains the wisdom that he now communicates to Trajan. His description of his journey and his exile also contributes to his self-portrayal as a philosopher and a wise man.

Dio uses the motif of travel to illustrate broader points in other ways as well. In the *Euboean Oration*, Dio speaks of one of his adventures wherein he was shipwrecked on the island of Euboea and needed to rely on the hospitality and generosity a local hunter and his family. Here he most wants to demonstrate, by way of this account, his own attitudes toward the poor and his beliefs about how society should respond to the poorest. In speaking about the generosity of the poor, he points out that, when Odysseus, disguised as a beggar first arrived at his family home, he received the most hospitable and compassionate treatment, not from Penelope or Telemachus, but rather from Eumaeus the swineherd.²³ Dio emphasizes the fact that while

²² Dio Chrysostom, *Or* 1.50-84

²³ Dio Chrysostom *Or*.7.83-90; also see *Odyssey* 14.50-70, 14.490-506 for Eumaeus' generous hospitality and see 16.76-99 for Telemachus' immediate reaction against offering the beggar Odysseus food and shelter.

Penelope is very wealthy (the suitors devouring her wealth notwithstanding), she only offers him a cloak, Eumaeus the swineherd who lives in extreme poverty offers the disguised Odysseus food and shelter.

Dio directly compares himself with Odysseus in his thirteenth and forty-fifth orations. In *Oration 45, In Defense of His Relations with Prusa*, Dio speaks of a trip he made to his homeland of Bithynia after Trajan remitted his exile. In that instance he casts himself and his calm response to the confiscation of his goods as morally superior to Odysseus' famously belligerent and bloody re-taking of his family home.²⁴

Of all of his orations, Dio's thirteenth oration has the most intertext both in terms of deliberate comparison with Odysseus and his self-projection as a wanderer. *On His Exile*, Dio says that he decided to accept his exile from Domitian, not by going to one place and staying there, but rather by taking up a life of wandering.²⁵ He speaks of how he reflected on what the great poets said about exile. Dio recalls how Odysseus, after his *nostos*, did not refrain from travelling again on the advice of Tiresias and speaks of that reflection as crucial in his decision to not simply go somewhere and stay there, but accept his exile and take up a life of wandering.

These three authors, Lucian, Philostratus, and Dio Chrysostom, all exhibit through their writings both direct references to Homer and thematic tendencies reflective of the Homeric epics. Lucian satirizes Homer and Homeric characters in his *Dialogues of the Dead* and parodies the *Odyssey* especially through *A True Story*, in which the narrator and his companions set off on a blatantly fantastical and false journey to many strange and wondrous places. Philostratus directly interacts and competes with Homer in his *Heroikos*, sometimes subverting the more traditional

²⁴ Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 45.11-12, see also Desideri

²⁵ Dio Chrysostom *Or.* 13.4, 13.10

stories surrounding within and about those epics. Dio Chrysostom the orator and philosopher both made use of examples from Homer and the *Odyssey* to demonstrate points.

Intertext with the *Odyssey* also appears in the works of the ancient novelists, one of whom will be the focus of this study: Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Achilles Tatius, and Heliodorus. The other prominent novelist, who does away with a travel plot altogether, is Longus. In all of the other novels, the protagonists, like Odysseus, travel as a result of misfortune. Each novel with travel displays a certain kinship with the *Odyssey*. Most of the novels recount the stories of protagonists who go into exile and eventually return home. Heliodorus' references to the *Odyssey* are far more deliberate and explicit. Heliodorus' more extensive intertext with the *Odyssey* will be treated more thoroughly in a later section.

Odysseus the Traveler

In a broader sense, many Second Sophistic authors employ the idea of travel, which acts as a central motif of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus is one of the most famous travelers of antiquity. His own voyages, adventures, and sufferings represent one specific brand of travel that differs from such types as those of Herodotus, Alexander the Great, and many authors of the Second Sophistic. Odysseus is the traveler who wants to return home.²⁶ Far from being an adventurer who wanders out of intellectual curiosity, Odysseus is an exile, someone who travels against his will. Above all, he wants not to travel but to achieve his homecoming. In the Second Sophistic, when the culture would have been imbued with both Homer and Herodotus (to name a couple of examples of prominent authors), writers dealt with the theme of travel in different ways. Here I

²⁶ Francois Hartog describes the nature of travel in the *Odyssey* compared with other authors in *Memories of Odysseus: Frontier Tales from Ancient Greece*.

shall speak mainly of two: travel motivated by curiosity – the travel of a willing adventurer – and travel motivated by necessity – the travel of an unwilling exile.

In the *Odyssey*, travel, which begins simply as a journey to return home from the Trojan War, becomes an endless ordeal. For Odysseus, travel becomes a mode of suffering and an obstacle to his homecoming and the reunion with his family.²⁷ Montiglio argues that Odysseus' sufferings and wanderings can be seen as a representation of the human condition, saying "in the *Odyssey*, as in the *Iliad*, wandering is viewed more as an inevitable punishment for being human than as an exceptional one due to an individual's impiety."²⁸ While Homer himself does not explicitly say that Odysseus wanders as the result of a specific crime before the blinding of Polyphemus, later literature, including the *Heroikos* and Sophocles' *Ajax*, represents Odysseus committing various crimes. One of the more famous examples is his alleged murder of the hero Palamedes. In her study of Odysseus and his misfortunes, Clay suggests that Odysseus angers Athena long before he reaches the Island of the Cyclopes. However, she does not posit that Athena punishes Odysseus for any one particular treacherous act. Rather, in her reading, "Odysseus is too clever; his intelligence calls into question the superiority of the gods themselves."²⁹ Thus while Odysseus is Athena's favorite, she must nonetheless humble the highly intelligent Odysseus, whose cunning mind presents a challenge to the gods themselves. Homer's choice not to mention Athena's anger toward him reflects his own bias, which is favorable towards Odysseus.³⁰

²⁷ See Hartog 15-21. Hartog presents an insightful discussion of Odysseus as "a traveler against his will."

²⁸ Sylvia Montiglio, *Wandering in Ancient Greek Culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005): 47

²⁹ Jenny Strauss Clay *The Wrath of Athena: Gods and Men in the Odyssey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983): 209

³⁰ Clay 34 - 38, Montiglio 42 - 61

Second Sophistic authors present in their works a few different modes of travel. These different images of travel follow other predecessors, most prominently Herodotus, who traveled the world to enquire about the nature and causes and history of the Persian Wars. In Lucian's *A True Story*, it is true that the characters find themselves thrown off course as the result of unexpected events.³¹ Yet the element of suffering and reference to the human condition does not really appear. Moreover, as Hartog notes, Lucian's narrator says of his motives that, "The motive and purpose of my journey lay in my intellectual activity and desire for adventure, and in my wish to find out what the end of the ocean was, and who the people were that lived on the other side."³² In a certain sense, the narrator (who, in any case, speaks blatantly as a writer of fiction) nonetheless chooses to begin his journey as the result of curiosity, unlike Odysseus, who begins with a simple goal in mind – to return home safely – and finds every obstacle that one could imagine. Lucian does not write less thoughtfully or intelligently than others, but as he is writing a satirical work, it does not come as a surprise that his work strikes the reader as less concerned with questions of the human condition.

Within the pages of Philostratus one also finds tales of travelers, both merchants and sages. The *Heroikos* begins when a Phoenician traveler meets a vinedresser. Philostratus uses this meeting of two strangers as the setting for the two characters' dialogue about the heroes.³³ Philostratus' longest and most epic tale of travel is the eight-book saga of Apollonius of Tyana. The *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* is filled with stories of travel to exotic places. Philostratus presents a great example of a traveler who is a wandering sage, Apollonius of Tyana, who

³¹ See Hartog, 38-39. Hartog interprets the nature of travel in *A True Story* as a very different matter from that in the *Odyssey*, saying that "This fictitious story thus explicitly declares that its hero is spurred on by curiosity, a desire to see. But this fictional traveler who is so curious about the antipodes is poles apart from Odysseus!"

³² Lucian, *A True Story*, 1.5

³³ Philostratus, *Heroikos* 1.1 – 3.2

journeys far and wide to learn wisdom from the Indians, Egyptians, and Ethiopians. On his journey through India, he even passes the altars and stone that mark the furthest point to which Alexander the Great ever came.³⁴ He later voyages into the West. There he meets and advises many leaders in the community as he goes – among them Vespasian – but suffers persecution under Domitian.³⁵ Apollonius combines the Herodotean desire for knowledge with sage-like, pilgrimage type of travel.³⁶

Dio Chrysostom presents one with a more ambivalent case; while involuntarily exiled from Rome and his native Bithynia,³⁷ he adopts the persona of a perpetual travelling philosopher and in his self-representation, identifies with Odysseus who travels *after* he reached his homeland.³⁸ Surely, Dio was exiled from his homeland and from Rome, but it doesn't follow that he absolutely needed to become a wandering philosopher rather than go to one place and stay there. Moreover, Dio's exile, enacted by Domitian, was remitted after Nerva came to power. Wandering served him as a means to project his particular brand of philosophy and oratory. In that sense, Dio is a willing traveler, a voluntary traveler.³⁹ Dio himself casts his exile as a matter of both voluntary and involuntary travel. While Dio obviously does not hope or will for

³⁴ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 2.43

³⁵ Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 5.27-5.38, where Apollonius has dealings with Vespasian and 7.1-7.42, 8.1-8.12

³⁶ See John Elsner, "Hagiographic Geography: Travel and Allegory in the Life of Apollonius of Tyana," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997): 22-37.

³⁷ The specific details of Dio's exile are by no means settled among scholars. Most agree that Dio was in fact exiled (something that has not always been a matter of consensus) but there is less of an agreement about the exact circumstances of his exile (e.g. whether he was exiled from Rome and Bithynia, Bithynia alone, etc.). See Desideri, Whitmarsh (2001), and Montiglio 193-203.

³⁸ Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 13.9-10.

³⁹ On Dio's sincerity/truthfulness as an exile, see Montiglio, Whitmarsh (2001) and Paulo Desideri, "Dio's Exile: Philosophy, Politics, Literature" in *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. Jan Felix Gaertner. Desideri for the most part takes Dio at his word, whereas Whitmarsh interprets Dio's discussion of himself as more of a sophistic exercise rather than a literal oration. Montiglio's reading falls somewhere in the middle.

Domitian to banish him, his choice to wander functions as a way to turn his exile into a meaningful way of living, rather than passively accepting his fate.

The Greek Novels

Travel plays an important role in the Greek novels, which invariably (with the exception of Longus) feature their protagonists constantly travelling. The five extant Greek novels, Chariton's *Callirhoe*, Xenophon of Ephesus' *Habrocomes and Anthia*, Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, and Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*, all feature love stories between two gorgeous protagonists who, despite numerous obstacles, manage to achieve marriage and a homecoming by the end of the novel. Typically, Chariton and Xenophon are dated to the first century, Longus and Achilles Tatius to the second, and Heliodorus to the third or fourth century A.D. The novels portray various love stories in which travel functions either as a threat or a concrete obstacle to the union and homecoming of the characters.⁴⁰

They all feature, with the exception of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, in one sense or another, two main characters who are in love and who experience an exhaustive series of misfortunes that threaten to separate the protagonists forever and to keep them from their eventual goal: reunion, marriage (if they are not already married), and a homecoming. In Chariton's *Callirhoe*, for instance, the protagonists Callirhoe and Chaereas fall in love and marry⁴¹ within the first few pages, but through many unfortunate events, Callirhoe is kidnapped.⁴² Her kidnappers sell her to a wealthy man in another country who becomes her

⁴⁰ For an analysis of travel in Heliodorus compared to Chariton and Xenophon of Ephesus' novels, see J.R. Morgan, "Travel in the Greek Novels: Function and Interpretation", in *Travel, Geography, and Culture in Ancient Greece, Egypt, and the Near East*, eds. Colin Adams and Jim Roy (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007): 139-160.

⁴¹ Chariton, *Callirhoe* 1.1

⁴² Chariton, *Callirhoe* 1.8-11

second husband.⁴³ The plot then essentially focuses on the story of her exile and return.

Xenophon of Ephesus' *Habrocomes and Anthia* has the protagonists set off on a journey in response to an oracle,⁴⁴ after which point they are kidnapped by pirates,⁴⁵ are separated, and must overcome many obstacles to return home.

The second century novels, those of Achilles Tatius and Longus, show innovation both in terms of structure and psychological development of the characters. With regards to structure, Achilles Tatius, whether deliberately or through lack of opportunity, begins but does not end his novel as a frame story told by the male protagonist Clitophon.⁴⁶ As an author, however, Achilles Tatius has received more recognition for the way that he writes his characters.⁴⁷ Achilles is credited with more realism in his characters' attitude toward chastity. Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* dispenses with the travel plot altogether. Travel threatens to separate Daphnis and *Chloe* a few times, but it never succeeds in doing so for a long period of time. The absence of more dramatic adventures enables Longus to place a stronger emphasis on the interior growth and development of the protagonists. In contrast to the protagonists of other novels, Daphnis and Chloe do not fall in love immediately, but rather begin to love each other over the course of the novel.⁴⁸

Travel in these works functions in a few different ways. Many, many times, the novels portray their protagonists as being kidnapped by pirates. More than just being separated from his

⁴³ Chariton, *Callirhoe* 3.1-2.

⁴⁴ Xenophon of Ephesus, *Habrocomes and Anthia*, 1.6-11.

⁴⁵ Xenophon of Ephesus, *Habrocomes and Anthia*, 1.13. Because of the many similarities between *Callirhoe* and *Habrocomes and Anthia*, scholars tend to infer that either Xenophon borrowed from Chariton or Chariton from Xenophon, with a preference for the former. See for instance Morgan (2007).

⁴⁶ Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 1.1-3.

⁴⁷ See B.P. Reardon, "Achilles Tatius and Ego-Narrative" in *Greek Fiction, the Greek Novel in Context*, eds. J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman (London and New York: Routledge, 1994): 80-96.

⁴⁸ See J.R. Morgan, "Daphnis and Chloe: Love's Own Sweet Story", in *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context*, 64-69.

or her significant other, kidnapping often places an individual in danger of slavery, sexual violence, and death. In order to achieve their long-desired happy ending, the hero and heroine must display a considerable degree of perseverance when facing the various and repeated challenges that confront them.

In all of the novels, *Daphnis and Chloe* included, travel is largely connected with misfortune as in the *Odyssey*. In Chariton's novel, for instance, misfortune is a prominent cause of anyone traveling. When Callirhoe, the character after whom the novel is named, falls into a coma and is supposed dead, her family entombs her. Little do they suspect that a short time later both a disoriented Callirhoe and the treasures buried with her will be carried away by tomb robbers.⁴⁹ Chaereas' travels consist largely in his attempt to find Callirhoe again. Like travel in the *Odyssey*, Heliodorus' novel features a complex notion of travel, one that casts it both as a setting for dangerous obstacles and a vehicle by which the protagonists reach their destinations.

Heliodorus: The *Aithiopika*

Like all other Greek novels, the *Aithiopika* is a love story with a handsome hero and a beautiful heroine, Theagenes and Charikleia, who overcome all obstacles to marry one another and live in peace. Yet Heliodorus' novel is a far more ambitious project than any of the other extant novels of his predecessors. The plot itself takes many twists and turns and surprises the reader in many places.⁵⁰ The novel begins *in medias res* when Egyptian bandits discover, amidst

⁴⁹ Chariton, *Callirhoe* 1.9-10

⁵⁰ See J.R. Morgan, "The *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus: Narrative as Riddle," in *Greek Fiction, the Greek Novel in Context*, eds. J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman (Routledge: London, 1994) for an analysis of Heliodorus' narrative style. Morgan's essay cites various examples from the narrative which essentially present a confusing situation that the narrator only explains piece by piece. Heliodorus also embeds clues within the narrative prior to the confusing situation. For example, when Charikleia was forced to jump into a fire and came out perfectly unharmed thanks to a magical jewel on her person, Heliodorus doesn't say immediately, "A magical jewel protected her and therefore she was fine," but allows the reader and the characters to be surprised before later revealing what protected the heroine. Here Morgan says that, "It is characteristic of Heliodorus at every level of narration to

a scene of slaughter and a ruined banquet with overturned tables, a beautiful young woman and a handsome young man whom the reader later discovers are the novel's protagonists. Theagenes and Charikleia, along with an Athenian captive named Knemon, escape the bandits' camp. They take different roads, however, and when Knemon comes to a village called Chemmis, he meets an Egyptian priest named Kalasiris who has already played a crucial role in the lives of Knemon's friends Theagenes and Charikleia.

Kalasiris then begins his own narration of events. He says that he served as the high priest of Egypt until troublesome circumstances at home prompted him to exile himself to Delphi, which in any case seemed like a good location for a priest. Charikleia, the novel's heroine, has grown up in Delphi and lived there for most of her life. In Delphi she lives as the foster daughter of a man called Charikles and serves as a priestess of Artemis. Kalasiris meets Charikleia and her Charikles. Charikles complains to Kalasiris that although he desperately wants her to marry her cousin Alkamenes, she forswears marriage and says that she will live her life as a virgin. That all changes, however, when a man named Theagenes arrives from Thessaly with a group of men for a festival and for athletic competitions. When they see each other at a festival, they immediately fall in love; yet they fail to recognize the mutuality of their affection.⁵¹

Kalasiris, however, recognizes their mutual passion immediately. After speaking with Charikles, he deduces the fact that Charikleia is the daughter the Ethiopian king and queen,

withhold information, not simply to produce effects of shock and surprise, but to enlist the reader in an actively interpretive role."

See also J.R. Morgan, "A Sense of the Ending: The Conclusion of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*" *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 119 (1989): 299-320, where Morgan points out that in the conclusion Heliodorus surprises the reader at every turn. Oftentimes the narrative device that should bring the novel to completion and resolve a dangerous situation fails to do so, at least in the short run.

⁵¹ A similar "love at first sight" moments happens in both Chariton's *Callirhoe* (1.1) and Xenophon's *Habrocomes and Anthia* (1.3). In *Callirhoe*, the protagonists Chaereas and Callirhoe do not realize that their affections are reciprocal, but their marriage nonetheless occurs because of a public outcry (1.1).

Hydaspses and Persinna, a fact which Charikles himself does not know. Long ago, Kalasiris had met Persinna and learned of her long-lost daughter. Persinna's daughter had been born white as the result of a strange accident, leading Persinna to expose Charikleia with some tokens out of fear that her husband would suspect her of infidelity. These tokens include a ribbon on which is written the details of Charikleia's true parentage. When Charikles shows Kalasiris this ribbon and tells him the story of how he adopted Charikleia, Kalasiris can conclude that Persinna's long-lost daughter is none other than Charikleia herself. Having discovered this, Kalasiris meets with Charikleia and tells her both of her origins and Theagenes' love for her. Prompted by his earlier meeting with Persinna, the oracles that he receives in Delphi,⁵² and a desire to see Theagenes and Charikleia have a happy ending, Kalasiris maneuvers, often using deceit, to both bring Theagenes and Charikleia together and to help the pair journey from Delphi to Charikleia's home in Ethiopia. After they fake Charikleia's abduction (by having Theagenes and his band of Thessalians "kidnap" Charikleia), Theagenes, Charikleia, and Kalasiris all flee Delphi with some Phoenician merchants and make for Ethiopia.

While the three are *en route*, one of the Phoenician merchants with whom they are traveling falls in love with and wants to marry Charikleia.⁵³ This prompts him to pressure Kalasiris, who is pretending to be both Theagenes' and Charikleia's father,⁵⁴ for Charikleia's

⁵² On the oracle that Kalasiris receives (and bystanders hear) regarding Theagenes and Charikleia, see Hld. and 2.35. "One who starts in grace and ends in glory, another goddess-born;/ Of these I bid you have regard, O Delphi!/ Leaving my temple here and cleaving Ocean's swelling tides, / To the black land of the Sun will they travel,/ Where they will reap the reward of those whose lives are passed in virtue:/ A crown of white on brows of black." The priestess also chants an oracle welcoming Kalasiris to Delphi at 2.26.

⁵³ A common problem in the Greek novels, a genre in which the romantic heroes and heroines are gifted with incredible – almost divine – beauty. One of the main obstacles to the protagonists' happiness is the interference of romantic rivals.

⁵⁴ Hence Morgan (2007) notes that Charikleia has a number of priestly father figures 1) Charikles, who is a priest of Apollo and who raises her in Delphi, 2) Kalasiris, the former high-priest of Egypt who becomes a father figure to both herself and Theagenes, and 3) Sisimithres, the Ethiopian gymnosophist who takes care of Charikleia as a baby and verifies the story of her origins when she returns to Ethiopia. Morgan names Sisimithres as one of Charikleia's

hand in marriage. Fearing violence, Kalasiris pretends to agree until he can think of a way to prevent Charikleia's marrying the merchant. The whole group travels to Egypt, when in the midst of preparations for Charikleia's wedding, fighting breaks out among the merchants over Charikleia, and they all manage to slaughter each other. Only Theagenes, Charikleia, and Kalasiris survive.

After the battle, a group of bandits led by the robber captain Thyamis captures Theagenes and Charikleia. Thyamis, as the reader will learn later, is the elder son of Kalasiris. Not recognizing Kalasiris' presence, they leave him to wander back to civilization as best he can. Later, when the robbers' camp is attacked, Theagenes and Charikleia escape and attempt to go to a nearby village. However, they are captured and sent in different directions: Theagenes to Memphis and Charikleia to a merchant's house where, by a fortunate coincidence, Kalasiris and Knemon have also sought hospitality. Once Charikleia and Kalasiris are reunited, they journey to Memphis in search of Theagenes.

Once they reach Memphis, Kalasiris reconciles his two sons Thyamis and Petosiris, who had been at war with one another. There they find Theagenes. Soon afterwards, to the great distress of both Theagenes and Charikleia, Kalasiris dies in his home city. Later, after spending some time in Memphis, Theagenes and Charikleia end up under the control of Oroondates the Persian satrap. After Hydaspes the Ethiopian king defeats the Egyptian forces under Oroondates, he captures Theagenes and Charikleia and has them brought to Ethiopia. Although the protagonists are thrilled to hear the name of Hydaspes, Charikleia's father, Charikleia astutely judges that she must proceed with caution in revealing her identity.

two fathers in Ethiopia, as opposed to her natural father Hydaspes. He does not name Hydaspes as a priestly father. However, Hydaspes does after all, as the King of Ethiopia, act as the priest of the Sun (Hld. 10.4).

Although close to their goal, the couple faces many dangers from that point forward, beginning at the point when the Ethiopians condemn them both to human sacrifice. They have no especial hatred of either one – in fact, the more they interact with the protagonists, the more they begin to regret their choice to sacrifice them – but they choose Theagenes and Charikleia because of an established Ethiopian tradition which says that the first captives of war must be sacrificed. Through many twists and turns, Charikleia maneuvers and attempts to stall first her own and then Theagenes' execution until she finally reveals the truth of her birth and her relationship with Theagenes. Charikleia is reunited with her parents, marries Theagenes, and the novel comes to a happy conclusion.

Heliodorus and Travel

As Morgan notes, when analyzing the *Aithiopika* compared with the other Greek novels, Heliodorus shows impressive innovation in terms of both the structure and use of travel as a part of the plot.⁵⁵ Heliodorus' *Aithiopika* has, among the Greek novels, both the most inventive narrative strategy and the most deliberate intertext with the *Odyssey*. Morgan, in his analysis of Heliodorus' narrative strategy, notes how the author creatively faced two challenges of his own: first, that the conclusion of the novel was becoming predictable by the time Heliodorus was writing and secondly that the series of loosely connected events and setbacks presented in the novel created hurt the unity as a whole. Heliodorus did this by withholding information and creating suspense within the narrative, less about the outcome of the novel – the happy ending – than about how that longed-for conclusion will occur. Moreover, leaving many puzzles unsolved helps the novel's unity by leaving unsolved riddles whose answers a reader would curiously turn

⁵⁵ See Morgan (2007) Morgan sees the function of travel in Heliodorus' novel as very different from that of Chariton's and Xenophon's novels. For Morgan, travel in those novels exists simply as "the thread upon which the episodic beads are strung" (153).

page after page to discover. Thus Morgan refers to Heliodorus' narrative strategy as a "spectacular advance over his predecessors in the romance form."⁵⁶

In Heliodorus, travel acts as a double-edged sword. It offers both the fear and danger of risk alongside the possibility and hope (but certainly not guarantee) of reward. It can function both as the source of and the obstacle to the protagonists' goal. On the one hand, without travel, Charikleia, Theagenes and Kalasiris would never have met in the first place. Charikleia in turn would never have discovered her true origins. On the other hand, as in the other novels, travel places the protagonists in a highly vulnerable state. Travel places the protagonists at the mercy of natural forces, the most powerful people in the regions in which they are travelling, the unfamiliarity of their surroundings, the unpredictability of events, and much more.

Travel plays a key role in initiating the plot action. Charikleia's journey to Ethiopia and her homecoming, the driving forces of the plot, begin after both Theagenes and Kalasiris arrive in Delphi. Without the arrival of Kalasiris in Delphi or his previous journey to Ethiopia, Charikleia would have never discovered her origins. Without Theagenes and his band of Thessalians, in turn, Charikleia and Kalasiris might not have found the means by which Charikleia could achieve her homecoming, even with Kalasiris' crafty and creative mind.

Kalasiris tells the Athenian Knemon that he imposed exile on himself after falling into the sin of lust for the courtesan Rhodopis. He exiled himself from his home city of Memphis, he says, as a penance for that sin and in order to prevent what he had desired from becoming reality. At the time, he tells Knemon only that he came to Delphi to take part in the religious festivals and rites of Apollo and the other gods.⁵⁷ When he speaks to Charikleia, he states that when

⁵⁶ Morgan (1999): 106-107.

⁵⁷ Hld. 2.24-33, 4.8

travelling in Ethiopia, Persinna, Charikleia's mother, told him her secret that she had exposed her daughter because she was born white; she also mentioned the tokens through which someone could recognize Charikleia, which include the long ribbon that tells in detail the whole story of Charikleia's origins and exposure.

As an exile, Kalasiris experiences the sort of travel that is associated with misfortune. That his sons believe he is dead until Kalasiris arrives in Memphis points to the idea that Kalasiris' travel was less than voluntary or fortunate. Kalasiris' misfortunes, which cause him to travel, also leads to his being able to meet Charikleia and point her toward her true home. Travel and misfortune, then, in the case of Kalasiris, displace him from one vocation (that is, his role as a high priest in Memphis) and lead him to another task – the restoration of Charikleia to her original family and the facilitation of her marriage (although he dies before the actual event takes place) with Theagenes.

Heliodorus relates travel in this novel to travel in the *Odyssey*, casting both Kalasiris and Charikleia as Odysseus figures. Yet in many ways Heliodorus elevates the Odyssean paradigm of the clever but occasionally shifty hero in the case of his own heroes. Both Kalasiris and Charikleia use their wits and deception to defend themselves and to accomplish their various ends, but their goals generally seem to be good, and their deception does not seem to lead to anyone being hurt in the process.

Heliodorus and Intertext

Heliodorus, like many of his contemporaries, contains numerous references and allusions to many of his literary predecessors. Of these, I will focus specifically on those pertaining to the *Odyssey*, but it is worth noting all the same that Heliodorus' intertext and literary allusions

reference many works and authors other than the *Odyssey* – in particular the *Iliad*, Herodotus’ histories, and Greek tragedy. Heliodorus even incorporates phrases from Demosthenes’ speeches “Against Medias”⁵⁸ and “On the Crown.”⁵⁹ His creative use of these texts, combined with a complex and innovative narrative strategy, provide researchers of narratology and mythography with a treasure-trove to explore, not to mention a culturally and structurally sophisticated work for the reader.

The *Aithiopika* contains no shortage of allusions, both explicit and subtle, to the *Odyssey* and its hero, Odysseus. This is true even to the extent that the entire novel can be seen as a creative new form of the *Odyssey*, a story of the *nostos* – that is, the homecoming – not only of its heroine Charikleia, but of the principal architect of events, Kalasiris. Odysseus himself – his ghost, that is – ultimately says that to the audience in Book 5, when he appears in a dream to Kalasiris soon after the three protagonists flee Delphi. After reproaching Kalasiris for sailing by Odysseus’ home and not paying him reverence there, he says,

‘Ordeals like mine shall you undergo; land and sea you shall find united in enmity against you. However, to the maiden you have with you my wife sends greetings and wishes her joy, since she esteems chastity above all things. Good tidings too she sends her: her story has a happy ending.’⁶⁰

Heliodorus’ blunt assertion of the *Aithiopika* as a new *Odyssey* comes midway through the novel – after its author has already hinted and provided numerous clues during the first four books. These clues include the tendency of Charikleia and especially Kalasiris to lie and deceive

⁵⁸ Hld. 1.6, Heliodorus uses a phrase from Demosthenes 21.138. (See Morgan’s footnote to his translation of the *Aithiopika*).

⁵⁹ Hld. 6.3, Heliodorus employs a metaphor from “On the Crown” 97, as Morgan also notes in his translation.

⁶⁰ Hld. 5.22. When quoting Heliodorus, I rely upon John Morgan’s translation in B.P. Reardon, ed, *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)

in order to escape danger, to the extent that J.J. Winkler wrote an extensive article called “The Mendacity of Kalasiris” about that character and his tendency to deceive. Kalasiris, the Egyptian priest and foster-father of Theagenes and Charikleia, orchestrates much of the plot action in the first part of the novel. Heliodorus emphasizes the parallel between Kalasiris and Odysseus by having Kalasiris narrate the better part of Books 3 – 5, much in the style of Odysseus’ own narration to the Phaeacians in books 8 – 12 of the *Odyssey*. The reader observes his characterization as an Odysseus figure most clearly in his tendency to deceive – yet he almost always uses deceit for a good purpose: to help his friends. For instance, when one man among the merchants with whom they are travelling wants to marry Charikleia, he at first does not agree. When he learns, however, that this person wants to kidnap Charikleia, Kalasiris falsely promises Charikleia’s hand to prevent her kidnapping until they can figure out a better plan or are provided with an opportunity to escape.⁶¹

Lastly, Kalasiris has his own *nostos* and ends his part in the narrative after he reaches his home city of Memphis and reconciles his two sons, Thyamis and Petosiris. They had been at war because Petosiris had usurped the high priesthood from Thyamis, his older brother and the rightful heir to that title. Kalasiris arrives just as the fight between Thyamis and Petosiris has turned into a man-to-man, Achilles vs. Hector style duel, complete with Thyamis chasing his younger brother around the city walls.⁶² Whereas when Odysseus comes home, he comes as an agent of justice and restores peace by killing those who are disrupting his home and family, Kalasiris on the other hand appears as an agent of peace and reconciliation between his two sons who are making war against each other.

⁶¹ Hld. 5.19-21

⁶² Hld. 7.6-8, II. 22.136-213

Kalasisir as Holy Man?⁶³

In addition to his portrayal as an Odyssean exile, tossed about by fate, Kalasisir also functions to some degree as a sage-type traveler in the mode of Apollonius of Tyana. Heliodorus paints Kalasisir as a sort of holy man, the former high priest of Egypt, with an air of mystery about him, especially for the people in Delphi. While Kalasisir can't appear and disappear, change his appearance (beyond the ability of normal mortals at any rate), or wield divine power, he does greatly influence the lives of the couple through his intelligence and planning. Because Kalasisir comes from Egypt and acts as a priest, the people he meets believe him capable of magic and otherwise supernatural feats. During his stay in Greece, the people there recognize him as a "holy man." In fact, both Charikles and Theagenes, hearing that Kalasisir comes from Egypt, approach him and beg him for help with Charikleia: Charikles specifically asks that Kalasisir "use an Egyptian spell" on Charikleia to convince her to marry the man he has picked out for her,⁶⁴ while Theagenes, having fallen desperately in love and suffering greatly, comes to Kalasisir with the vague and emotional request that Kalasisir help him.⁶⁵

Kalasisir laughs at the people who believe that he uses such arts as magic, spell-casting, and necromancy,⁶⁶ but he also uses this image of himself to achieve his plans, often in quite

⁶³ Alan Binnault addresses this question in his own chapter, "Holy Man or Charlatan? The Case of Kalasisir in Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*" in *Holy Men and Charlatans in the Ancient Novel*, (eds.) Stelios Panayotakis, Gareth Schemling, and Michael Paschalis (2015). Binnault argues against the idea that Kalasisir is a shifty liar and a charlatan. Although he recognizes that Kalasisir lies and uses deceit, he nonetheless concludes that Kalasisir is "a genuine priest, who sometimes acts as charlatan to protect and serve Theagenes and Charikleia," and that his tendency for deceit "is not selfish."

⁶⁴ Hld. 2.33

⁶⁵ Hld. 3.16

⁶⁶ See Hld. 3.16 where Kalasisir disparages the type of magic "that crawls on the ground." One may also detect the author's generally negative attitude toward magical practices in Book 6.13-15, when an old woman uses necromancy to consult the corpse of her dead son. While his corpse does prophesy true events (as the novel bears out), her son rebukes her for using magic and forecasts the old woman's death and future events in the novel (i.e. the reconciliation of Kalasisir's sons and Charikleia's homecoming). Of course, the whole scene also functions in a more practical way as a plot device. It serves as a means of foreshadowing for the audience.

humorous ways. After Charikleia falls in love with Theagenes, for instance, she complains of a headache and falls ill due to her emotional distress – in a fashion rather typical for the protagonists of both sexes in the Greek novels⁶⁷ – Charikles finds Kalasiris and begs him to help cure Charikleia. The perceptive Kalasiris has already figured out that the protagonists have fallen in love with each other; to him it is the most obvious thing in the world. He tells Charikles, however, that Charikleia has been struck by an evil eye.⁶⁸ When he comes to see Charikleia, Kalasiris tells Knemon,

“Having secured our privacy, I launched into a sort of stage performance, producing clouds of incense smoke, pursing my lips and muttering some sounds that passed for prayers, waving the laurel up and down, up and down, from Charikleia’s head to her toes, and yawning blearily, for all the world like some old bedlam. I kept this up for some time, until, by the time I came to an end, I had made complete fools of both myself and the girl, who shook her head again and again and smiled wryly as if to tell me that I was on quite the wrong track and had no idea of what was really wrong with her.”⁶⁹

As Kalasiris leaves Charikleia’s house, he finds Theagenes lingering outside. When Theagenes makes a despairing comment about Charikleia, Kalasiris tells Knemon that, “I made of show of annoyance, ‘I shall thank you to stop slandering me and my art,’ I said, ‘which has already ensnared her and compelled her to love you. Now she is praying to catch a glimpse of

⁶⁷ See David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994): 15-25. In a section appropriately entitled “Hapless Heroes,” Konstan points out the emotional helplessness of male heroes in the Greek novels as part of his argument for an equality (by ancient standards, anyway) of the portrayal of masculine and feminine in the Greek novel.

⁶⁸ Although one may interpret the “evil eye” as tongue-in-cheek way for Kalasiris to talk about love at first sight (Winkler 320).

⁶⁹ Hld. 4.5

you as if you were one of the gods.”⁷⁰ So while Kalasiris subtly and intelligently figures out a way to bring the couple together, he casts this fallacious image of himself as a magic-worker.

As comical as Kalasiris’ image of himself as a sorcerer is, his own attitude toward magic hints as his decision to have Theagenes and Charikleia flee in the middle of the night rather than attempt to convince Charikles through conversation. Using “an Egyptian spell” to convince Charikleia to marry her cousin would constitute a form of manipulation (which Kalasiris evidently considers far worse than his own manipulation of Charikles himself). Moreover, Winkler argues that when Kalasiris acts with duplicity towards Theagenes – who may be excused somewhat on account of his passionate and emotionally disabling love for Charikleia – and especially Charikles, he does so in order to prevent the forcing of Charikleia’s own will and enable her to make her own decisions autonomously. During Kalasiris’ private conversations with Charikleia, Kalasiris speaks with honesty and gentleness.⁷¹ While Kalasiris lies and uses deceit, he always does so with a good purpose, looking out most especially for the interests of Charikleia. As an exile and a trickster, the character of Kalasiris evokes his ties to Odysseus. His *nostos* to Memphis and the reconciliation of his sons further the comparison. In accordance with his portrayal as a sage-type traveler, Kalasiris does not wander without meaning; rather, the exile of this wise man is an important means by which the gods bring about Charikleia’s return to her parents.

Charikleia as Odysseus

⁷⁰ Hld. 4.6

⁷¹ See Winkler 328-329

Like Kalasiris, Charikleia, the novel's principal heroine, also functions as an Odysseus figure.⁷² While Kalasiris' resemblance to Odysseus is evident mainly in his cleverness and tendency to deceive others Charikleia is cast as an Odysseus primarily through her own *nostos*, that is, her homecoming. However, these categories do overlap: as I mentioned before, Kalasiris has his own homecoming and Charikleia fabricates tales and uses deceit when necessary. Charikleia's homecoming serves as one of the two major goals of the plot, together with the happy conclusion to the romance between her and Theagenes.

A *Nostos* for Charikleia?

Do Charikleia and Theagenes have a homecoming? In my own reading, they do; yet the question merits a bit of examination. They certainly reach the land of Charikleia's birth by the end of the story. The *nostos* in this novel is more of a homecoming for Charikleia than Theagenes, but the novel is not as concerned with the hero as with the heroine.⁷³ Some scholars, however, have presented differing views on the idea of homecoming in this novel: Morgan, for instance, writing about the *Aithiopika*'s intertext with the *Odyssey*, calls the intertext associated with Charikleia's homecoming "predictable."⁷⁴ On the other hand, Whitmarsh, believes that no Greek novel has so little evidence of a homecoming as the *Aithiopika* and that the protagonists do not have a clear idea of where exactly their home might be. His analysis of what constitutes

⁷² It is also worth noting that Theagenes, the love and eventual husband of Charikleia, is crafted as a sort of Achilles, more in terms of strength and ability as an athlete and warrior than in behavioral tendencies (such as, for instance, giving into extended bouts of self-pity). One may observe this first of all in the name *Theagenes* "goddess-born" and also in a passage in Book 2.34-35 where Kalasiris tells Knemon that Theagenes and his band of Thessalians claimed descent from Achilles. Heliodorus also gives Theagenes a heroic combat scene in Book 10.28-32 where he wrestles first with wild animals running amuck and then the Ethiopian champion. Moreover, at the beginning of Book 7, when while Thyamis chases his brother Petosiris around the walls of the city, an unarmed Theagenes (who has now become Thyamis' friend) runs following Thyamis out of concern for him.

⁷³ Katharine Haynes speaks of Charikleia's superiority to Theagenes in her own work, *Fashioning the Feminine in the Greek Novel* (London: Routledge, 2003): 67 – 73. It is certainly true that while the novel follows the journey of both Theagenes and Charikleia, it focuses more on Charikleia's finding her own homeland.

⁷⁴ Morgan (2007): 139-160

“home” seems to be based on a character’s emotional or ideological connection to one particular location.⁷⁵

Whitmarsh contrasts the emotional attachment of novel heroines such as Callirhoe with the emotional lack of attachment to any particular location in the *Aithiopika*. The heroes and heroines of the novels *Callirhoe* and *Habrocomes and Anthia* always are, in a very literal sense, attempting to reach the place that they came from. After pirates kidnap Callirhoe from her tomb in Syracuse, the main driving force behind the plot is the restoration of Callirhoe to Syracuse and to her first husband, Chaereas. After Habrocomes and Anthia depart from their home city of Ephesus, the novel is chiefly concerned with both reuniting the hero and heroine and bringing the couple back to their home town of Ephesus where they may live in peace. Callirhoe, Chaereas, Habrocomes, and Anthia all attempt, throughout the course of their respective novels to reach the city where they were born, grew up, developed community ties, formed friendships, and married. Thus Whitmarsh insightfully draws a connection between the literary reunion of prominent citizens with their homeland and the presentation of the health of the polis in those novels.⁷⁶

On the other hand, in the *Aithiopika*, the author suspends the idea of emotional attachment found in the earlier novels. Whitmarsh sees the lack of homecoming, which is rooted in this lack of emotional attachment to any particular “home,” as the basis for his analysis that nothing resembling a homecoming takes place in Heliodorus’ novel. However, the context which Heliodorus presents – that Charikleia has never known her true parents – renders any homecoming an entirely different affair from the context provided by Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, and Achilles Tatius. In a certain sense, Whitmarsh correctly identifies the different

⁷⁵Tim Whitmarsh, *Narrative and Identity in the Ancient Greek Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 150-151

⁷⁶ Whitmarsh (2011), 32-40

meaning of home in the *Aithiopika* from other novels. “Home” for Charikleia is most definitely not the place where she grew up, not the place where she formed friendships and ties with the community, and not the place where she met Theagenes who by the end of the novel becomes her husband. It is technically the place where she was born, but of course she has no idea where that might be until she is seventeen years old and meets Kalasiris, who fortuitously deduces who she is and where she came from.

When Charikleia returns to her parents, she does not return to a place that she knows, loves, and longs for (like Odysseus), but to the place of her origins and her true parents nonetheless, and coming into her inheritance – for a loose analogy, a bit like the way Aragorn in the *Lord of the Rings* by the end of Tolkien’s trilogy becomes a king by virtue of being a descendant of Isildur. Becoming king and ruling in Gondor constitutes a great personal achievement for him, even if he grew up in a different country and thus formed most of his friendships and relationships elsewhere.⁷⁷ While Charikleia might not have an emotional attachment to Ethiopia or Hydaspes and Persinna through personally knowing and interacting with them, she nonetheless considers it important to achieve a reunion with her parents. Charikleia does have a homecoming in the sense of returning to the place of her origins, and her return to the land of her birth, even if it is not associated with any pre-existing memories or friendships with the people who live there (other than Sisimithres who cared for Charikleia as a young child).⁷⁸

Charikleia does not speak of her return and reunion with her family all the time. While Charikleia does not have an emotional attachment to her home based on memory and previously

⁷⁷ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965): 236 – 251, 337 – 344

⁷⁸ Hld. 10.12-16

existing relationship, Heliodorus nonetheless presents her as a heroine who is deeply invested in returning home. Charikleia first learns of her true parentage from Kalasiris, during the confused mess that arises after Theagenes and Charikleia have fallen in love with one another (which is further complicated by Charikles' appeal to Kalasiris to bewitch Charikleia into marrying her cousin). In Book 4, when Kalasiris reveals Charikleia's parentage and origins to her, he says that "a pride befitting her birth was awaked in her" and immediately "ran to embrace" Kalasiris and asked him what she ought to do.⁷⁹

While one might expect Charikleia to speak about missing Delphi, the place where she has grown up, Charikleia does not express regret at leaving Delphi with Theagenes until the very end, when Charikles appears in Ethiopia. Even then, rather than saying that she misses Delphi itself, she says that she feels regret at the callous way in which she faked her own kidnapping.⁸⁰ When the soldiers of Hydaspes capture and handcuff Theagenes and Charikleia, they lead them away to be sacrificed. However, Charikleia does not worry about their ominous circumstances, but rejoices that the soldiers are taking them to Ethiopia. She acts with confidence until the moment when she must speak with her parents. They are overjoyed when they hear the name of Hydaspes, even if Charikleia insists upon waiting to reveal her identity until the moment is right.⁸¹ When the candidates for sacrifice are tested for their virginity (and hence, eligibility for human sacrifice) on a gridiron, Charikleia confidently runs to it even though her success with the test will ostensibly lead to her death.⁸² Thus Charikleia, rather unlike Theagenes, who laments

⁷⁹ Hld. 4.12

⁸⁰ Hld. 10.38

⁸¹ Hld. 9.24

⁸² Hld. 10.9

the fact that sacrifice will be the reward for their virtue, has confidence and a hopeful expectation about her ability to win over her parents and to convince them of the truth of her identity.⁸³

Charikleia as Crafty Heroine

How else does Heliodorus craft the heroine into an Odysseus figure? In addition to having a *nostos* of her own, Charikleia displays a natural talent for deceit when she fabricates a story about her and Theagenes' supposed origins in Ephesus that parallels Odysseus' Cretan Tales – that is, the false stories he tells when he first arrives in Ithaca, in which he pretends that he is a Cretan exile. Charikleia uses her own stories to protect herself and Theagenes from the robbers who have captured them. To the bewilderment of poor Theagenes she deceitfully agrees to marry the robber captain.⁸⁴ Near the end of the novel, when Charikleia reaches Ethiopia, she waits and withholds the truth of her parentage before slowly revealing to the King and Queen of Ethiopia the fact that she is their daughter. Charikleia's method of releasing information resembles that of Odysseus himself, who approaches his home in disguise and waits for the opportune moment to reveal his true identity.

In at least two separate occasions, Charikleia, like Odysseus, makes use of disguises. As Theagenes, Charikleia, and Knemon prepare to leave what was once Thyamis' bandit-hideout, Theagenes and Charikleia decide to dress as beggars, prompting a sarcastic joke from Knemon about their hideous appearances (like other romantic protagonists of the Greek novels, both Theagenes and Charikleia have outstanding beauty).⁸⁵ In Book 6, she and Kalasiris, believing that no one on the road will bother beggars, make the journey from Chemmis to Memphis both

⁸³ Hld. 10.9

⁸⁴ Hld. 1.22-26

⁸⁵ Hld. 2.19

dressed in rags and covered in filth. On that occasion, Heliodorus says that she “befouled her face, smearing soot and daubing mud on it to make it dirty, and arranged a filthy shawl skew-whiff on her head so that the edge of it hung down over one eye like a crazy veil.”⁸⁶ Her disguise proves so effective that Theagenes does not even recognize her when she arrives in Memphis until she whispers a secret password to him and thus reveals her identity.⁸⁷ Their use of disguises recalls a number of instances in which Athena changes Odysseus’ appearance or veils him in mist to protect him.

Unlike Odysseus, Charikleia need not fight to restore order to her own family home.⁸⁸ From the moment that the author introduces King Hydaspes to the audience, it becomes clear that he is both morally good and sufficiently in control of his own realm. Yet she and Theagenes are put in immediate danger when the Ethiopians decide to sacrifice them. Charikleia’s fight to regain her homeland manifests as a battle between her ingenuity and cleverness and the dangerous situation that faces both her and Theagenes. Once her parents realize that Charikleia is their daughter and that Theagenes is her betrothed, all is well, and soon enough the characters achieve their happy ending.⁸⁹

Let us return at this point to Charikleia’s false stories and their significance for the plot as a whole. A reader who does not know the *Aithiopika*’s plot would know next to nothing about

⁸⁶ Hld. 6.11

⁸⁷ Hld. 7.7

⁸⁸ In a certain sense, one might even consider Heliodorus’ use of violence in comparison with the picture presented in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* subversive. When Odysseus comes home, he slaughters the arrogant suitors without mercy; yet when Theagenes and Charikleia return to Ethiopia, after Charikleia clarifies her relationship with her parents, the monarchs of Ethiopia, the Ethiopians abolish human sacrifice. They take the fact that they *almost* unknowingly sacrificed the daughter of the king and her beloved as sign from the gods to end the practice of human sacrifice. Similarly, when in Book 7, Theagenes (who, as I mentioned in an earlier footnote, recalls Achilles) runs around the walls of Memphis in a scene that is meant to evoke Achilles’ pursuit of Hector around Troy, he simply runs without weapons. He does this not wishing to kill anyone but rather out of a concern of for his friend’s safety.

⁸⁹ Hld. 10. For analysis of the novel’s conclusion, see J.R. Morgan, “A Sense of the Ending: The Conclusion of Heliodorus’ *Aethiopika*,” *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 119 (1989): 299-320.

Charikleia and Theagenes by the time that Thyamis asks where they come from. Charikleia's response can be seen as both a nod to the *Odyssey* and a perhaps more sarcastic reference to Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesian Tale*. The audience knows next to nothing when she tells Thyamis that she and Theagenes, a sister and her brother from Ephesus, she a priestess of Artemis and he a priest of Apollo, originally planned on sailing to Delos to help to prepare for festivals there. Their ship was tossed about for days and nights by a storm. No sooner had the passengers sat down at a feast in thanksgiving for their deliverance than the sailors set upon them and killed most of them for their money. All those events had led to the opening scene as the robbers discovered it: overturned tables and slaughter everywhere, with a wounded Theagenes and a well-dressed Charikleia standing over him weeping.⁹⁰

Winkler has interpreted Charikleia's "Cretan Tale" as Heliiodorus' response to and echo of other novels – he gives a basic plot, albeit without a love story since Charikleia naturally does not want Thyamis to become jealous. Charikleia's self-identification of herself and Theagenes as Ephesians recalls in particular Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesian Tale*. Heliiodorus, according to Winkler, gives the basic version of many earlier novels. After doing this, Heliiodorus then proceeds to write a more complex, intriguing, and unpredictable novel than the ones that came before.⁹¹

I do not contest Winkler's analysis on this point; however, I should like to posit another function of Charikleia's tall tales in Book 1, in view of her relationship with Kalasiris. That relationship, I believe, is meant to mirror in the context of Heliiodorus' novel the relationship

⁹⁰ Hld. 1.22

⁹¹ See Winkler 303-304. He states that "Her [Charikleia's] account is not only a lie, it is nearly a parody of the Greek romance as a genre, conflating typical motifs from several novels, as a sort of least common denominator of what such a story could be expected to be. It is as if for Heliiodorus the measure of the brigands' gullibility is their willingness to believe in the plot of a Greek romance."

between Athena and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. That analogy is not exact, but why should one expect it to be in the context of a completely different novel coming from an author bent on placing his own creative stamp on his references to the past? But to understand how one relationship in the *Aithiopika* resembles another in the *Odyssey*, it would first be useful to analyze the relationship of Athena and Odysseus in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Athena, goddess of Crafts and Helper of Heroes

Who is Athena? She acts as one of the most prominent characters of the Homeric epics, Greek tragedy, hero stories and 6th and 5th century vase painting. The 28th Homeric hymn states that she sprung from her father's head in full armor and that "At the might of the bright-eyed goddess great Olympos reeled/ In a fearsome tremor, the earth all round with a dreadful scream."

⁹² Athena is a figure of power and strength, even to the point that she inspires fear and awe in Olympus. She is the goddess of war strategy, of wisdom, of material crafts and craftiness of the mind; in addition to all those things she is the helper of heroes, such as Herakles, Diomedes, Achilles, and most especially Odysseus. She appears prominently in this role both in literature and in art.

Athena's personality and distinctive features include many talents of the mind: the ability to plan and strategize, the ability to use cunning devices and deceive when necessary (like her favorite Odysseus). The composer of the 5th Homeric hymn contrasts three goddesses with Aphrodite: Hestia, Artemis, and Athena.⁹³ The Homeric hymns emphasize her love of military strategy and her patronage of crafts. Hymn 5 to Aphrodite states that

⁹² Homeric Hymn 28.10-11

⁹³ For a more detailed analysis, see Polyxeni Strolonga, "Aphrodite against Athena, Artemis, and Hestia: A Contest of *Erga*," *Illinois Classical Studies* 37 (2012): 1-20.

For not pleasing to her are golden Aphrodite's works,
 But what is pleasing to her are wars and Ares' work,
 Combats and battles and being busy with splendid works –
 She was the first who taught the craftsmen on earth to make carts
 And chariots gleaming with bronze, and she taught her splendid works
 To the soft-skinned maidens in halls, inspiring each one's mind.⁹⁴

Hymn 11, a hymn to Athena herself, hints more at the role she plays in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*:

With Pallas Athena, protectress of cities, my song begins,
 With that fearsome goddess who cares like Ares for warlike works.
 The sacking of cities, the scream of battle, the clash of the fray –
 And also ensures the army's safe homeward return.⁹⁵

The *Library* of Pseudo-Apollodorus portrays Athena providing patronage to Perseus, Jason, and Herakles. She gives Perseus advice. To Herakles she gives weapons, a peplos, and noisemakers to scare away the Stymphalian birds, takes the golden apples back to the garden of the Hesperides, and helps him fight the giants in the Gigantomachy.⁹⁶ Athena's patronage of Herakles also appears indirectly in the *Iliad*, when she speaks of how many times she helped that hero.

Athena, as a highly intelligent goddess often uses tricks as disguises to accomplish her own ends. In the *Iliad*, Athena appears to Hector disguised as his brother Deiphobos. She thus convinces Hector to stop running away from Achilles, who has now already chased Hector

⁹⁴ Homeric Hymn 5.7-15.

⁹⁵ Homeric Hymn 11.1-4

⁹⁶ Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Library*, 1.69. 1.71. 1.93. 1.121

around the walls of Troy three times. She then, without Hector's knowledge, retrieves for Achilles a spear that he had cast at Hector. Once Hector stops running and stands to face Achilles, brave as that action is, it is only a matter of time before he realizes that "Deiphobos" has disappeared and Achilles takes revenge on Hector.⁹⁷ Through her deceit, Athena helps Achilles to win the duel against Hector. Not only does she stop Hector from fleeing Achilles, but her deception also demoralizes him. Moreover, Apollo at this time decides that the gods have abandoned Hector and leaves him permanently. Athena as the helper of heroes shows special favoritism to Odysseus in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

The Relationship of Athena and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*

In Homer's epic poetry, the Wandering Hero, Odysseus, is the favorite of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and war strategy. Athena appears frequently to various heroes, including Odysseus, to guide and direct them. The first example of Athena's relationship with Odysseus in the *Iliad* is her guidance of Odysseus after Agamemnon's test of his men. The Greek leader receives a false dream from Zeus in which he learns that the Greeks should go to battle, because they will win against the Trojans. Agamemnon's dream tells him that victory is in store, but when he speaks at the assembly, he says something quite different: that he received a dream from Zeus the night before in which he was commanded to assemble the fleet and leave for Greece. They would not have victory against the Trojans. Agamemnon's falsehood is of course a test, but the Greek soldiers, ignorant of that fact, begin to head for their ships. The order and unity of the army dissolve into chaos. At that moment Athena, at the prompting of Hera (who desperately wants to see the Trojans destroyed), appears to Odysseus and tells him to stop the

⁹⁷ *Il.* 22.214-301

Achaean soldiers from fleeing to their ships and leaving. Odysseus, with his gift of oratory, encourages all the soldiers to return, to stay, and to continue fighting the war against the Trojans.⁹⁸ Athena's action helps Odysseus to restore order to the Greek army.

The bulk of Athena's interaction with Odysseus occurs not in the *Iliad*, but in the *Odyssey*, in which any interaction between gods and humans focuses primarily on Odysseus and Athena. Of course, Athena counsels Telemachus,⁹⁹ Poseidon persecutes Odysseus,¹⁰⁰ Hermes gives Odysseus a magic herb to ward off Circe's magic,¹⁰¹ and other gods and other heroes interact in different passages, but in large part the focus remains upon Odysseus and Athena, his patroness. At her prayers, Zeus agrees to help Odysseus escape from Calypso's island and complete the final part of his journey.¹⁰² Athena through different mechanisms orchestrates Odysseus' return home and helps him to overcome obstacles that he, despite his intelligence and perseverance, would have not, most likely, been able to overcome on his own. She saves Telemachus from the plotting of the suitors,¹⁰³ gives Odysseus the disguises he needs to arrive home safely,¹⁰⁴ arranges that the Phaeacians give him a favorable reception,¹⁰⁵ and intercedes with him before the other deities.

⁹⁸ *Il.* 2.1-372

⁹⁹ *Od.* 1.231-248, 2.311-351 Athena advises Telemachus to sail to Pylos and Sparta; 15.11-48 Athena tells Telemachus to return home and warns him of an ambush the suitors have set for him and tells him how he can avoid it.

¹⁰⁰ *Od.* 1.80-95 Zeus summarizes Poseidon's anger at Odysseus; 9.584-596 Polyphemus curses Odysseus, and calls upon his father Poseidon for revenge; 5.309-365 Poseidon destroys Odysseus' raft.

¹⁰¹ *Od.* 10.302-341 Hermes give Odysseus "moly"

¹⁰² *Od.* 1.53-103, 5.1-57 Athena appeals to Zeus on behalf of Odysseus

¹⁰³ *Od.* 15.31-43

¹⁰⁴ *Od.* 13.492-501

¹⁰⁵ *Od.* 6.247-260 Athena improves Odysseus' appearance, *Od.* 7.15-47 Athena covers Odysseus in mist, 7.50-89 Athena in the guise of a little girl guides Odysseus through the city and tells him about the royal family

Athena considers Odysseus her favorite in large part because their personalities resemble each other.¹⁰⁶ Jenny Clay has written about the connection between Athena in Odysseus in terms of *metis*, a defining characteristic of their personalities. In the case of Odysseus especially, *metis* is a deeply ambivalent character trait, which can both be applauded when it serves Odysseus' ability to survive and used in some rather questionable or underhanded moves on Odysseus' part. Nowhere (or at least in few places) is Odysseus' and Athena's likeness in terms of *metis* so clear as in Book 13, where she appears to Odysseus in disguise and he fabricates a story about his supposed origins in Crete and other falsehoods about who he is and what he is doing.¹⁰⁷ Naturally, Athena in response laughs at him and makes fun of him for his tricks and his trying to deceive her, a goddess.¹⁰⁸

A certain ambivalence in Athena and Odysseus' relationship exists which, due to the nature of the circumstances in Heliodorus, does not exist to the same extent in his novel. Odysseus is a hero with Athena, a goddess, as his patroness. Athena can therefore appear and disappear at various intervals. While she may be methodically completing carefully laid plans, Odysseus does not know or fully understand what those might be. As far as Odysseus knows, before he meets Athena again in Book 13, he is truly alone and forced to rely upon his own devices to continue to survive. Of course, by the time he makes his way home, Athena makes it very clear that she intends to restore Odysseus to his family home and the rule of Ithaca. However, for the majority of the chronological time (as opposed to narrative time) that Odysseus spends wandering, he does not see Athena; he has no way of knowing that Athena will intercede

¹⁰⁶ See Clay 197-199, and *Od* 13.374-377

¹⁰⁷ *Od.* 13.252-324; For a detailed analysis of Athena and Odysseus' discussion in Book 13, see Clay, chapter 4, 186-212.

¹⁰⁸ *Od.* 13.324-353

with him before Zeus.¹⁰⁹ These traits differ to some extent from the picture of Kalasiris' mentorship that Heliodorus presents. Since Kalasiris is a mortal, he cannot appear or vanish willingly. Moreover, Kalasiris speaks to Charikleia in a straightforward and honest manner.

In addition, Athena's role and status as a goddess has other implications for her relationship with Odysseus. Not only may she appear and disappear at her good pleasure – even if one may argue that the gods tend to display more reliability and reasonableness in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad* – but her level of power over Odysseus, that of an immortal goddess over a mortal man, implies a greater degree of obligation from one party to the other. Athena helps Odysseus in many ways, but her help is to some degree contingent upon his status as her favorite. She could just as easily use her divine power to punish in a dramatic way a hero who displeased her.¹¹⁰ Although Odysseus doesn't fear his patroness so much as reproach her for her long absence during her wanderings, the fact remains that she possesses enough power to cause the person who would displease her to fear her.

The Relationship of Kalasiris and Charikleia

Kalasiris, on the other hand, functions as Charikleia's mentor and foster-father, but never quite possesses the power or inconsistency of presence that comes with the characterization of Athena in the *Odyssey*. In that sense their relationship differs from that of Athena and Odysseus,

¹⁰⁹ See *Od.* 13.357-367, where Odysseus reproaches Athena, saying, "But I do know this: you were kind to me in the war years, so long as we men of Achaea soldiered on at Troy. But once we'd sacked King Priam's craggy city, boarded ship, and a god dispersed the fleet, from then on, daughter of Zeus, I never saw you, never glimpsed you striding along my decks to ward off some disaster. No, I wandered on, my heart forever torn to pieces inside my chest till the gods released me from my miseries at last, that day in the fertile kingdom of Phaeacia when you cheered me with words, in person, led me to their city."

¹¹⁰ Ajax especially comes to mind. Athena's preference for Odysseus over that hero surfaces, for example, in Sophocles' *Ajax* (1.1-133) and in Ajax's bitter comment in Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead*, "I know very well what lady rigged that jury against me; but one mustn't talk about the gods. As for Odysseus, I couldn't help hating him even if Athena herself told me not to" (29.2)

but it has similarities in other ways. The fact that misfortune sometimes separates Charikleia from her mentor and that he eventually dies midway through the novel facilitates settings in which Charikleia must fend for herself – using tactics very similar to those of Kalasiris. While Athena finally shows up for Odysseus after a long absence, it is just at the end when Charikleia loses Kalasiris and must face the obstacles before her on her own.

When Kalasiris and Charikleia first begin to work together, Kalasiris acts as the main architect of events. In his own narration to Knemon, Kalasiris explains that he is working to achieve the will of the gods, which they communicate through dreams and oracles. Kalasiris helps Charikleia to win the love of the man she is in love with (who has already fallen in love with her of his own accord), and more than that, to find her true parents – who, luckily, happen to be the king and queen of Ethiopia. In the early days of the plot, Kalasiris is the mover, and both Theagenes and Charikleia willingly follow his plans. Theagenes and Charikleia must exercise a lot of trust both in believing Kalasiris' story about Charikleia's origins (after all, if only Kalasiris can read the tokens that detail Charikleia's parentage, who is to say that he hasn't fabricated the whole story entirely?) and following his advice about fleeing Delphi and travelling, at the risk of both safety and reputation (more importantly safety) to an entirely different country across the Mediterranean Sea.

Like Athena and Odysseus, Kalasiris and Charikleia have similar personalities and intellectual gifts. Already before Kalasiris meets Charikleia, she displays a natural intelligence and a certain stubbornness in insisting upon virginity against the wishes of Charikles. Charikles, while complaining of Charikleia's refusal to marry at all, says that,

I have tried soft words, promises, and reasoned arguments to persuade her, but all to no avail. But the worst part is that I am, as the saying goes, hoist with my own petard: she

makes great play with that subtlety in argument whose various forms I taught her as a basis for choosing the best way of life.¹¹¹

Charikleia's innate intelligence, combined with her rhetorical training from Charikles, further develops under the influence of Kalasiris, from making good arguments to lying and fabricating tales when necessary. Even in these chronologically early days of the plot, Kalasiris uses deception, thus acting as a protective figure to Charikleia. Pretending to Charikles that he is a sort of magician, he reveals to Charikleia her origins and offers to both help her to return home and marry Theagenes. For example, in a delicate piece of maneuvering, when Charikles recruits Kalasiris to convince Charikleia to marry her cousin, Kalasiris instead suggests to Charikleia the possibility of marrying Theagenes and returning to her homeland. Thus Kalasiris accomplishes something entirely different from what Charikles intended.

After revealing Charikleia's Ethiopian origins to her, Kalasiris states his plan: Charikleia can return to her homeland and her royal family, avoid marrying Alkamenes, and marry Theagenes. When Charikleia asks what they should do, Kalasiris advises that Charikleia "pretend to consent to marry Alkamenes." When Charikleia asks why they should use deceit at all, Kalasiris vaguely tells her to trust him, saying that "events will reveal all... and often an enterprise is executed more boldly if it is carried out without forethought."¹¹² Thus while Charikleia learned much from Charikles in terms of rhetorical argument, she now learns about the value of deception from Kalasiris – at least inasmuch as it is used for some good. Heliodorus does not ever, in my reading, portray an instance in which Kalasiris lies for an evil or even a questionable purpose. Charikleia witnesses Kalasiris' maneuvering in his dealing with the

¹¹¹ Hld. 2.33

¹¹² Hld. 4.13

Phoenician merchants, and both she and Kalasiris disguise themselves when they set out upon a journey together.

As their relationship progresses, chronologically speaking, Charikleia emerges more and more as a confident and intelligent figure, capable of the same type of cunning and clever devices displayed by her mentor Kalasiris. Yet chronological time does not equal narrative time in Heliodorus. However, in terms of narrative time, the novel both begins and ends with a confident, clever heroine, creating to some degree the impression that she is, has been, and always will be that way. In the beginning of the novel, we see her lie to the Egyptian bandits when she is captured. She intelligently maneuvers through a series of dangerous circumstances when she finally arrives home at the end of the novel. While Charikleia's successful homecoming results to some degree from factors that are beyond her control, such as the sudden appearance of Charikles, nonetheless her own ingenuity helps save both herself and Theagenes from the horrible ending of human sacrifice. For instance, toward the end, the Ethiopians capture her and Theagenes. Rather than revealing her identity immediately, which might confuse and anger Hydaspes, she bides her time, waiting for the opportune moment.

After Hydaspes accepts the facts that Charikleia is his daughter, Charikleia must still think on her feet to save Theagenes from danger. She exasperates Hydaspes by asking that Theagenes' life be spared. When that fails, Charikleia asks that she herself might sacrifice Theagenes. When Hydaspes tells her that only a married person can perform the sacrifice, since the priestess of the Moon who performs the sacrifice must be married, she says that she has a husband in mind. Although Hydaspes interrupts Charikleia and refuses to listen to her argument,

thinking that she must be mad, she nonetheless invents one argument after another with admirable speed.¹¹³

Sandwiched in the middle of the novel lie the adventures of Kalasiris, whose talents and intelligence manifest themselves most prominently during his frame narrative to Knemon. Speaking in narrative time then, Charikleia appears much the same (with exceptions, of course) in both the beginning and the end; yet one can detect a significant increase in confidence and the control over her own destiny from passages when she first meets Theagenes and Kalasiris, acting as a priestess at Delphi, and the times when she displays her own mendacity later in the novel.

In a certain sense, Kalasiris' death in Book 7¹¹⁴ prompts Charikleia to act more autonomously now that her beloved mentor and foster-father is gone and she has no choice but to act with her own wits. For all of Theagenes' good qualities – and he certainly has many of them – he does not excel in ingenious ideas and planning the way Kalasiris and Charikleia do. For the plot to reveal Charikleia's development most fully from an intelligent but initially modest and obedient young woman to a confident, crafty, and highly ingenious young heroine, the audience must see a set of a circumstances in which Charikleia acts without help. Similarly, before Athena directly intervenes in Odysseus' fortunes upon his arrival to the Phaeacians, Odysseus acts without help dealing with such tricky situations as his entrapment in Polyphemus' cave. To one degree or another, such episodes help to showcase Odysseus' own talent for scheming.

Conclusion

¹¹³ Hld 10.18-22

¹¹⁴ Hld. 7.11

Heliodorus participated within a tradition of Second Sophistic authors both imitating and competing with the great authors of the past, especially Homer. In doing so, he constructed his novel as a sort of second *Odyssey*, complete with a frame plot told by the crafty Egyptian priest Kalasiris. The author, working with the previously established genre of the Greek romance and adventure novel as a literary form, wrote a far more ambitious, more complex in narrative, and more intertextually playful novel than the works of his predecessors. Like Achilles Tatius and Longus before him, Heliodorus engaged in innovative ways with the earlier forms of the novel. Whereas one can see the innovation of Achilles Tatius and Longus in terms of the psychological development of their characters, in the *Aithiopika*, Heliodorus' innovation most clearly appears in terms of his narrative strategy and his competition with Homer's characterization. In the development of his plot, Heliodorus casts both Kalasiris and Charikleia as Odysseus-type figures, protagonists who are driven on a journey that is filled with dangers, challenges, and obstacles, even as they attempt to make their way to Charikleia's homeland of Ethiopia.

Throughout much of the novel, Kalasiris acts as a father figure and a mentor to Charikleia. Their relationship is such that it resembles the relationship of Athena and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. Just as Athena acts as a patron of Odysseus, Kalasiris acts as a mentor of Charikleia. This can be seen most clearly in the following ways: In both relationships, the personalities of the characters resemble one another in terms of intelligence and a gift with words and deceit. In addition, Charikleia and Odysseus both gain knowledge and protection from their respective mentors. Both Odysseus and Charikleia must also grow through facing trials without Athena and Kalasiris, respectively. While Odysseus faces this obstacle in the first part of his journey, before reaching the land of the Phaeacians, Charikleia experiences the reverse: she must work without Kalasiris' help by the time that she and Theagenes reach Ethiopia and achieve their

homecoming. Heliodorus uses the motif of mentorship to portray the complex development of Charikleia as a character and as a heroine of her own *Odyssey*.

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