

Abduction Marriage in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*

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AS IN MYTH, sexual violence played a major rôle in ancient Greek and Roman social life and literature.¹ Interaction in rituals and informal settings both restricted and enabled mingling between the sexes; family conclaves and issues of social standing gave rise to protracted property negotiations with other families concerning a valuable human commodity: daughters. An "alternative strategy" to the norm of father-approved betrothal and (parentally) arranged marriages was found in marriage by abduction, a quasi-legal correction of a structural conflict within Mediterranean trafficking in women.

Judith Evans-Grubbs' survey of abduction marriage in antiquity and the Byzantine East² omits one palmary example of ancient co-operative bride-capture as a device to foil paternal wishes: this is found in the elaborately wrought plot of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*.³ The first section of this paper will explore this element of Mediterranean social and literary history before and during the the epoch of Heliodorus. The second section will consider the bride-theft in Heliodorus' novel as a source (hitherto unexploited) of information on the mechanics and aesthetics of abduction. The third section examines the significance of the abduction for the values implicit in Heliodoran narrative. It briefly probes Heliodorus' characterization and erotic themes, the heroine's personality and sexuality, the psychology and sociology of obsessive 'romantic' love, recipro-

¹ A. LAIOU, "Sex, Consent, and Coercion in Byzantium," in A. E. Laiou, ed., *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Mediaeval Societies* (Washington [D.C.] 1993: hereafter 'Laiou'), 109–221, in an examination of the Byzantine epic *Digenes Akrites*, wrongly ascribes (200) to Roderick Beaton the mistaken claim that abduction never occurs in the ancient romances.

² J. EVANS-GRUBBS, "Abduction Marriage in Antiquity," *JRS* 79 (1989: hereafter 'Evans-Grubbs') 59–83, at 61.

³ Subsequent references will be made to the three-volume Budé edition by Rattenbury, Lumb, and Maillon (Paris 1960²).

cated but unconsummated, and the power of ancient marriage as a regulator—ordinarily nearly invisible—of gendered behavior. The result will place abduction marriage in the context of Heliodorus' pretense at accuracy in its social as well as its physical setting; and it will document the pervasive manipulation of gender expectations by the characters and the author for both internal and external audiences.

I. Abduction Marriage in Society and Literature

The personal dangers and limited social options of beautiful young women abducted, seduced, and abandoned populate the romantic literature of every age. They are central to Greek literature, from Homer's Chryseis, Briseis, and Penelope, through Euripides' *Medea*, the abused maidens and prostitutes of Attic Middle and New Comedy, on to Callirhoe, Anthia, Leucippe, Chloe, and Chariclea in the later Greek novels. Abduction as an evasion or anticipation of arranged marriage provided a staple of Roman (Seneca, Quintilian) and probably also Greek declamation long before Heliodorus' age; it subsequently appears with some frequency in the medieval Greek romances. Such *topoi* reflect patterns of action and expectations of gender behavior, and they do not necessarily reverse or even distort known social practice: for when women cannot choose the marriage they wish, and do not choose to violate openly the local limits of permitted sexuality, pretended male coercion offers one form of evading parental demands.⁴

Abduction marriage, a practice known in the ancient and modern Mediterranean and other societies from Mexico to India, allows *both* marriageable parties to recover the initiative

⁴ For E. Goffman, *Relations in Public* (New York 1971) ix, the literary evidence does not necessarily misrepresent known social practice. In the ancient Greek novels, Xenophon's Anthia offers another solution to the problem of evading male authority over sexual partners by apparently passive endurance. She pretends to experience a kind of epileptic seizure when the brothel-keeper puts her body up for hire (described at *Ephes.* 5.7.4 as her *τέχνη ἀποφυγῆς*). Everyone feels fear and pity for her pretence at spirit-possession (cf. Philostr. *VA* 3.38, 4.10, 6.43) designed to prevent him from trying again. Chariton's pregnant Callirhoe goes so far as to marry another man in order to preserve her first and true love's son (2.10f).

in selecting their spouses.⁵ More to the immediate point, it short-circuits patriarchal legal authority, whether the abduction is genuine or feigned (elopement when the woman is a willing party to the 'rape'). Although the two strategies appear quite different to us, especially as regards the issue of the woman's consent, they seemed less distinguishable to the results-oriented, patriarchal laws and customs of Greeks and Romans.⁶ In environments of limited and fragile honor, the 'unavoidable' marriage after a 'capture' was often accepted by the parties of both generations as the best among a poor choice of 'solutions'.⁷

How plausible are the tactics of abduction for marriage? Bride-theft and pseudo-theft (or elopement) have been Balkan institutions in all known periods of history.⁸ Boy and girl meet, a proposal to run off is sometimes made that same day, the woman finds a pretence to leave the house (for water or to visit

⁵ Ritual bride-capture as practiced by the Spartans provide yet another distinct category. Spartans and Argives also knew trial marriage: see Plut. *Lyc.* 15.3; E. WESTERMARCK, *A History of Human Marriage*⁵ (New York 1922: hereafter 'Westermarck') 240–77; M. HERZFELD, "Gender Pragmatics: Agency, Speech, and Bride Theft in a Cretan Mountain Village," *Anthropology* 9 (1985) 25–44. A. Stanley, "In the Land of Arranged Wedlock, Love Steals In," *The New York Times*, 7 December 1995 (A4, national edition), reports current abduction practice, again agreed upon, in Bagir, Turkmenistan, and among the Teke and Khodzha tribes. "Basically, I stole her," one sweetheart named Merdan Atayev reports. His beloved's family's rage, threats of murder, and scandal were ineffective in the face of the *fait accompli*. Cf. Evans-Grubbs 63f.

⁶ Ach. Tat. 22.13–18, 8.17–19 (discussed by Evans-Grubbs 70, with credit to her teacher J. J. Winkler) provides a case of "genuine" bride-capture, although the wrong woman is stolen! Outrage to the honor of the family of the female (8.17) is mollified here and elsewhere by a large dowry and deferential and propitiatory attentions. Herzfeld 27 discusses contemporary Cretan bride-theft, links it to animal theft, and examines how the practice of supposed violation is legitimated.

⁷ In discussing sexual consent and coercion in Byzantine law, Laiou 137 reports a parallel to Heliodorus' tale of Chariclea and her lover in a *responsum* by the jurist Balsamon to Patriarch Mark of Alexandria concerning a woman's attempt to avoid an unwanted spouse and to secure a wanted husband. Balsamon proposes an anathema to foil the woman's attempt to force her parents' hand after the feigned abduction.

⁸ See W. G. LOCKWOOD, "Bride Theft and Social Maneuverability in Western Bosnia," *Anthropological Quarterly* 47 (1974: hereafter 'Lockwood') 253–69, esp. 253f, who summarizes Kadedgic's 1818 description. In Bosnia "elopement" and "abduction" share the same word (*otmica*: 260).

the privy), meets her man and his friends, and they leave town.⁹ This is elopement. Another pattern: a group consisting of wife-shopper and his cronies may visit a town, break into a house at night, or by day waylay a young woman at a spring or tending the flocks. The men run off with the 'bride', to the humiliation and disgrace of the entire home village. Women may acquiesce in the inevitable when taken, or encourage men to abduct them, or (as above) even sneak off from home under their own power to meet supposed 'abductors'. But under Serbian rule, Bosnian *otmica* was a crime for the groom (Lockwood 254).

The families of the abducted women display great sorrow and greater anger, but a number of results beneficial to the community emerge. Beyond exercise of preference by the parties involved, a greater degree of social and genetic exogamy is obtained, and wealth is more widely distributed than in pre-arranged marriages between families with shared economic interests.¹⁰

Thus the alternative to a prescribed system is no less functional for the society than the patriarchal norm. The 'story', as told by relatives on both sides, features bold and dominant males, but in the event women play an important rôle, not rarely the decisive one.¹¹ Indeed, elopement and abduction were more common in the 1970s than the 'normal model' of marriages initiated and arranged by a boy's father (Lockwood 260). The tradition lives on in Islamic societies of Europe and Asia.

"Abduction of local maidens" and rape were "perhaps traditional amusements of high-spirited noblemen in the provinces" (Evans-Grubbs 72). Numerous such practices can be located in fourth-century B.C.E. Attic comedy. But we need not suppose that Heliodorus is engaged entirely in literary borrowing, as in his numerous allusions to Homer, Herodotus, Euripides, and Menander. Gender rôles, familial expectations,

⁹ Note that going out to relieve his bladder is used by the male Pelorus as an excuse to observe the divinely beautiful Chariclea (*Aeth.* 5.31).

¹⁰ Lockwood 260-63 also mentions some advantages irrelevant to Heliodorus: wedding expenses are greatly reduced, trial marriages are common among Muslims, and fathers are often consulted by sons on the best candidate for elopement (265).

¹¹ Cf. D. G. Bates, F. P. Conant, and A. Kudat in *Kidnapping and Elopement as Alternative Systems of Marriage* (= *Anthropological Quarterly* 47 [1974]) 233-37.

and patterns of marriage remained largely stable over time. Menander's Sostratos would not be historically out of place as a sort of Knemon in Heliodorus' romantic tale. After speaking to a citizen female, Sostratos is suspected by her family and friendly slaves of seduction, intended abduction, and even outright rape.¹² 'Simple' rape, a momentary but life-altering violence, occurs more often than bride-capture, which entails a permanent liaison, with permanent and institutional sanctions. Not less than in marriage, social custom (as opposed to formal law) concerning rape, male sexual desire, and women's options—along with codes of acceptable behavior and risk of social ostracism—remained relatively constant.¹³

The daughter of Menander's Grouch goes out for water at their isolated Attic farm, conceived by her father as a substitute social prison (*Dysc.* 198ff). Thus she manages to see and be seen. In classical antiquity, as in more recent centuries, water chores and religious duties traditionally offer women opportunities for escape from the house and for public appearances.¹⁴ The daughter does not speak. Her desires are never expressed

¹² *Dysc.* 218–23, 289–93; cf. E. FANTHAM, "Sex, status and survival in Hellenistic Athens: A study of women in New Comedy," *Phoenix* 29 (1975: hereafter 'Fantham') 44–74, esp. 53–56.

¹³ L. A. POST, "Women's Place in Menander's Athens," *TAPA* 71 (1940: hereafter 'Post') 420–59, esp. 421; Fantham 52–61; B. EGGER, "Women and Marriage in the Greek Novels," in J. Tatum, ed., *The Search for the Greek Novel* (Baltimore 1994) 260–80, esp. 267ff on Attic antiquities in the later novels (excluding bride-capture). Evans-Grubbs exhibits materials from Homer to present-day Balkan customs. M. Giovannini, "Female Chastity Codes in the Circum-Mediterranean: Comparative Perspectives," in D. Gilmore, ed., *Honor and Shame* (Washington [D.C.] 1994) 61–74, surveys current Mediterranean male and female expectations about female chastity, based on her own work in Sicily. Herzfeld explains how contemporary Cretan rules are manipulated, and describes the collusions possible among parties interested in the marriage (parents and uncles can also play their part in the pretended violations of protocol). D. COHEN's study of the "enforcement of morals in classical Athens" in *Law, Sexuality, and Society* (Cambridge 1991) employs Bourdieu's observations on rules, legal and unspoken, and his reports of how parties shave or violate them without becoming pariahs. He examines the specific interplay of law, informal social policing, and ideology in classical Athens, but employs cross-cultural data and Goffman's sociological nuances to analyze rules, infractions, and limited non-adherence (238).

¹⁴ Cf. Men. *Epitr.* 451–77, Hdt. 5.12.2; many black- and red-figure vases portray women at a well or fountain: see Cohen 152f and n.81, with modern parallels at 162f.

or asked about. In Menander's genteel world, seduction, rape, or abduction is bruited (289–93), but abduction and sexual violation prove unnecessary in this comedy: the Nymphs nearby arrange the youngsters' union and marriage.

Forcible violation at Hellenic festivals is a staple of later Greek comedy and its Roman derivatives, creating plots of suspense and surprise.¹⁵ But if rape may provide an occasion for the comic plot, it cannot provide the subject. No premeditated seduction of a maiden occurs precisely because there would be nothing comic in such an event for Athenian males or females. The protection of free women's virtue was a serious social and legal concern.¹⁶ But women "were known by sight to the men of their neighborhood or deme, presumably from being seen in the streets, or in temples, and at funerals or festivals."¹⁷

The domestic and sexual choices available to Attic and other ancient women are occluded or ignored by the extant law codes (that of Gortyn, *I.Cr.* IV 72, furnishes a modest exception). The unexpected possibilities revealed by bride-capture show how hard it is to delimit the subterfuges that law and custom unintentionally provide those lacking legal power. Demosthenes' *Against Spoudias* 41.4 refers to a father who took back his daughter after she was married—in fact to her father's adopted but later disavowed son! As Post notes (431), "For all we know ... the daughter may well have instigated the change." Pamphila, the obedient married daughter with a deviant idea in

¹⁵ Ἀρπάζω and ἀναρπάζω and other compounds are the popular *and* legal terms for abduction of women, as well as of others; cf. Evans-Grubbs 67–71; Post 424; and Fantham 55–58 for examples of reported rape in *Arbitr.*, *Samia*, *Georgos*, cf. *Cistell.* 159 (at Sicyon), *Hecyra*, *Andria*, *Adelphoe*, *Trucul.*

¹⁶ [Ar.] *Ath. Pol.* 59.3f; Pl. *Symp.* 181E; Lysias 1.32f, βιαιῶν δίκη (a slippery source for any law regulating sexuality); cf. the consternation of Daos at finding a virgin maid alone and out-of-doors at *Dysc.* 219–24. Cohen 62ff, 100, 102–32 (mostly on adultery, that is, sex with other men's *wives*); 163ff compare normative law to the ruses of sexual life. S. C. TODD, *The Shape of Athenian Law* (Oxford 1993; hereafter 'Todd') 276–79, addresses rape and our ignorance of relevant Athenian legislation.

¹⁷ Post 438, quoting Ar. *Eccl.* 520–31, Isaeus 6.10; cf. Ar. *Lys.* 530–32, Men. *Pk.* 121ff for veiling; Heliod. 6.11.3 offers a bizarre example of *kredemnon*: Chariclea dons another disguise.

Menander's *Epitrepontes*, refuses to her father's face to leave her husband.¹⁸

As to the question whether the ancient novels offer valid reflections of historical conditions, social practices, and perceptions of the 'real world', a qualified affirmative seems now the consensus.¹⁹ The novelists encourage belief by using famous buildings, institutions, legal procedures, settings, situations of lovers, and character types well-known for centuries, situating their plots in the capacious gaps of history, while they defy trust by piling up bizarre natural and social dangers and improbable coincidence for their make-believe characters.²⁰ Chariclea's *contretemps* are not those of every (or any) reader's everyday life, but the improbable, possible action is rendered plausible to be pleasurable. In the domestic sphere, self-help abduction-marriage is a social fact, an expansion valve in a closed social system. Thrills and wonders draw readers in; a known and stable horizon of "social expectation" (gender, generational protocols, dream interpretation, paternal prerogatives, sexual instincts, commercial and civic procedures, laws of war, etc.) keep the reader comfortable in a familiar world, structured yet difficult to control.

In other words, the suspension of disbelief at the endless succession of Heliodorus' threats, imprisonments, and escapes

¹⁸ Cf. *P. Didot* 1, which argues the same, then refers clearly to patriarchal privilege in controlling marriage. Passages that refer to women's *de facto* interest and choice in the selection of husbands appear in Hdt. 1.4.2, 1.5.2, and 6.122 [athetized by many but not therefore wrong in its facts]: Callias, a wealthy and powerful aristocrat's indulgence of his women; Pl. *Leg.* 924D: fathers consider what their daughters might think suitable matches; Arist. *Rhet.* 1401b36ff: Helen given her choice; and Plut. *Mor.* 189B-C: odd anecdotes about Pisistratus' mother and daughter. Hypermnestra the Danaid furnishes a mythical example of bride-capture and subsequent reconciliation of father and husband (of course here without reference to collusion, but cf. Ach. Tat. 2.10.3).

¹⁹ J. R. MORGAN, "History, Romance and Realism in the *Aithiopiaka*," *CA* 1 (1982: hereafter 'Morgan 1982') 221-65, esp. 242, the best introduction to this difficult subject; see also S. Saïd, "The City in the Greek Novel," in Tatum, ed. (*supra* n.13), 216-36. Cf. the earlier opinion of E. ROHDE, *Die griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*³ (Leipzig 1914) 483, 486 n.2: "Heliodor nur mischt in merkwürdiger Willkür die Nachrichten der verschiedensten Zeiten durcheinander." Further, "die Pythischen Spiele scheint Heliodor nicht aus eigener Erfahrung zu kennen."

²⁰ J. R. MORGAN, "Make-believe and Make Believe: the Fictionality of the Greek Novels," in C. Gill and T. P. Wiseman, edd., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Austin 1993: hereafter 'Morgan 1993') 175-229, esp. 195.

only 'works' because the author has gotten enough contextualizing facts right to retain the reader's confidence.²¹ This claim to representational realism does not erase Heliodorus' historical and geographical errors (neither so many nor so important as to alienate the audience). Rather, the fictions of his persons can please because the contextualizing details and situations seem adequately credible. The fictional date of the *Aethiopica* remains intentionally vague,²² in part to allow the inclusion of a broad pastiche of literary reminiscence and to permit a wider range of useful historical coloring. One may therefore examine this fictional incident as useful evidence for ancient abduction-marriage as a continuing strategy of Mediterranean exogamy, as Heliodorus' use of the bride-theft motif corresponds to other examples known from literature, history, and law in its motives, method, and consequences.

Heliodorus' staged abduction at Delphi transfers the choice of spouse from serious and practical parents to the romantic—or at least determined—young lovers. Evans-Grubbs justly notes (76, 83) that law, rhetoric, and historical reality are for their part variously related in their references to each other; specifically, the harsh provisions concerning women-stealers found in the later Theodosian Code (9.24.1, incorporating an edict of Constantine concerning bride-theft) may offer a consolidated restatement of long-standing civic policy, or a new Christian ide-

²¹ The French excavators of Delphi have positive things to say about the Neoptolemus hero-cult and the Stadium; the bull-throwing that the Thessalian Theagenes engages in at Meroë has known Thessalian analogues ("das mag war sein," Rohde 487 n.2, end). Socrates *Hist. eccl.* 5.22 refers a Bishop Heliodorus' episcopate to Thessalian Trikka, but G. ROUGEMONT, "Delphes chez Héliodore," in M. F. Baslez, ed., *Le Monde du Roman Grec* (Paris 1992: hereafter 'Rougemont') 93–99, expresses doubts about Heliodorus' actual experience of Delphi, if any: the significance of Artemis at Delphi is virtually nil, Chariclea's duties as priestess are therefore imaginary, no such parade could fit the Delphic route, etc. He nevertheless grants a veridical realism to Theagenes' sacrifice on behalf of his Aeanean Thessalians (96 on 3.5f).

²² After 515, if we recall 2.32.2, Calasiris' report of Charicles' report of Sisimithres' report of an Ethiopian ambassador's mission to the Persian satrap in Egypt, occurring *ten years before* the moment that the main narrative 'occurs' in the text. Mention of an Egyptian courtesan named Rhodopis need not refer to Herodotus' famous lady (2.25.1; cf. 2.134f) and her late sixth-century date, first because such 'trade names' were popular among women of this profession, and second because Heliodorus plays on the associations of famous names. Further discussion in Part II *infra*.

ology inspiring the existing law, or an example of life imitating literature. The problem of promiscuous borrowing among sources naturally infects such 'historical' novels as Heliodorus' more deeply than the genuine law codes.

It is nevertheless clear that the pragmatics of ancient gender reflect a coercive ideology of male dominance and female submission. The rules of patriarchy, in brief, demanded female virginity, dowry, and acquiescence in both fathers' visions of economic and social interests. The father's daughter serves as a relatively passive element, as expensive trafficked goods (*Aeth.* 4.6.5: οὐ εὖωνον καὶ τῶν ἐν μέσῳ τῷ βουλομένῳ προκειμένων), in the institutions of betrothal and marriage, legal contracts, and social rituals that are designed to unite two houses. Heliodorus' Chariclea—an unwanted white female infant—is handed off in Egypt, with a shawl, jewels, and other tokens of identity, to Charicles by the Ethiopian Queen Persinna's agent Sisimithres. The sworn pledge then demanded of him is to marry her to a free and equal husband and to transmit the attached dowry. The world, and also its privileges, is divided by gender. These details enrich the aura of verisimilitude with historical coloration, however exotic the immediate locale. Exposure and adoption of a baby and the conspiracy to abduct a bride all have internal and external warrant; they correspond to the audience's experience and cohere in the narrative.

Female social existence is institutionalized as a carrier or conduit for male networking. Women's legal and social "subordination is construed culturally as benign."²³ The father, with his legal right to preserve his daughter's chastity and to arrange his child's future, becomes one of literature's amusing blocking figures, but the always beautiful young woman consequently has little room to make her own selection or to engineer the union that she prefers. She has access to no legitimate way of asserting her selfhood, no open method of manipulating patriarchal imperatives within the law, religion, and the community. Attic New Comedy and the ancient romances show us that women nevertheless could and did make use of gestures, glances, beauty, and rhetoric to influence

²³ D. Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry* (Princeton 1994) 40; M. Katz, "Patriarchy, Ideology and the *Epikleros*," *StlT* 10 (1992) 692–708, at 702f comments on *Aspis*, *Dyscolos*, *Epitrepontes*, and *P. Didot* 1, with an analysis of woman as token in Attic law, the "with-the-estate" or "heiress-in-trust" *epikleros*, a topic of many comedies (*cf.* Fantham 48).

parental expectations and demands.²⁴ Male relatives expect to "speak the bride" (Herzfeld's evocative phrase [43] from the Greek regarding current Cretan practice), to elicit consent, and to conduct the formalities for house, agnates, or even villages. The conduct and placement of women calibrate male standing. Betrothal and marriage procedures, however, may allow women to rearrange their male relatives' expectations and to shape their lived reality.

II. Heliodorus' Bride-Theft in Context

The *Aethiopica* was completed perhaps between A.D. 350 and 400, although a date fifty years earlier, in the age of Constantine, is also conceivable.²⁵ The date of composition is thus as uncertain as the dramatic date of the novel. But although Heliodorus is not an accurate reporter of a historical moment, his posture of historical authenticity nevertheless requires constant reference to authentic toponyms, learned onomastics, credible—if bookish—ethnography, civic customs, and social protocols, along with the rhetoric of historiography: mannered claims of scrupulous research, of claimed limitations on precision, and other "credential ploys."²⁶ In scenes set in Egypt and Ethiopia, at Athens and at Delphi, Heliodorus takes pains to represent genuine rituals and priestly regalia, accurate topography and customs, actual names, monuments, and institutions known to earlier ages or to his own age—that is, to himself and to his educated audience. "Cette fidélité même était la condition première de sa crédibilité."²⁷

Thus while Heliodorus demonstrably takes artistic licence, historical reality furnishes the backdrop to his love-story, and every element and minute detail corresponds to some element

²⁴ Cf. Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe* at 1.19.1; 2.24.2, 25.3, 27.3, 30.1.

²⁵ G. N. Sandy, *Heliodorus* (Boston 1982) 1–5, and T. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity* (Berkeley 1983) 59f and 240 summarize the indications; G. W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History* (Berkeley 1994) 149–60 reviews the evidence for a *terminus post quem*, which he finds in what he takes to be Heliodorus' reference to the third battle for the frontier town of Nisibis (350 C.E.); B. P. Reardon, *Petronian Society Newsletter* 24 (1994) 12 concurs.

²⁶ Morgan 1982: 223, 228, 234, 246.

²⁷ J. Pouilloux, "Delphes dans les *Éthiopiennes* d'Héliodore: la réalité dans la fiction," *JSAw* 1983, 259–86: 261f, 266, 276, 285.

in concrete or literary reality, even if they are jumbled in time and space (Morgan 1982: 247f). Similar ceremonies, typical events, or comparable institutions can be found, if not in Delphi, then elsewhere. Heliodorus certainly takes pains, when the plot permits, to locate these minutiae where they belong. Like Lucian in an earlier century, gaps exist between the *buch-gelehrte* author's epoch and the dramatic date, and between that imaginary date and those of various empires and institutions—themselves seldom contemporaneous.²⁸ Nevertheless, and paradoxically, the "anachronism reinforces the realism" (Morgan 1982: 242).

At best the putative dramatic date of the novel can be placed between 525 and 331 B.C.E.: that is, after the Persian conquest of Egypt but before Alexander's conquest of Egypt. This capacious slot is neither precise nor satisfactory. Morgan (1982: 236 n.46) reasonably points out that this "history" must occur in a period devoid of any Greek-Persian conflict or Hellenic internal tension: a moment hard to locate within these temporal parameters. For all the impression of real places, manners, and times founded on 'realistic' details, Heliodorus offers few chronological specifics that would enable one to define his dramatic date, much as in the chronologically free-floating *Daphnis and Chloe*. A dramatic date at the later end of the scale—ca 360 B.C.E., an epoch similar to the late classical, if historically unspecific, Athenian society of Heliodorus' Attic model Menander—will nevertheless affirm that the abundant, if largely superficial, *Realien* corroborate the novel's historical posture. Anachronisms and anatopisms remain, to be sure, in a historically erratic narration that is neither naturalistic nor realistic in the modern sense.

For the topic of marriage by capture, however, the contaminations by historical errors are relatively unimportant, because such social customs do not have a history comparable to that of the Second Delian League, with one-time foundations, battles, constitution, organization, and elected officials. *Aethiopica* 4.16–21 is a legitimate, if fictitious, source for the phenomenon of abduction because the custom—as a safety-valve for the wishes of the young and lusty—did exist: before, during, and after both the dramatic date of the text and its date of composition, perhaps as much as 800 years later. This

²⁸ Cf. Rohde 484 on the realms of Axum and Meroë.

narrative ploy, like many in the novel, is grounded in social experience.

In the case of the Delphic assembly and posse, Heliodorus' mélange of historical and literary 'events' has antecedents in Demosthenes' accounts of Amphictyonic activities (19.150f) and in a similar abduction reported for the year 355/54 (Diod. 16.26.6, in an account of the founding of the Delphic oracle), when Echeocrates, a Thessalian of "recent times" seized and raped a beautiful young prophetess: ἐν δὲ τοῖς νεωτέροις χρόνοις ... θεασάμενον τὴν χρησμολογοῦσαν παρθένον ἔρασθῆναι διὰ τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς καὶ συναρπάσαντα (the *terminus technicus* for abduction) βιάσασθαι.²⁹ As a result of this outrage, the Delphians changed their procedures: henceforth, only women fifty years and over would declare the oracles, in virgin dress (παρθενικῆ σκευῆ) symbolic of the earlier custom. A version of this very incident, a cultic aetiology, a sordid and/or romantic "history," might therefore stand somewhere behind the Delphic element in Heliodorus' own complex plot. As for Charicles, Heliodorus' ἱερομνήμων, or "remembrancer," the term is specifically Delphic, with Classical precedents, as is the Amphictyonic levy (2.26.3; cf. Aesch. *In Ctes.* 115; Dem., *De Cor.* 147–51; cf. Rougemont 95). Attic details are largely accurate, either borrowed from books or derived from a visit, or both. Further, collections of tales of remarkable women existed long before Plutarch mentions them (πολλὰ καὶ κοινῇ καὶ ἰδίᾳ γυναιξίν ἄξια λόγου πέπρακται),³⁰ at a time well before Heliodorus shaped his story.

In the narrative itself, Charicles, the respected priest and local man of property, consorts with Delphi's first citizens. He wants a socially and economically suitable match for his beloved adopted daughter Chariclea. His choice for her husband is his nephew Alcamenes (4.7.9, 11.1f), and he desires this connection "more than all the money in the world," as he puts it. His own wife and daughter have died, the latter on her wedding night in a fire, the former shortly thereafter of a broken heart (2.29). The replacement daughter bears his name and keeps him alive (σαλεύω γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ τὸν βίον, 2.33.3, 4.19.9). Although

²⁹ Heliodorus seems to have conflated with this passage mention of virginal Artemis and virgin priestesses in the preceding sentence in order to introduce a priestess of Artemis at Delphi, where there was none (*supra* n.21).

³⁰ Plut. *Mor.* 243D; cf. Phot. *Bibl.* 161 on such collections by Artemon and Apollonius the Stoic.

Charicles had betrothed his foster-daughter to Alcamenes many years ago, Chariclea herself says that she would prefer the grave to this marriage, despite her dutiful nature as an adopted daughter. Calasiris, the match-maker from Egypt with his own hidden agenda, reasonably fears that Charicles may compel his daughter to marry *his* intended (4.13.2). Thus he justifies his protégé's sham abduction of the maid. Theagenes would have preferred to obtain Charicles' consent, if it were possible (4.6.6). Fathers fuss about money and status in the Greek novels as in Attic New Comedy (e.g. *Epitrep.* 645). The guardians of family status share a common, understandable obsession with the effect of the marriage on the household: a literary and social tradition that Heliodorus follows.

At 4.17ff the young, aristocratic Theagenes leads out an armed band of his countrymen to steal his beloved. At midnight, these high-class athletes—loyal friends of the groom-'rapist'—approach Chariclea's house disguised as drunken revelers (κῶμος, 4.17.3; ὕβρις, 4.19.2, 7) and begin to shout and bang on their shields and on the doors. They easily break down the courtyard gate (for the heroine has already tampered with the bolts εἰς ῥαδίαν ἄνοιξιν, an image fraught with sexual symbolism) and abduct a willing, complicit, and cooperative woman (εὐτρεπῆ καὶ ἅπαντα προειδυῖαν καὶ ... ἐκοῦσαν). The use of weapons and forcible removal of a female might resonate in the minds of a fourth-century reading public, familiar with contemporary versions of the *leges Iuliae de adulteriis* and *de vi publica* (later recorded in the *Digest* 48.5–6.5.2), concerning the use and abuse of unmarried and married women: for like the setting in time and space, legal procedures form a part of the background décor.

Chariclea's guardian and foster-father is distraught. The whole town is disturbed by the outrageous *iniuria* to Charicles' house and deceived about Theagenes' intent and Chariclea's participation. To the Delphians, the seizure is clearly a crime against public order and the dignity of a pillar of the community. It also represents sexual coercion (or, in Athenian law, *hybris*) against a local female resident and indeed the apparent defloration of a priestess dedicated to the virgin life. Mass hysteria and confusion ensue, then mass pursuit at Calasiris' instigation. This elderly Egyptian priest, mastermind of the entire hoax, encourages the formation of a posse but misinforms it about the flight of the miscreants (4.19–21), launching

the pursuit in the wrong direction in order to facilitate his own escape with the lovers.

The precise moment of Chariclea's seizure, providentially just before her paternally arranged marriage to a family relative and local magnate (19.9, ἀπ' αὐτῶν μικροῦ τῶν πασιτάδων, ἄρτι τῶν γάμων), fits Evans-Grubbs' model (62f) of a woman's planned escape from unwelcome matrimony and a young man's entrepreneurial forced access to a female who is denied to him by foreign birth, social custom, and potential in-laws. The penalty for such interference with paternal rights to dispose of women is specified in the text as death (4.6.6; cf. Pl. *Leg.* 874c); the mere use of accomplices in woman-theft establishes the crime as abduction in later Byzantine law (Laiou 164).

Calasiris says to Theagenes, "our business is not plunder" (4.6.5, οὐ γὰρ ἄρπαγμα τὸ πρᾶγμα). Chariclea is not for sale cheap to any buyer and is not at anyone's disposal except, nominally and legally, her father's (4.13.2). That gentleman hopes to retrieve his ward and dependent (cf. 10.37.2) even after the break-in (or break-out: 4.19.7). He has been humiliated publicly because the arranged marriage to Alcamenes had been announced to all (4.19.9). Having similarly lost his birth-daughter in a fire on her wedding-night (4.19.8), he would now willingly live only long enough to see the appropriate punishments exacted.

Postponement is a central strategy of the novel genre, of Heliodorus, and of his heroine. "Just wait"—for sex, for enlightenment, for a payoff—is a motif with infinite variations. Heliodorus' literary strategy of delayed gratification first deploys the social and ethnic distance between the lovers (their Delphic lovesickness and her foster-father's own plan: 3.5–4.18). Later, Heliodorus manipulates Chariclea's obsession with chastity for hilarious and adventurous ends (4.18–5.33, 1.2–2.4, 5.4.4–6, 6.1–10.41; see also Part III below). The lovers blush for an embrace observed, and Chariclea expostulates against Theagenes for taking liberties even in the fantasy of dreams (2.7; 2.16.3, 6.8.6)—her dreams at that! Heliodorus' skill in plotting makes the heroine's chastity and Theagenes' phenomenal self-control functional. These anomalous sexual athletes survive the Ethiopian ceremonial ordeals *because* of their chastity. Here chastity means much more than the preservation of virginity: it is essential to the excitements of their travels, contact with pirates, incarceration, disguises, near-death, etc.

The legal penalty for the violation of free women, including bride-theft, is, as we have noted, death. Even outside the law, such sexual transgression would qualify as what the modern anthropologist terms a "crime of honor," requiring a kinsman's instant, deadly retribution, with no legal remedy or reduced penalty (Cohen 131–34, 140–44, 183). "Blood must flow" is the ideology, whatever the reality in small Mediterranean towns. Theagenes will not only risk that chance of death gladly, but he is also ready to kill any other man who tries to marry Chariclea with or without her father's good will (4.6.6–7.4). Their mutual, nearly fatal attraction leads, in Theagenes' words, to "piracy, robbery (ἄρπᾶξ), and violent injustice" (10.37.1). His community in Thessaly disowns him and deems him liable to the drastic remedies of outlawry and legal execution (10.36.4; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 772F on homosexual *harpage*).

The preconcerted plan succeeds (4.18.1, τὰ προδεδογμένα πράττοντες), but the charade causes shame to the complicit Chariclea: she blushes suitably here as elsewhere (ἐρυθριῶσα).³¹ She has eloped for love but determines to return home to Ethiopia and her birth-parents before consummating her intended marriage (4.18.5); further, she is aware of the possible social outcome of bride-rape, sex by force, or marriage by force (4.18.5f).³² For both lovers the flight amounts to a self-imposed exile from family, estate, wealth, and status leading to repeated capture and confinement by pirates, brigands, alien soldiers, and empires.

Charicles, the prominent dean of the Delphic priesthood, dwells on his humiliation as well as his private desolation. In a dramatic midnight assembly in the theater at Delphi, the

³¹ D. Lateiner, "Blushes and Pallor in Ancient Fictions," *Helios* 25.2 (1998) 163–89, esp. 180ff; P. Liviabella Furiani, "La Comunicazione non verbale nelle *Etiopiche* di Eliodoro," in *Epigrafi, Documenti e Ricerche. Studi in memoria di Giovanni Forni* (Naples 1996) 299–340, surveys all types, but see 305ff for blush and pallor.

³² Cf. *Aeth.* 4.19.2: ἐξυβρικότητας. See Cohen 176–85; Todd 270f. As to the question of the ability of Heliodorus' audience to respond to such legal technicalities, it appears that novel-readers were equally familiar with the 'higher' forms of literature (epic, history, oratory: see S. STEPHENS, "Who Read Ancient Novels?" in Tatum, ed. [*supra* n.13], 405–18) and would have been able to contextualize such elements in their reading. Note that Chariton (5.4–8), on a far lower level of literary challenge, mimics many known Hellenic law-court practices, although the trial is set in Babylon before the Persian King.

punningly named Hegesias, the local *strategos* or chief magistrate, proposes pursuit and painful execution: live impalement or crucifixion.³³ Further punishment for the criminal and his accomplices includes infamy and, for their descendants, withdrawal of consultation privileges at Delphi (on the paternalist assumption that the woman in question can have played no active rôle in the affair). As often in New Comedy and romance, however, bride-capture has handily foiled a father more interested in social obligation, social climbing, financial advantage, and political alliance than in his daughter's tender feelings.

Theagenes, the calculating, militant lover (ἔστρατήγει ... τὸν ἐρωτικὸν τοῦτον πόλεμον), and Chariclea, the "cleverest thing" (5.26.2, χρῆμα σοφώτατον) have played their strategic parts well in one of Calasiris' mini-dramas. The omniscient author here has his stage-director create a scenario of "fraudulent rape." What first might appear to be only a dubious prank, a theatrical sham produced by a manipulative fairy god-father who enjoys hoodwinking Charicles and anyone else who gets in his way (see, e.g., 2.24.4, 3.17.2, 4.5f, 5.26.2, etc.), thus emerges as a realistic deployment of an alternative marital strategy.³⁴ Chariclea and Theagenes express their mutual love in pseudo-rape: that is, they elope. Female initiative has been obscured, as doubtless sometimes in "real life," by the trappings of wife-

³³ The crucial word is ambivalent at 20.2: καταλαβόντας ἀνασκολοπίσαι καὶ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτῶν ἀτιμῶσαι. For the death penalty and its various forms developed from the fourth century B.C.E. onward, see M. Hengel, *Crucifixion*, J. Bowden, tr. (Philadelphia 1977); J.-P. CALLU, "Le jardin des supplices au Bas-Empire," in Y. Thomas, ed., *Du châtement dans la cité. Supplices corporels et peine du mort dans le monde antique* (Paris 1984: hereafter 'Callu') 313-59; and R. MacMullen, "Judicial Savagery in the Roman Empire," in his *Changes in the Roman Empire* (Princeton 1990) 204-17, esp. 211, on death by molten lead for nurses who participate in abduction-marriages. Various death penalties are found in the novels (see Hengel 81f for a partial list) but unfortunately cannot be used as a criterion of date, given their tendency to earlier, generalized historical settings. *Crux* in the novels: Char. 3.4.18, 4.2.6ff; Xen. 4.2, 4, 6; Ach. Tat. 2.37.3; Lucian *Catapl.* 6; Iambl. in Phot. *Bibl.* 74a, 78a; Petron. *Sat.* 111-13; Apul. *Met.* 1.14, 4.11, 6.31, 9.19, and metaphorically: 4.12, 34; 5.17, 29; 7.17; 9.18, 31; 10.34.

³⁴ On Heliodorus' systematic use of terminology borrowed from the drama, see J. W. Walden, "Stage Terms in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*," *HSCP* 5 (1894) 1-43; on Heliodorus' dramatic 'realism' see Morgan 1982; on Calasiris' inveterate prevarications, J. J. Winkler, "The Mendacity of Kalasiris and the Narrative Strategy of Heliodorus," *YCS* 27 (1982) 93-158.

naping (Evans-Grubbs 68). Rape-charade here is therefore not a fantastic embellishment but a long-standing, real, and utilitarian Hellenic practice.³⁵ The strategy reflects not only earlier history and texts but is also current in fourth-century secular law, crime and punishment, and ecclesiastical fulminations (*CTh* 9.24, Basil *Epist.* 270; cf. Evans-Grubbs 74).

The traditional conventions of fathers giving away their daughters or bartering their sons provide the horizon of expectation and the veneer of verisimilitude in Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius (1.7.5). Customary betrothal procedures are contracted for Charicles' deceased, unnamed (but easily guessed) biological daughter, as for Nausicles' daughter Nausiclea. Calasiris subsequently arranges similar marital deals for his daughter with a Phoenician merchant and the bandit Trachinus (5.19.1, 21.2; 5.28f). The context of normal marriage by classical standards is thus preserved.

In Hellenistic Egypt and the Greek East of the Imperial age, as everyday documents reveal, women were often freer from male control, freer to choose their spouses, to give themselves in marriage (*autoekdosis*), and to arrange terms in marriage contracts. The Athenian epiclerate was a dead legal letter, and earlier Hellenic forms of female guardianship had become a formality.³⁶ Even obtuse Charicles recognizes that his paternal authority requires Chariclea's *de facto* consent or Calasiris' magic to achieve his intended result of her marriage to his nephew Alcamenes (2.33.6). He wants Calasiris to persuade Chariclea to "recognize her [female] nature and to know that she has become a woman": πείσον ἢ λόγοις ἢ ἔργοις γυνώρισαι

³⁵ The same may be true of the Spartan Demaratus forestalling Leotychidas' marriage to Perkalos, daughter of Chilon (Hdt. 6.65). Agreement had been reached (ἀρμυσαμένοι), but the bride was seized by another (ἀρπάσας). As Macan notes in his commentary *ad loc.*, Demaratus "converted the form into a reality ... peradventure not without the lady's goodwill." For the legitimated institution of marriage by capture see also Hdt. 1.4; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.30.5; Plut. *Lyc.* 15.4.

³⁶ Egger 266–71 notes that, among the various legal forms of marriage from the Classical to the Hellenistic periods, Heliodorus chooses the forms that best suit his plot as it develops. For the evidence of growing independence of women, see J. Evans-Grubbs, "'Pagan' and 'Christian' marriage: the state of the question," *J ECS* 2 (1994) 361–412, esp. 375f; R. MacMullen, "Women in Public in the Roman Empire," *Historia* 29 (1980) 208–19; R. van Bremen, "Women and Wealth," in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt, edd., *Images of Women in Antiquity* (Detroit 1983) 223–42; S. Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt* (New York 1984).

τὴν ἑαυτῆς φύσιν καὶ ὅτι γυνὴ γέγονεν εἰδέναι. This "officializing strategy," in Bourdieu's terms an attempt to state and manage the rules of the game, suits his patriarchal position. He is discreetly mobilizing his resources to reinforce the heavy weight of habit.

Chariclea works within this sexual system and protects it—because it protects her. The cult and cultivation of her virginity in this novel (2.33, ἐκθειάζουσα μὲν παρθενίαν) are, to be sure, given no Christian warrant. Her privileging of virginity, her ascetic renunciation from the start, and her service of Artemis are independent of Paul's attitudes towards sex; but Christian ideas may have influenced the pagan author from Emesa in Syria. Aside from the tradition that he later became bishop of Tricca (Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.22; Phot., *Bibl.* 73 *sub fine*; Budé edition vii–xv), certain ideas were widely shared: a clement god, purified rituals, the celebration of abstinence, etc. The world's psycho-social, half-enunciated assumptions were not yet unified and dogmatized, but pagan and Christian values often flowed in parallel streams. Pagan and Christian historical fictions depended for their wide dissemination on similar interests and even obsessions among the literate population, including teratology and erotology. *Tendenz* will differ, but motifs, themes, and entertaining incidents were widely borrowed (e.g. wandering, wives under suspicion, virgin prostitutes). In southern Turkey, Methodius writes a Platonic but all-female *Symposium* in praise of virginity, illustrating that for him, as for Heliodorus, the value of chastity is more than just a literary *topos*. Chastity, Christian or pagan, has come to emblemize self-control (*enkrateia*) and the maturity of the race: the progress of civilization from herd bestiality to individual continence.

The proud, self-intended, and self-chosen spouse Theagenes never violates Chariclea's determined chastity. Such diligent attention to female preferences and niceties of marriage-choice may reflect contemporary male sensibilities and/or indicate a prominent feature of Romance. Attic Xenophon's Cyrus, Longus' Daphnis, and Chariton's Chaereas behave in similar fashion. The fetishizing of male and female virginity found in Heliodorus—the sexual value *nonpareil* (1.3, 7.26, 10.7.7)—might be taken as providing sardonic parody aimed at earlier novels (see further below). But Theagenes' celibacy certainly

provides evidence for his *bona fides*.³⁷ And the obsession, along with rejection of the family, marital chastity—even celibacy within marriage—and the avoidance of all fleshly pleasures, is also found in his contemporary world and in Christian texts.³⁸ This “new erotics”³⁹ may be the cause or the effect of women seeking and finding more autonomy, celebrating celibacy, embracing charismatic faith, and discovering a variety of “liberating options” wherever they could. Aristocratic Roman women chose celibacy in the face of strenuous objection and threats from family and friends. Christian ‘romances’ record the history of the “unbride” (e.g. *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 22: ἄνυμφον).

Heliodorus’ two characters “hold to a reciprocal sexual fidelity” and glorify the virgin state.⁴⁰ Neither Theagenes nor Chariclea has any prior interest in marriage. First, they reject all marital overtures arising from within or without the family unit, and they shun shining examples of the other sex thrust into sight or bruited through intermediaries (cf. 2.33 and 3.17). Foucault notes, apropos Achilles Tatius but equally applicable to Heliodorus, that the novels’ plots “unfold as a kind of odyssey of double virginity.”⁴¹ Later their eccentric but determined virginal *eros* (5.4.5, παρθελεύων ἔρωσ) leads the loving couple into an exclusive, indeed otherwise largely asocial, union of two (συμπεφυκότες), deeply spiritual long before the sexual consummation and, for most of the plot, barely physical. Chariclea’s chastity is literally woven into the band with which

³⁷ Post 423 regards the “cult of chastity” in this novel as exceptional; further on this issue in S. GOLDHILL, *Foucault’s Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* (Cambridge 1995; hereafter ‘Goldhill’), esp. 118–21. It is worth emphasizing that male continence tends in the other novels to become essential *after* the mutual commitment has been made; virginity prior to it is not required, as for the female.

³⁸ For earlier discussion, see E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (New York 1965); more recently, P. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York 1988). For the interaction between Pagan and Christian ideologies, see E. Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World* (New Haven 1992) 187–210.

³⁹ The phrase appears in M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* III: *The Care of the Self* (New York 1986) 228–32.

⁴⁰ Konstan (*supra* n.23) 48–57, 207.

⁴¹ See Goldhill 2, 35 on the “obsession with virginity”; for the similar qualities of Ninus and Semiramis in the *Ninus Romance*, see S. Stephens and J. J. Winkler, edd., *Ancient Greek Novels. The Fragments* (Princeton 1995) 41–45.

Persinna exposes her to the world; chastity is her watchword, as the *pantarbe* is her talisman (4.8.7); violation of her virginity would be a fate worse than death (cf. 5.7.1: θανάτου πικρότερον).

Both Achilles Tatius (2.28, 8.11f, 8.6) and Heliodorus include ritual virginity tests that provide "mystical, theophanic endorsements" (Goldhill 116–21) of hero and heroine. Thersander, a pirate ready and eager to rape Leucippe, decries and denounces her claims to virginity as an incredible sham for a victim of kidnaping, regardless of whether or not she cooperated with the males into whose hands she fell (Ach. Tat. 6.21; cf. 8.5.6).

As with Christian passion narratives of female saints, the novels emphasize their naked exposure to prying eyes, to public torture and degradation, and to sexual violence.⁴² Yet sexual definitions are clearly being reformulated in these texts. Spirit and spirituality empower women and challenge male definitions of their institutional and inspirational roles. The martyr Perpetua troubled bishops Augustine and Quodvultdeus because her "virile Christianity" did not fit their paradigm of woman's lowly spritual capacities or their conviction of her bodily curse inherited from Eve (cf. Shaw 36–43). Female asceticism (including celibacy) was unacceptable to both their biological fathers and the fathers of the church (e.g. Tertullian, *De virg. vel.* 7.9), who prohibited women—even lifelong virgins—from performing the "male" offices of baptism and doctrinal teaching (Tert. *De Bapt.* 1.17).

Like any good romantic heroine, coy Chariclea can have her cake and eat it too, as virgin priestess, princess, and even virgin wife of the hero. Chariclea and Leucippe are superhuman by pagan *and* Christian standards of behavior. Their sexual

⁴² Cf. D. B. Shaw, "The passion of Perpetua," *Past and Present* 139 (1993) 3–45, esp. 9, on Leucippe's call for torture to test the truth of her statements (Ach. Tat. 6.20ff). Cf. G. Sissa, *Greek Virginity* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1990) 83–86, 119–21, on ritual virginity tests. Had Perpetua read pagan novels of women's bravery? She may well have derived some inspiration for the description of her vision from Apuleius: see P. Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1984) 1–17, esp. 14 with n.58 for her knowledge of her countryman Apuleius and amphitheater scenes. Certainly the NT *Apocryphal Acts* celebrate the power of chastity, male and female: see Goldhill 118 and G. P. Corrington, "The 'Divine Woman'? Propaganda and the power of chastity in the New Testament Apocrypha," *Helios* 13 (1986) 151–62. For the evidence for torture and other physical abuse, see H. Leclercq, *DACL I* (1907) s.v. "Ad bestias."

asceticism renders them nearly divine women, miracle-workers who gain blessings for their exploits and lifestyle, rendering them voices of unimpeachable authority.⁴³ Chariclea originally plans never to marry.⁴⁴ She changes her mind after glimpsing Theagenes, of course, or the romance would be lost. That previous plan was intended, we may guess, to enable her to escape male control and to discourse with the otherwise exclusively male sages of Delphi (2.33.4; 3.9, 19.4)—a freedom that she repeatedly achieves in the course of the story. Theagenes the Thessalian noble also wishes nothing to do with the “opposite sex,” with fornication, or with marriage (3.17.4). He despises all women. For him also, celibacy has been a liberation from the usual route of young men of wealth and family. The claims of all three to virgin status are challenged by figures of authority or power, but the claims always prove true.

The motif of sexual abnegation culminates in the unexpected Ethiopian dénouement. The only extant novels that make the protagonists' chastity crucial for the plot's outcome are this one and Achilles Tatius'. Had Theagenes' abduction of his inamorata ever led to coitus, as feared by Chariclea—and as the public expected in 'real life'—her death-warrant would have been sealed. She would have died on Meroë's fiery magic grate that consumed non-virgins. But the grand Ethiopian victory over alien enemies demands some human blood (as first fruits, the first prisoners presented to King Hydaspes, 10.7.2), and the sexually pure victim is choice. Therefore Chariclea will evade service as victim, a human sacrifice for the Moon's sake, if and only if she be proven *impure* and tainted, *not* a virgin (10.7.7; *cf.* the double chastity-test at Ach. Tat. 8.11–14). To prove this unsuitability for sacrifice, however, she must first survive a test that incinerates the flesh of sexually impure candidates on a grate of gold. As her anxious mother notes, many are the incidents that could have led a good girl, especially a ravishingly beautiful one, into sexual intercourse in captivity, war, and exile (10.7.7f). The dilemma reflects late antiquity's common obsession with sexual abstinence, even for men and women

⁴³ Corrington (*supra* n.42) 151.

⁴⁴ Despite the fetishism of virginity (1.25.4, 2.33, 4.8.7, 10.9.4), Chariclea once seemingly consents to a plan for Theagenes to have sex with Arsace—to preserve her own virgin status (7.25.6ff). He violently rejects the double standard, fortunately for him (10.9.1; *cf.* Char. 2.11.1ff; Ach. Tat. 5.7.11, 20.5, 26ff; 7.5.7; Xen. 3.12.4f).

who thought of themselves as married in spirit and in law. Passing this divinely enforced dual test gains Chariclea an ironic prize, the right of an alien to die as a sacrifice (10.9).

The dramatic prelude qualifies her (and Theagenes) as virgins fit for sacrifice. The fully qualified candidates are to die under the ax (10.7.2, ἀνθρωποκτονία). The woman who once exalted virginity to the status of a god (2.33.5, ἐκθειάζουσα παρθενίαν), renounced all thought of marriage, and consecrated her life to Artemis remains in fact pure of sexual taint. The trial by fire, considered cross-culturally, can be probative, purifying, or punitive (see Callu 343). For Chariclea it serves the first purpose. The triple function well served Roman magistrates and witch-hunters, for whom mere penal decapitation was inadequately deterrent, and insufficiently amusing for the populace.⁴⁵ The romances provide exquisitely varied interrogations, burning-tortures, and executions, reflecting the lawcodes and historical practices.⁴⁶ The threats to male and female honor, the tortures intimated and ensured, the tests of innocence, the repellent and barbaric human sacrifice that brings heroine and hero so close to death at the desolate end are only resolved by the peculiar circumstances of this abduction-marriage—seizure of the willing maid and sexual consummation delayed. Like Shakespeare's Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, Chariclea's demand for judicial investigation (10.10–17, δίκη καὶ κρίσις) provides a first better ending (*cf.* n.53 *infra*). Similarly, Theagenes, demanding that Chariclea be the officiant to despatch him by knife from this life, asserts to the law-keepers that Chariclea combines two qualities thought impossible in one person: she is a married woman and a virgin (10.22, 33.1). The priest Sisimithres avers that the gods' miracles deserve notice and respect (10.39.3).

III. The Abduction as a Focus for Characterization

Self-controlled and uncontrollable, manic and depressive, Hellenic and Ethiopian, legal and illegal, candid and deceptive, brave and cowardly, physical and spritual, emotional and calcu-

⁴⁵ On the entertainment value and functions of judicial murders and executions see K. M. Coleman, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions staged as Mythological Enactments," *JRS* 80 (1990) 44–73.

⁴⁶ An inventory in Callu 347 and n.129; *cf.* Coleman (*supra* n.45) 46ff.

lating, virginal and debauched, vegetarian and meat-eating, expressive and dissimulating: these are a few of the polarities that Heliodoros' characters present to his reader. One character, oscillating like Chariclea in her moods, can embody both, or two conflicting characters may emblemize the opposition. No single hierarchy of values or ideal triumphs, other than the mutual spiritual devotion of Chariclea and Theagenes. They rise above their nature, and ours, in their ability to overcome their afflictions. This co-dependent dedication of masculine and feminine gives rise to the peripeties of the plot. Having examined (I) abduction marriage as a 'fact' of [Mediterranean] life, and (II) its pivotal significance for Heliodoros' narrative, in this final section we focus on the personalities and values of the protagonists themselves: on how, that is, the abduction marriage, with its antecedents and consequences, fits in with the rest of these two strong characters' choices, thoughts, and actions.

The young lovers' characterization depends largely on indications of their socio-sexual values. As destined future exemplars of Hellenic élites, both have been induced to feel a strong sense of honor and shame. The extra-legal 'bride-capture' is justified (for them, as for the reader) by lack of alternatives and their overwhelming mutual passion—though it is passion contained and controlled by the will and by oath (4.18) in order to escape Delphi and its paternalistic decrees. Chariclea wants no "acts of Aphrodite" without her full consent (4.18.4f), and consent will not precede proper marriage. Chivalrously, Theagenes swears to defend her chastity, though he protests that he would have behaved no differently even if Chariclea had not demanded an oath (4.18.4ff and 5.4, *pace* 1.25.4).

Left alone in an Egyptian cave by their brigand captors and comrades, the grateful couple employ their long-delayed opportunity to embrace passionately and kiss without restraint (5.4.4ff). In a lovers' trance they "grow together." Heliodoros slyly adds that their erotic transports were pure and virginal, their intercourse consummated only by chaste kissing (καὶ καθαροῖς μόνον μιγνόμενοι τοῖς φιλήμασιν). Whenever Chariclea perceives that Theagenes is ready to play the man's part (penetration seems to be meant by ἀνδριζόμενον; *cf. Ach. Tat.* 4.1.2, a similar ἀναβολή, or 'putting off', of the lover Clitophon), she cools the ardent lover with reminders of his oath of restraint. In favor of seeing in this novel a parody of the deferrals of romance (*supra* 422), we may note that 'heavy petting' presents

another moment when sexual climax is deflected; 'rape-charade' has become a 'union-of-lovers charade'.

Chariclea, however, trusts no one. Her chastity, her bodily integrity, amounts to her life.⁴⁷ Before meeting Theagenes, she had vowed a life of virginity and service to Artemis (2.33.4).⁴⁸ She "decides to take her marital fate in her own hands and presents two fathers, each of whom has already selected a son-in-law, with her refusal and her own choice" (Egger 269, 272). She can be provocative when necessary, as when she dresses herself in a way calculated to seduce the buccaneer lieutenant Pelorus into demanding her as his share of the pirates' booty, and can ignore a women's 'natural' modesty, and kills men who threaten her or her lover (5.30f, 10.22.1, 10.38, 5.32).

Both young parties, like Odysseus as beggar, exploit situational improprieties with the wives of the disempowered. Abduction-marriage illuminates the lovers' desperate mutual dedication, but Heliodorus employs the chastity motif, courage before torture, and Chariclea's Odyssean cleverness to further the storyteller's need for suspense, delay, and delicious reversals that depend on virginity.

Codified rules exist in every community, but individuals learn at a young age to develop a 'feel for the game', to navigate obstacles by officializing strategies, sets of moves improvised to benefit from the rules, or some of them, as they choose the life-goal most attractive to them—marriage, business, career, or religious vocation.⁴⁹ Parents are often the main obstacle, as with Chariclea in Delphi, while the community at large serves as the parents' allies. Chariclea, however, manipulates the Delphic androcracy for her own advantage,⁵⁰ as Odysseus manipulates Scherian and Ithacan rules of *noblesse oblige* through the disguises of suppliant and beggar.

⁴⁷ Her "jealously is pathological—or perhaps merely fashionable" (Post 451 on 7.21.5). In fact, Theagenes has more occasion than she for doubting the fidelity of his betrothed (e.g. 1.25).

⁴⁸ Post (454) regards the vow as unprecedented, but Hippolytus in Euripides and Daphne and Atalanta *inter alia* in Ovid (*Met.* 1.478–87, 10.565–69) vow to maintain virginity. See also Egger 262 with n.11.

⁴⁹ Herzfeld 25ff, citing P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge 1977) 38ff, applies the idea to modern Cretan bride-theft. The phrases reappear in Bourdieu's *In Other Words* (Stanford 1990) 62ff, describing Kabylia (North African) marriage.

⁵⁰ E.g. rules of speaking: 1.21.3, 10.18.2; blushes: 4.11.1, 18.2; 10.18.2; gestures of female submission: 10.38.1.

Chariclea is a clever strategist of her own destiny, employing charades, ruses, and lies for pleasure and advantage (λογοὶ ἐπίκαιροι, 1.25.3). Since, in social terms, "virginity is to a woman what honor is to a man"—a symbol of free status—one should not presume from Chariclea's courage and "dedication to virginity ... [any] general commitment to moral integrity," any dedication to truth or candor (πάλαισμα τὸ πλάσμα, 1.26.5; cf. 5.8.4). In fact, "a more devious little twister would be hard to find among heroines of romance."⁵¹ Chariclea, Calasiris' female double in duplicity, enjoys ὑπόκρισις, in a light moment laughing and teasing her mentor-in-fraud about their disguises (6.12.1). She threatens death when that is convenient (1.4.1, 4.7.11, 5.26.3); she pretends that Theagenes is her brother (1.21.3, 5.26.3, 7.12.7, 10.18.2; cf. 8.25.2); and she delays three marriages (1.22.6f, [4.6.1], 4.13.3ff, 5.26.2f). These last ploys clearly show her tactical brilliance in selecting her mate(s). In fact, virginity has a surplus of meanings and uses for her; its multivalence makes it serviceable for immediate ends and extenuating long-range plans.

By explicit plan (1.26.4) Chariclea defers the brigand Thyamis, her foster-cousin Alcamenes, and the buccaneer captain Trachinus. By her manner, words, and beauty she attracts and seduces these men, as well as Theagenes,⁵² Pelorus, Achae-menēs, and Meroebus (3.5f, 5.31.2, 7.23.5, 10.24.1f). She can philosophize with professional sophists, having been trained to do so (2.33.5), or moan and cry like a baby at the propitious moment (e.g. 1.23.1, 5.26.4, 10.33.4). Her arsenal is varied, and she has an elaborate ethic of lying: sophist that she is, she even gives instruction to the more naive Theagenes (1.25f, 6.9.6f, 10.18.2, 19.1). Faced in Egypt with brigand rape or brigand marriage, she makes an effective speech, beginning with a formal defense of her right, though a maid, to speak among men

⁵¹ N. Frye, *The Sacred Scripture: A Study of Romance* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1976) 73.

⁵² Theagenes' classic symptoms of depressive lovesickness, second only to Chariclea's symmetrical affective state (3.5ff, 19; 4.3–7), are given their historical and medical context by P. Toohey "Love, Lovesickness, and Melancholy," *IJCS* 17 (1992) 265–86, who points out that Heliodorus borrows even the doctors' vocabulary and diagnoses (274 n.38); cf. Rattenbury *et al.*, ed., I 112 n.3, II 12 n.1). Aretaeus, Galen, and Hippocrates are probable sources for Heliodorus' Dr Acesinus and quack Calasiris' symptomatology of love and therapies. Toohey inexplicably ignores the lovesick Arsace's *morbus amatorius* (7.9, 22.2; 8.13, etc.)

and to deliberate about her own marital future (1.22.1).⁵³ This moment, presented earlier in Heliodorus' narrative, but occurring later in dramatic time than the pseudo-abduction, shows Chariclea taking charge of her life in determining her spouse.

Chariclea is the heiress, or *epikleros* in the Attic terminology that the Athenian setting of Cnemon's story in Book 1 would encourage an informed reader to assume. Her Delphic foster-father Charicles has no other heir: no male offspring, no surviving biological child at all (2.29.3, 33.7). Thus the wealthy priest pursues his sole child far up the Nile. At the outset she prettily curses (ἀποσκορακίζουσα, 2.33.5) Eros, Aphrodite, and all the trappings of marriage. She rejects sex and the dependence of marriage (3.9.1, 19.4)—until she beholds Theagenes and trades one obsession for another, one assertion of sexual self-control (total denial) for another (chaste loyalty to her beloved and intended).

Other instances of manipulating the normative order and of non-adherence to the rules governing socio-sexual behavior are frequent. Theagenes and Chariclea demonstrate such passive skills as weeping, fainting on demand into the lover's arms, threatening suicide, feigning cooperation with a sexual demand or pretending illness (1.22f; 4.4; 7.18.3, 19.9, 26.3; 4.5.3). But Chariclea's attractiveness both creates her many predicaments (6.9.6, 10.7.8) and allows her to manipulate her peers as well as older men and women. She eludes the dangers that beset a woman too beautiful for her own good (6.9.6, 8.2; cf. Ach. Tat. 6.21.3–22.1), whether threats to her chastity or the unwelcome dilemma of rape or forced marriage (e.g. 1.21.3, 5.26, 4.13, 6.9.7). Other heroines show less physical strength, and none matches Chariclea in managing to outwit and control her lover, her friends, enemies, and her father (2.33, 5.4.5, 6.12.1, 10.24). This supremely capable Hellenistic heroine cannot be talked into or forced into accepting another husband without her consent or her death (4.13.3, 4.15.3, 4.7.9, 10.19, *et passim*), a dilemma that

⁵³ This paragraph is indebted to L. Pernot, "Chariclée la Sirène," in M. F. Baslez, ed. (*supra* n.21), 44, 47 with further references. He also mentions Plutarch's novelistically named Aretaphila, a bold woman who experienced ποικίλον τι δράμα καὶ πολυμερὲς ἀγωνισαμένη and then retired to a wifely seclusion at the loom (*Mor.* 255E–57E). Plutarch's account would provide a 'factual' situation for a novel considerably less believable than the one that Heliodorus confected.

she resolves at Delphi by the feigned bride capture/elopement.⁵⁴

Heliodorus motivates Theagenes' abduction of Chariclea more strongly than one may at first realize. Calasiris was already obliged by the will of heaven (ὁ μοιρῶν ὑπαγορεύει θεσμός), specifically by Artemis, to transport the maid back to Ethiopia (3.11.5, 4.9). He had already booked passage on the Phoenician freighter (4.16). All three parties were of one mind, as the pre-arrangements show. They could have stolen away in the night without arousing the panic and fury of the Delphians and the wrath of the Thessalians against the Aeneanean abductors' progeny (4.17–20).⁵⁵ The ruckus naturally provides opportunity for tragic lamentation by the bereaved parent. More important, the abduction makes Theagenes a real fiancé, νυμφίος, of Chariclea (6.8.6; 10.21, 22.3, 33.1, 38.2, 39.2). The lovers exchange yet other binding vows at various moments (4.19.1, 5.5.3, 8.12.1): they are virtually husband and wife, a situation vital to the plot.⁵⁶

Like Odysseus, his model of dissimulation, Calasiris views deception as a pleasure (3.17f; 4.5, 10.1 and 5; 5.13) as well, on occasion, as a necessity. The momentary contrivance of pretended illegal rape veils the spiritual and physiological reality of the future long-continued virginity between the young lovers at peril of life and limb.⁵⁷ The apparent rape also proves the hero's suitably manly courage and thieving skill, often the case in comparable contemporary schemes of bride-capture. Further, at the Ethiopian court Theagenes gains the father of the

⁵⁴ Cf. Callirhoe (Chariton 2.8f), who marries the decent Dionysius: her pregnant situation encourages a unique determination to marry someone other than her true love in order to preserve her true love's legitimate offspring. Postponement as a coherent strategy is theorized by Chariclea for her situation (and reflexively for the novel) at 9.24.

⁵⁵ Sandy (*supra* n.25) 13.

⁵⁶ Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, a play variously indebted to Heliodorus—whom Shakespeare knew well (cf. *Twelfth Night* 5.1.121ff with *Aeth.* 1.30.6)—for the chastity motif, trial scene, elderly stage-manager, and many other elements, as I hope to show elsewhere, equates (in its Christian context) marriage with expressed but unconsecrated intentions (1.2.145–53; 4.1.70–75; 5.1.170–230, 374–424).

⁵⁷ Several narratological critics compare the pleasure of a text to the pleasure of sexual foreplay, e.g. F. Zeitlin, "The Poetics of Eros," in D. Halperin, J. J. Winkler, and F. Zeitlin, ed., *Before Sexuality* (Princeton 1990) 417–64, citing R. Barthes, R. Scholes, and P. Brooks at 425 n.21. Heliodorus returns the compliment by making the endlessly extended foreplay (e.g. 1.2, 25f; 2.6; 5.5, 7) of this virginal couple the contents of his text.

bride's consent by winning several contests (bull-tossing, wrestling a local giant), as well as by his beloved's quick wit. At Delphi, Heliodorus provides a contrast between the Thessalian groom's physical power and his generous spirit of chivalry and self-control.⁵⁸

Charicles rapidly recapitulates the whole Delphic plot in Ethiopia. The moment once again postpones resolution and revitalizes the theme of bride-theft. One irony is that he misrepresents (by conscious omission: ἀπέκρυπτε) Chariclea's origin for fear that her Ethiopian parents might emerge—unaware that he is addressing those very personages, the king and queen (10.36.1)! Another irony is that Chariclea, having escaped one paternally intended husband, now faces another, Meroëbus, a close relation (her father Hydaspes' nephew, a cousin once again: 10.21.3, 23.1, 24.1) and "like a son." Chariclea's circle is complete, from high birth in Ethiopia back to death or marriage in Ethiopia, from one parent's choice of husband for herself to another's (10.33.2ff). The "scrupulous unpredictability" of the novel⁵⁹ does end with a fabulous parade and the mystic moments of marriage (τῶν ἐπὶ τῷ γάμῳ μυστικώτερον τελεσθησομένων) after Heliodorus has led readers along so many pleasantly misleading paths. Marriage is affirmed and indeed now elevates the bride and groom's true love to a sacrament⁶⁰—a true μυστήριον that none can gain-

⁵⁸ R. Lonis, "Les Éthiopiens sous le regard d'Héliodore," in Baslez, ed., (*supra* n.21) 23–41, esp. 235, points out that Delphi is the Hellenic pole and center, as Meroë is the barbaric pole and periphery of the novel's world. In both places, at the beginning and the end of the love affair, Theagenes wins symmetrical athletic victories over arrogant opponents, as Morgan (1993: 221) points out—though of course Athens remains the center of Heliodorus' world of literary allusion.

⁵⁹ One 'throw-away' ending among the many in the last scene that do not end the tale as we expect: see J. R. Morgan, "A Sense of the Ending: The Conclusion of Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*," *TAPA* 119 (1989) 299–320, has the indefatigable wanderer Charicles get his man, finally, in Meroë. The searcher espies the sacrificial victim, Theagenes, and makes a citizen's arrest with a noose formed from his disguise, another rough beggar's cloak like Odysseus' and Chariclea's, both adept at τὸ πτωχικὸν πλάσμα (6.11.3). He demands royal justice, calling Theagenes a kidnaper, woman abductor, house destroyer, and proclaimed outlaw for his sacrilege (10.35.2, 36.4): τὴν ἐμὴν θυγατέρα συλαγωγήσας ... τὴν ἐμὴν ψυχὴν ἀναρπάσας ... ἀπαιδῖαν, κ.τ.λ.). But his call for justice is trumped by others'.

⁶⁰ Cf. Morgan (*supra* n.59) 318, 320, and "The Story of Knemon in Heliodorus' *Aethiopika*," *JHS* 109 (1989) 99–113, esp. 110ff.

say—in the presence and with the blessing of Charicles, Persinna, and Hydaspes—not to mention the gods (10.40.1f, 41.3). Thus bride-theft has been reconfigured as a lawful wedded union with the assent not merely of all past and presently available ‘parents’ but also of kings, priests, and a cheering community. Put in another way, marriage itself has been triumphantly and elaborately defined as a choice depending upon mutual love and commitment by both parties.

Heliodorus, like his novelistic predecessors, polemicizes for mutual passion, a reciprocal and symmetrical attraction between equals. The athletic Thessalian noble (rather than a decent but ordinary young Delphic relative of wealth) makes a much better match for the intellectual and determined African princess.⁶¹ *De facto* marriage by abduction from Delphi paradoxically enables Chariclea’s Ethiopian birth-parents to bless her union, though Queen Persinna acknowledges that her daughter has already chosen her bridegroom.

Hydaspes, the father and monarch, can only ratify the couple’s own choice as the gods’ will (10.38.2, 40). *Eros* and *gamos* are the well-bred youngsters’ goals, but civilized patriarchal concerns and brute force of pirates, brigands, time and space in the state of nature and under the law of nations block this and nearly every couple in the romances. These foils to their pure goal constitute most of the plot. Disparity of power by gender, age, and wisdom draws people together and apart in Heliodorus. The lovers address each obstacle as equal partners and steadfastly struggle through adversity (1.25.4; 4.13.2, 18.5). Their elopement, blatantly illegal and adjudged a criminal abduction, has been romantically right, but leads to the pander’s intermittent expressions of regret (Calasiris at 3.15.3; 4.9.1, 14.2, 19.6–20.1). Theagenes also ironically acknowledges piracy and rape, as Chariclea admits to (foster-father) parricide in a final spasm of confession (10.37.1, 38.1: *πατραλοίας*). The bride-capture, a theatrical disturbance of public order, allows the gods to play out their complex drama to its climax (10.38.3, 39.2f).

Shared complicity in the duping of Charicles thus draws Heliodorus’ lovers closer together. Partners in social crime, they play out the fantasies of young love, freed from parental, familial, and communal restraints. They replace extrinsic

⁶¹ Konstan (*supra* n.23) establishes “mutual enamorment” as his theme, viewing it as an alternative to daily life’s patriarchal plot-structure (see 208, 216); Morgan (*supra* n.59) 320; Goldhill 121.

restraints—in the world of make-believe—with their own free choices and taboos, their own interior inhibitions (which neatly contrast to the larger world's sexual expectations). Illogically but providentially, the lovers reject short-term sexual gratification for enduring wedlock, meanwhile together in isolation sharing dangers—many of them produced by Chariclea's pseudo-parent and the real Ethiopian couple. This series of dangers, escapes, and ultimate marital union is not merely delicious adolescent fantasy: the protagonists' constancy carries them from despair to reward (recuperation of security, royal status, and homeland), from repeated Aristotelian δέσις to final λύσις.

Marriage, often of a young, romantic, and attractive couple drawn to each other despite the conventional materialistic and genealogical objections of parents and rivals, provides the focus of the ancient Greek novels. In the course of the extant complete texts, seventeen couples are married in paradigms of success in love-making, and failure at unwelcome seduction or rape appear in all the books. Marriage is the formal goal of nearly all the plots, although not the topic of the narrative action itself. Expectations of marriage create, retard, and structure the narratives. Abduction can in theory lead to forcible rape or to a situation that respects a woman's right to choose.⁶²

The language of marriage (*gamos*-related words) is ubiquitous. Over three hundred examples occur in the novels of Chariton, Xenophon, Achilles Tatius, Longus, and Heliodorus, as their lovers' paths to legal union are frustrated and blocked before the dénouement. That heroines marry their beloved without damage to their reputation after various seizures and near misses is "a lucky coincidence that they cannot influence."⁶³

The texts often archaize women's duties, incapacities, and limited privileges, just as they do their settings. That is, they posit a large space for patriarchal authority over various women, as they fabricate a more contemporary femininity and heroism that appeal to the readership. The legal statutes and social conventions for women's status mix obsolete with contemporary features (Egger 271). The novels' readership

⁶² It even leads to mutual affection (after the travesty of making off with the wrong body) in a sub-plot of Achilles Tatius (Calligone and Callisthenes: 2.18.4, 8.17.3–19.3).

⁶³ Egger (260f with n.4) provides statistics on the novels' marital vocabulary, and discusses (266–71) later legal conditions of marriage; quotation at 268.

accepted an amalgam of enduring conventions and conveniently hostile laws that imperil romantic fantasies of the one goal of 'true love'. Staged abduction-marriage provides a cooperative evasion by the younger generation of the patriarchal system. It can be a furtive, or at least clandestine, safety-valve for female choice when the woman is party to the escape. Both versions—abduction and elopement—elude parents, their social arrangements and their legal devices.

The guardians of the *oikos*, keepers of the keys, cannot always control the privileges and destinies of heroines. The briefly ruptured marriage regulations, conventions, and ideology, assumed to be 'natural' by the older generation, are never entirely overturned in the novels. Clitophon, after his exhausting adventures, still maintains at the end that every father's consent is wanted (Ach. Tat. 8.5.8), just as Chariclea and Theagenes assume. They bow meekly to protocol, at least when they have been assured of the desired result. Remedial rituals (supplication), words, gestures, and postures designed to heal the breaches are eventually managed by this and other beautiful couples with becoming grace and 'face' (*Aeth.* 10.38, 41). Thus a romantic fable of unconventional birth, acquaintance, abduction, sexual restraint, and marriage is re-inscribed and solemnly affirmed within the bounds of grown-up respectability.⁶⁴

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