THE CULT OF NEOPTOLEMOS AT DELPHI
IN HELIODOROS' AITHIOPIKA

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ABSTRACT

In the Aithiopika Heliodoros provides precise and copious details about the opening ceremonies and sacrifices at the Pythian Games at Delphi at which his hero, Theagenes, and heroine, Charicleia, first meet. The date of composition of this narrative is some time in the 4th century CE; the dramatic date is almost a millennium earlier (during the Persian occupation of Egypt), but the description itself is Homeric. The events are described by a narratological focaliser, the exiled Egyptian priest Kalasiris, who informs his narratee, the young Athenian Knemon, of the religious rites of purification in honour of Neoptolemos that preceded the games. This paper examines the ideological reasons for this elaborate fictional reconstruction of the cult of Neoptolemos at Delphi by a fourth-century CE Syrian author from Emesa and the relevance of this account to the attempt of Heliodoros' contemporary, the Roman emperor Julian, to revive paganism within the Roman Empire.

In Heliodoros' Aithiopika (2.34.2-7) the priest of Apollo at Delphi, Charkles, describes the quadrennial sacrifice (θυσία) and embassy (θεορία) 1 sent to Delphi at the time of the Pythian Games in honour of Neoptolemos, the son of Achilles, by the Thessalian Ainians who lived in Hypata and traced their descent from Hellen, the son of Deukalion. 2

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1 I am grateful to the referees of Acta Classica for a number of improvements to this article.

2 For the narratological context, see Hilton 1996:187-95; the theatrical character of θεορία, which is appropriate to Heliodoros' treatment of the procession, is discussed by Rutherford 1998:131-56. For Greek athletic games at the time of the Roman Empire, see Newby 2005.

2 The Ainians can be identified with the Ενιῆνες (Ἐνιῆνες) in Homer's Catalogue of Ships (Il. 2.748-55; cf. Eur. I.A 277 [Ἄινιανες]). The story of the old script they wanted deciphered indicates that they were an ancient people (cf. Arist. Mir. Ausc. 843b.17), who had been forced to migrate a number of times from their original location (Plut. Greek Questions 293f-294c, 297b-c; Strabo 1.3.21), but
According to Charikles, the ceremony was performed at Delphi because Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, had killed Neoptolemos at the altars of Pythian Apollo. The leader of the Thessalian embassy was the young man Theagenes, whose imposing stature (μεγεθος) and handsome appearance (μορφή) were sufficient proof, in the eyes of the priest, of his descent from Achilles (Ἀχιλλείδης ... εἶναι σεμνύνεται) and confirmed his divine birth from the goddess Thetis (βεβαιοῦν τῇ θέᾳ τὸ γένος – a pun on the young man’s name). Charikles’ interlocutor, the Egyptian priest of Isis, Kalasiris, expresses surprise that the young man could claim descent from Achilles, since he was an Ainian, and Homer states that Achilles came from Phthia (Il. 1.154-56; 9.395). Charikles replies that Theagenes maintained that although many cities laid claim to be the home of Achilles, Thetis had in fact emerged from the Gulf of Malis to marry Peleus near Phthia, which was in the territory of the Ainians. As further proof of his descent from the house of Aiakos,3 he pointed out that one of his ancestors was Menesthios, Spercheios’ son by Polydora, the daughter of Peleus (cf. Il. 16.173-716), and a leader of the Myrmidons. As a final piece of evidence he stated that the right to lead the ‘offering of propitiation’ (ἐναγισμός)4 to Neoptolemos was bestowed on the Ainians by the peoples of Thessaly.5

After Charikles, Kalasiris and Theagenes receive a spontaneous oracle from the priestess (2.35) concerning the future destiny of the lovers, although they have as yet not met. The narrator, Kalasiris, continues (3.1-3.5) to describe the procession to a young Athenian, Knemon, in such precise detail – his discourse is a rhetorical ekphrasis – that he is able to see it and to hear the hymn sung to Thetis in his imagination (3.1.1; 3.2.3; 3.4.7). In the hymn to Thetis (3.2.4), Neoptolemos is described as a ‘death-dealer to Trojans but Greece’s salvation’ (περσέπολιν Τρώων, ῥυσίπολιν Δαναῶν) and as ‘showered with blessings’ in his tomb in Delphi (ὄλβιε

were generally located near Mt. Oeta (Strabo 9.4.10), where they had been driven by the Lapiths (Strabo 9.5.22).

3 Achilles is regularly described as the ‘son of Aiakos’ in the Iliad (e.g. 2.860, 874; 11.805).

4 For this term, see Jones 2010:18, who translates it as ‘taboo’.

5 In terms of literary presentation, this erudite display of mythological lore serves to characterise Charikles as a rather pedantic scholar. It also reinforces the aristocratic credentials of the hero, Theagenes, whose lineage could not be more noble and Hellenic, and makes him a worthy suitor for the Ethiopian princess, Charikleia. There is no direct evidence that the Ainians did ever play a role in the cult of Neoptolemos at Delphi. This legend may have been an invention by Heliodoros to align his Ur-Hellene aristocrat, Theagenes, with the cult centre at Delphi to facilitate the encounter between him and Charikleia.

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Πυθιάδι νῦν χθονὶ κευθόμενε). The description ends with an account of how the procession of fifty Thessalian cavalry and two choruses of maidens wind their way around the tomb of Neoptolemos, after which a hecatomb of cattle, sheep and goats is sacrificed, a libation is offered to the hero by Charikles, and the sacrificial fire is lit by Theagenes with the torch presented to him by Charikleia, the acolyte of Artemis (3.5.2-3). This last detail enables the two lovers to meet and fall – Platonically – in love (3.5.4; cf. Plato, Phaedrus 255c; Symp. 192a, 195b); they then elope in a staged kidnap,6 and the chief magistrate at Delphi, Hegesias, proposes that Thessalians should be hunted down, impaled and deprived in perpetuity of their ancestral rights to lead the procession to Neoptolemos at Delphi (4.20.2-3).

This account of the procession in honour of Neoptolemos at the opening of the Pythian Games is so rich in detail that historians of religion have succumbed to the temptation to pronounce it to be the evidence of an eye-witness,7 whereas it is, of course, a rhetorical extravaganza – a fictional pastiche based on a wide range of ancient sources from Homer to Quintus of Smyrna. In this article I explore the intertextuality at work in the description of the cult of Neoptolemos at Delphi in the Aithiopika and, on the basis of this analysis, I argue that it carries an ideological resonance best suited to the reign of Julian in the 4th century (which I assume to have been the date of composition of the novel) rather than to the dramatic date of the events (some time during the Persian occupation of Egypt in the 4th century BCE).8

The reconstruction of the procession in honour of Neoptolemos preceding the Pythian Games in the Aithiopika, as given above, is unexpected, particularly because the extant sources on the death of Neoptolemos are almost entirely unanimous in describing his violent aggression rather than his genial benevolence towards Delphi. His murder of Priam or

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6 For this, see Lateiner 1997:409-39.
7 See, for example, Fontenrose 1960:195: ‘Heliodoros’ circumstantial account of the elaborate procession, sacrifice, and accompanying ceremonies reveals an eyewitness, himself or an informant.’ However, no-one who has been to Delphi would think it plausible that a cavalry procession with two choruses of young girls and their attendant crowds could have circled the tomb of Neoptolemos, however the archaeologists reconstruct the crowded site at Delphi.
8 On the dramatic date and the date of composition of the Aithiopika see Morgan 1996:417-56 and the literature cited there. The complex issue of the date of the novel cannot be entered into directly here.
Astyanax is a common theme in Greek and Roman Art. Ibycus (fr. 26 Page), Euripides (Hec. 523-68) and Seneca (Trojan Women 1118-64) make him inexorable in his execution of Polyxena. According to our mythological sources, Neoptolemos visited Delphi after the fall of Troy either to hold Apollo to account for the death of Achilles at Troy, or to plunder the temple, or to offer Trojan spoils to Apollo, or to consult the oracle about the barrenness of Hermione. He was killed either by a Delphian or Delphians because of a quarrel over sacrificial meat at the altar of Apollo (Pindar, Nem. 7.34-47), or by Orestes, because Menelaus had given Hermione in marriage to Neoptolemos (Euripides, Andromache 994-1008; 1070-165; Orestes 1653-59). Pindar (Paean 6.98-120) records Apollo’s anger with him for the killing of Priam, and Virgil (Aen. 2.526-58) describes his violent murder of Astyanax and Priam, and his own death at the hands of Orestes (Aen. 3.330-32) as acts of extreme savagery. The latter scene is the subject of a Pompeian wall-painting – evidence of continuing interest in the theme at the time of Vespasian. Heliodoros broadly follows the version of the myth in Euripides’ Andromache – there is no indication in the hymn to Thetis in the Aithiopika that Heliodoros makes any use of Pindar, Nem. 7.34-47, in which Neoptolemos is stabbed to death during a quarrel over sacrificial meat, or of Pindar’s description of him as a ‘guardian of right over the pomps and ceremonies of heroes with their rich sacrifice’ (ἡροΐαις δὲ πομπαῖς | θεμισκόπον οἰκεῖν ἐόντα πολυθύτοις). None of the early sources on the cult of Neoptolemos describe him as unjustly killed, nor is he portrayed as a virtuous hero like Battos of Cyrene, nor as a military hero such as Brasidas in Thucydides. It is especially noteworthy that Herodotos (8.31-39) does not mention Neoptolemos in his description of how the heroes Phylakos and Autonoos protected the shrine of Apollo at Delphi at the time of the Persian Wars – the dramatic date of the novel. This episode was not suited to Heliodoros’ purpose since the Thessalians had, in fact, played a treasonous role in leading the Persians against Delphi (Hdt. 8.31) and the Ainians were

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9 Cf., e.g., LIMC s.v. ‘Priamos’, 87-139, esp. 112, a Roman sarcophagus of the 2nd century; ‘Astyanax’ 1, 7, 13, 18, 28; ‘Polyxene’, 21-33, esp. the well known 26.
10 For a discussion, see Fontenrose 1960:212.
12 There is no evidence either that Heliodoros made any use of the more human picture of Neoptolemos in Sophocles’ Philoctetes.
13 For these heroes and hero cult in the Roman Empire generally, see Jones 2010:10-12, 24-26.
14 Fontenrose’s argument (1960:212-56) that Neoptolemos should be identified with Phylakos is highly speculative and ultimately unconvincing.
known medisers (Diodorus Siculus 11.3.2). Pausanias records (10.22.8-10) that it was the Ainians who led Brennos into Delphi after his forces had cruelly massacred the Kallians and violated their women and children. According to Pausanias (10.23-24) it was later, during the Gallic invasion of Greece in 280 BCE under Brennos, that Pyrrhos/Neoptolemos, in association with three other heroes not mentioned in Heliodoros, undertook to defend Delphi. Thus, at the dramatic date of Heliodoros’ novel in the 4th century BCE, there were no grounds for representing the son of Achilles as a beneficent hero, who had protected the site of Apollo against foreign aggression.

The explanation for the more positive legend surrounding the cult of Neoptolemos lies in pagan attempts under the Roman Empire to renew the cult of heroes in response to Christian neglect of them in favour of stories of martyrs and saints. It is Pausanias, in the 2nd century, who relates information about the history of the Amphictyonic League from the earliest times until his own day. According to him (10.8.1-5) the Ainians, together with the Ionians, Dolopes, Thessalians, Magnesians, Malians, Phthiotians, Dorians, Phocians and Locrians who border on Phocis, had constituted the original League. Under Macedonian control the Phocians and Dorians lost their membership, but the Phocians were reinstated because of their heroic defence of Delphi against Brennos. Under Augustus the Magnesians, Malians, Ainians, Phthiotians and Dolopes were consolidated into a single Thessalian bloc, and control over their vote was given to the Nicopolitans (Nicopolis, ‘City of Victory’, was the name given to Actium by Augustus) who became members of the League for the first time. In Pausanias’ own day there were thirty Amphictyons and the Ainians are not specifically mentioned as separate from the Thessalians. It is possible that this account of changes to the membership of the Amphictyonic League underlies the story of how the Ainians lost their place in the running of Delphi in the Aithiopika. However, Pausanias makes it clear that it was the people of Delphi, not the Thessalians, who were responsible for the cult, that it was celebrated on an annual basis as a ceremony of purification (ἐναγισμός), and that it was entirely separate from the Pythian Games (Paus. 10.24.6). Pausanias’ interest in such cults was not restricted to Delphi, as he describes the sacrificial rituals at about fifty other centres in Greece, in which the blood sacrifice of animals was maintained in opposition to the rejection of such offerings by Christians.

16 See also Aeschines, On the Embassy 115; Strabo 9.3.7; Weir 2004:58-59; Defradas 1954:146-56.
The change from blood sacrifice to abstract offerings has been identified as the single most important change in ancient religion in the transition from paganism to Christianity. It is clear that much of the description of events at the ceremony in the \emph{Aithiopika} is drawn from Philostratos’ account of the cult of Protesilaos in the Troad in his \emph{Heroikos} (esp. 9.1-23.30). The \emph{Heroikos} is a fictitious dialogue between a disbelieving Phoenician and a vine-dresser in the Thracian Chersonese, who is a faithful devotee of the cult of Protesilaos. The latter states that he has accurate information about what actually happened at Troy through communicating with the spirit of the hero, who was the first Greek to die in the war. In the course of the discussion, the vine-dresser explains the original nature of the embassy of fourteen men that was sent to Achilles from Thessaly every year of the war in compliance with an oracle from Dodona, in terms of which they were to sacrifice a white bull to him as a god, and a black one as a fallen mortal. This embassy is similar in many respects to that led by Theagenes in the \emph{Aithiopika}. The description of the sacrificial ritual is broadly similar in both texts (\emph{Her.} 53.8; \emph{Hld.} 3.5.2-3). In both Philostratos and Heliodoros there are hymns to Thetis. Both hymns are genealogical hymns, which show ring-composition, beginning and ending with the same line in each case. In terms of content the two hymns both refer to the fact that Thetis belonged to the sea, that she was immortal, that she had given birth to Achilles, that Achilles or Neoptolemos had caused the destruction of Troy, and both hymns invoke the favour of the hero and mention sacrifice. In the \emph{Heroikos}, hymns are said to form part of the rites of hero worship. They were sung when visiting the tombs of the heroes (\emph{Her.} 52.3). Both texts stress the role of Thessaly in preserving these heroic legends. Similarities can be observed also at the level of language: Heliodoros 2.34.3 uses the term ἐ δολοφονήθη, while Philostratos has the very same, rather unusual verb (\emph{Her.} 51.1 δολοφονηθείς) to describe a treacherous murder. In the \emph{Heroikos} the sceptical Phoenician poses a series of awkward questions concerning Protesilaos to the vine-dresser who manages to deal with them all convincingly. In the course of answering these problems, the humble rustic displays a formidable knowledge of

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19 The references are from the edition of Maclean & Aitken 2001.
20 For a detailed comparison of the two hymns, see Hilton 2003:235-48.
21 For the cult of heroes in Philostratos’ \emph{Heroikos}, see Hershbell 1996:169-79.
22 The more usual term for murder is φονεύειν which occurs 453 times in the TLG corpus in the active infinitive form compared with just 5 occurrences of δολοφονεύειν.
Homeric epic, even going so far as to correct the poet on a number of points. Ultimately, the Phoenician relinquishes his scepticism and is converted. The cult of Protesilaos as described in the Heroikos is similar in many respects to Christian accounts of Christ’s violent and unjust death and resurrection, especially with regard to his appearances at the empty tomb, and dialogues of faith and scepticism among his followers. Although, of course, Christian writers never write of Jesus as a hero, but as God, they sometimes used the term ‘hero’ on their tombs to refer to themselves in the afterlife.23 There is by now a considerable body of work on the close relationship between early Christian writings, including the apocryphal gospels, and pagan fiction in respect of the Christian themes of crucifixion, resurrection and the eucharist.24

The account of Neoptolemos’ cult in the Aithiopika is nowhere as full or as complex a treatment of hero-cult as the Heroikos, it must be said. Nevertheless, the two texts are undeniably related, especially as regards the importance of hero-cults. Despite this, the character of Heliodoros’ treatment of Neoptolemos cannot be fully explained by this intertext alone. The two versions differ in that the Heroikos focuses on Achilles, including his afterlife on the island of Leukē as a dangerous δαίμων (Her. 54.2-57.17), while Heliodoros’ account centres on Neoptolemos. In particular, the description of Neoptolemos as a beneficent hero demands further explanation. Some intervening text is needed to account for this change of emphasis and shift in characterisation from the cruel murderer of Priam, Astyanax and Polyxena to the beneficent protector of Delphi and Greece.

Quintus of Smyrna may prove to be the catalyst of this change.25 His much neglected and underrated Trojan Epic was a late revival of the early Greek Epic Cycle based largely on traditional heroic legends. Part of the lost epic Aithiopis, for example, described how Achilles killed the Amazon queen Penthesilea and the Ethiopian prince Memnon. These episodes are fully treated by Quintus; the arrival of Memnon at Troy (2.31), his battle with Achilles, his death and the laments of his mother, the Dawn, are also reflected in the prominence this hero enjoys in the Aithiopika, in which the Ethiopian queen Persinna identifies him as one of the three heroes who

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23 Jones 2010:64.
25 It is possible that a positive account of Neoptolemos was given by a text preceding Quintus of Smyrna that has not survived from antiquity. However, there is no report that maintains so positive an interpretation over such an extended narrative.
were her ancestors, the others being Perseus and Andromeda (4.8.3; cf. 10.6.3). One of the chief heroes of the *Little Iliad*, Neoptolemos, features very prominently in Quintus’ poem (7.353; 8.24), especially in relation to his grandmother, Thetis, who plays an extensive role in putting on funeral games in honour of her son, Achilles (4.92-94). The hymn in her honour during the ceremony of propitiation in the *Aithiopika* invokes by proxy her role as patron of the ensuing Games. Moreover, the uniquely close association between Thetis and Neoptolemos in the Delphic hymn in Heliodoros, absent in Philostratos, is found also in Quintus, where the Nereid’s pride in her grandson is frequently recounted.

It is the moral character of Neoptolemos, however, which is most strikingly different from preceding accounts in Quintus’ *Trojan Epic*. A recent study of the character of Neoptolemos in the *Posthomerica* argues that he shows more sensitivity to others (especially the old Nestor, 12.275-80, who acknowledges his kindness), exercises greater restraint and humility, is more intellectual than his peers in the poem, especially in his speeches, and is more honourable — he rejects the stratagem of the horse as cowardly trickery — and widely loved. This stands in sharp contrast to earlier accounts in which he is more eager to harm his enemies than help his friends. Quintus’ account of the deaths of Priam and Astyanax is notably less violent than the representation of these scenes in art and in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, in the *Posthomerica*, Priam is resigned to his fate and glad to die, and stress is laid rather on the necessity for Neoptolemos to kill the ancient enemy king. Likewise, Neoptolemos is absolved from the killing of Astyanax who is killed by the Greeks in general and not specifically by him. The description of Polyxena’s sacrifice at the altar is similarly indirect — Quintus emphasises Neoptolemos’ duty to appease the spirit of Achilles. Most tellingly, there is no indication of Neoptolemos’ later murder at Delphi in the *Posthomerica* — it is his later apotheosis that is foreshadowed instead (3.760-62).

If the role of Quintus of Smyrna, whose epic poem dates to the end of the 3rd century, can be accepted as the catalyst of the change in characterisation of Neoptolemos in the *Aithiopika*, there is no going back to the 3rd century date for Heliodoros. If this, in turn, is the case, then the pagan revival instituted by Julian is the only remaining historical context.

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26 Cf. Hld. 4.8.3: Ἡμῖν πρόγονοι θεῶν μὲν Ἡλίους τε καὶ Διόνυσος, ἡρώων δὲ Περσεύς τε καὶ Ἀνδρομέδα καὶ Μέμνων ἐπὶ τούτοις (‘Our ancestors among the gods are Helios and Dionysus, among the heroes, Perseus and Andromeda, and, in addition to these, Memnon’); a similar claim is made at 10.6.3.
28 See the introduction to the recent translation by James 2004: xi-xl, esp. xx-xxi.
for the composition of *Aithiopika*.\(^{29}\) There are many echoes of Julian’s writings in the novel, from the description of the siege of Nisibis (Hld. 9.3-13; cf. Jul. Or. 1.27a-30b; 2.62b-2.67a) to the account of cataphract cavalry (Hld. 9.15.5; cf. Jul. Or. 2.57b; Or. 1.30).

With regard to hero-cult specifically, there is the astonishing account in *Ep.* 19 (‘To a Priest’) of how the Christian bishop Pegasius (whom Julian suspected to be a secret worshipper of Helios) showed him the hero-shrine (ἡρώιον) of Hector at Troy and said that it was maintained and sacrificed to in the same way that Christians worship the martyrs. In *Against the Galilaeans* (143b) Julian states that for each nation there is a presiding god who has established the differences in laws and characters in harmony with divine command and that to help him there are angels and *daimones* and heroes. In the same work (161a) Julian notes that the wrath of a hero against humanity is unbearable and (229e) that humans can prove themselves ‘heroic’ (ἡρωικός). In *Oration* 8 (‘To Sallust’, 250b) the emperor exhorts his audience to imitate the Homeric heroes, since God will help men today if they strive for virtue, as he helped the heroes of old. Julian frequently mentions Delphi and its important intellectual tradition in his writings.\(^{30}\) He frequently refers to the phrase ‘Know Thyself’, he talks of philosophy as an initiation (Iamblichus initiated me [into philosophy] through his doctrines’ [λογοί], Or. 4.146a), and believes philosophy sometimes arose from the interpretation of oracles (Or. 5.162c) – the oracle at Delphi, for example, pronounced on the fate of Plotinus’ soul (Porphyry, *Plot.* 22).\(^{31}\) Julian is known to have sent Oribasius to revive the oracle at Delphi (Philostorgius 7.15) only to receive the famous last oracle of Delphi.\(^{32}\) He commanded the Castalian spring at Daphne, which Hadrian had blocked up (Amm. Marc. 22.12.8), to be reopened. The strength of Julian’s abhorrence of pollution through dead bodies is evident from the funeral decree of Feb. 363 (*Ep.* 56.136b Bidez).

While Christians opposed blood sacrifice\(^{33}\) – and there is no doubt that both Julian and Heliodoros had good knowledge of Christian scripture –

\(^{29}\) The first decades of the 4th century were taken up with Constantine’s Christianising policies. Cf. Odahl 2004; Polsander 1996; Barnes 1981. A detailed cultural analysis of this period goes beyond the scope of this article.

\(^{30}\) For the policy of the Roman emperors towards Delphi, see Weir 2004:140-75.


\(^{33}\) 1 Cor. 10.20; Athenagoras, *Appeal on Behalf of the Christians* 13; Tatian, Or. 4.2; Justin, 2 *Apol.* 5.3-5; Tertullian, *Apol.* 30.5-6; Law of Constantius II (337-61) in the Theodosian Code 16.10.2 (sacrificiorum aboleatur insanias); Pliny 10.96.10.
Julian (Letter to a Priest 89b Bidez) urged people to perform it: ‘Let men worship the gods as if they see them actually present; for our fathers established images and altars and the maintenance of undying fire, and everything of the sort, and symbols of the presence of the gods … so that through them we may worship the gods.’ In Against the Galilaeans (229bc; 305b), he condemned Christians for disregarding the Mosaic demand for sacrifice, and this treatise breaks off just when Julian is criticising Christian indolence in sacrifice and divination (CG 351d, 358de). Ammianus Marcellinus (25.4.17) regards Julian’s indulgence in sacrifices as excessive,34 and Libanius (Or. 12.87, 91; 15.79) testifies to his passionate belief in their efficacy: ‘This city … has given many gods to be your allies. You have sacrificed and made invocation to them, you have soldiered with them; Hermes, Pan, Demeter, Ares, Calliope, Apollo, the Zeus of the Mountain, and the Zeus in the city in whose presence you entered into your consulship.’35

In conclusion, the fictional account of the hero-cult of Neoptolemos at Delphi provided by Heliodorus would have been unthinkable at the dramatic date of the Aithiopika (some time during the Persian occupation of Egypt in the 5th and 4th centuries BC), since the notion of the son of Achilles as a spirit who was kindly disposed to the Delphians had not yet been established. The fictional account in the Aithiopika ameliorates the dark myth of Neoptolemos and, through the invented narrative of the role played by the Thessalian Ainians, gives an additional quasi-historical dimension to the encounter between the Greek aristocrat Theagenes and the Ethiopian princess Charikleia. It was only after Pausanias’s catalogue of festivals of purification (ἐναγισμοί) of hero-cults in the 2nd century, after the more laudatory treatment of Neoptolemos in the Posthomeric Trojan epic of Quintus of Smyrna, and particularly during the time of the Emperor Julian’s use of hero-cult and their associated sacrifices to counter the Christian saints in the 4th century that Heliodorus’ account begins to make sense. Such a reconstruction of the ideological underpinning to Heliodoros’ novel gives the work a far deeper resonance than has been afforded to it to date.

Bibliography


34 See Bradbury 1995:331-56; Smith 1995.


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