

## Will It End Happily? Suspenseful Episodes in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*

The author of the *Aethiopica* is universally recognized as the most suspenseful of the novelists, or even the only suspenseful one (Winkler 1982). The main reason for this is the novel's dramatic style, which lets the story largely emerge through the interaction of the characters rather than having it told in the voice of the outside narrator, who hides himself behind the characters and, especially in the early stretches of the novel, hides his own knowledge (Winkler 1982; Morgan 2007). His limited vision fosters suspense of uncertainty (Flint 1922; Duckworth 1933) in connection with climactic developments. I propose to discuss particularly suspenseful episodes in the first half of the novel, the more "dramatic" and the less explanatory. Heliodorus builds up suspense there mainly in two ways: first, by sending "signals of suspense" (Eco 1979), that is, by showing characters in the grips of fear, anxiety, even anguish at crucial junctures, fostering the same emotions in the readers, and, second, by underscoring a withdrawal of information, likewise at pivotal moments, thus drawing the readers' attention to their ignorance and stimulating their desire to discover what they do not know. The first kind of suspense comes about especially through the reactions of the hyperemotional Cnemon, while to withdraw information is the thoughtful and calculating priest Calasiris, who tells his story, which occupies a large portion of the novel, from the limited perspective of the acting character rather than with hindsight, and often lets other characters know more than he allows the readers. The importance of suspense in Heliodorus' novel invites questions related to his narrative technique and his expectations: does he seek to please a highly intellectual reader or does he want his novel to be a page turner?

## Bibliography

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