

# Wronged Maidens in Myron's Messenian History and the Ancient Novel

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WHEN PAUSANIAS reaches Messenia in his guide to Greece he inserts his most extended historical excursus, a narration of the wars by which the Spartans imposed helotry on the Messenians. Pausanias dates the wars to the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., a millennium before his own day, and portions his materials into two separate wars, basing his division on lines of the poet Tyrtaeus, who inspired the Spartans during the second war and reminded them of the glorious struggle of their grandsires in the previous war (Paus. 4.15.1–3). As his sources Pausanias names the prose work of Myron of Priene and the epic poem of Rhianus. He will use Myron for the first war and Rhianus for the second. Complications arise because Aristomenes, Rhianus' hero, appeared as a warrior also in Myron's tale. One or the other author must be incorrect. Pausanias decides the poet is more accurate than the prose writer, and condemns Myron for retailing false and untrustworthy material both in his Messenian work and his other writings (4.6.1–4).

To this day Myron's reputation as a historian remains low. Writing in the early Hellenistic age about a period from which only legends survived, Myron has produced what Pearson<sup>1</sup> has

<sup>1</sup>L. Pearson, "The Pseudo-History of Messenia and its Authors," *Historia* 11 (1962) 397–426 (hereafter PEARSON) at 425. On the dating of Myron to the third century B.C. see Pearson 411, and Jacoby *ad FGGrHist* 106 (p.341).

dubbed "creative history." His battle scenes are tedious and wooden.<sup>2</sup> Far stronger are his tragic episodes played out in sanctuaries, at altars, and at tombs. Today such a work would be classified as historical fiction, but in Myron's own day such a category was not recognized as separate from history.<sup>3</sup> Pausanias' lengthy rehandling of Myron's material can inform us about the nature of those largely vanished tragical histories at which Polybius railed (2.56), but which were much in vogue in the early Hellenistic age.

In this study I will analyze Myron's work as a piece of creative literature, concentrating on the theme of wronged maidens which recurs from beginning to end of his tale. The episodes in which this leitmotif emerges, though melodramatic, possess a psychological, if not a historical, verisimilitude. The influence of Euripidean tragedy is strong, and gives Myron's work greater depth than comparable creative histories such as the *Alexander Romance* or the fragmentary *Ninus Romance*. Like these works Myron's history prefigures the Greek novel.<sup>4</sup>

Ephorus, writing before Myron, had given as the cause of the Messenian war a Messenian crime, the violation of Spartan

<sup>2</sup>On the style of Myron's battle scenes see J. Rickenmann, *Rhianos und Myron* (diss. Zurich 1917: hereafter RICKENMANN) 50–55. At least one battle which, as I will argue below, comes from Myron's work, has a historical basis, that of the Great Trench, as it is confirmed by a papyrus fragment of Tyrtaeus published in 1980 (*P.Oxy.* XLVII 3316). This has led W. K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography* V (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1985) 1–31, to value the battle accounts in Pausanias' Messenian section much more highly than did earlier scholars. The latest treatment of the historicity of Pausanias' account of the Messenian wars is by S. E. Alcock, "The Pseudo-history of Messenia Unplugged," *TAPA* (1999) 333–341.

<sup>3</sup>On the nature of early Hellenistic "tragic history" see F. W. Walbank, "History and Tragedy," *Historia* 9 (1960) 216–234.

<sup>4</sup>On the influence of Hellenistic historiography on the Greek novel see B. E. Perry, *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of their Origins* (Berkeley 1967: hereafter PERRY); B. Lavagnini, "Le origini del romanzo greco," *AnnPisa* 27 (1921) 1–104, reprinted in his *Studi sul romanzo greco* (Messina/Florence 1950) 1–104; and S. Trenkner, *The Greek Novella in the Classical Period* (Cambridge 1958) 23–30. Lavagnini discusses the *Alexander Romance* and the *Ninus Romance* at 57–81 and 217–222.

maidens holding festival to Artemis at Limnae (Strab. 8.4.9) and the killing of the Spartan king Teleclus who attempted to rescue the girls (Strab. 6.3.3, 6.1.6). Pausanias, however, carried away by his task as a historian, offers a lengthy discussion of causes (4.4.1–4.5.7), including a Herodotean summation of contrary Messenian and Spartan versions of the rights and wrongs of three incidents (4.5.1–5). These incidents are the outrage at Limnae, the quarrel between the Messenian Polychares and the Spartan Euaephnus, and the trickery of Cresphontes by which, after the Dorian invasion, Messenia was allotted to him and Lacedaemonia to his nephews.

How much of this material did Pausanias take from Myron? Pausanias mentions Myron as his source for the first Messenian war only after his discussion of causes, telling us that Myron's work comprised the first action of the war, namely the Spartans' capture of Ampheia, and following events, going no further than the death of the Messenian king Aristodemus (4.6.2). Pausanias' statement need not mean that Myron omitted to discuss the causes of the war altogether, but does suggest that his treatment, unlike Pausanias' own, was brief.<sup>5</sup>

It would be odd if Myron had passed over in silence the Limnae incident, the traditional cause of the war. We can, in fact, be certain he covered it, for one of his most dramatic scenes presupposes that the Messenians have offended the gods. Ravaged by a plague, they send Tisis, an oracle expert, to Delphi. The Pythia advises the Messenians to sacrifice a virgin in a night ceremony to the infernal powers (4.9.1–4). The name of Tisis, Repayment, and the fact that the recipients of the sacrifice are the gods of death, indicate that the offering is to be

<sup>5</sup>While most scholars assume Myron covered the causes of the war, Rickenmann (89, 106–107, 110–116) contended that Pausanias' words show that the causes were wholly omitted by Myron. An extreme opposite view was taken by H. L. Ebeling, *A Study in the Sources of the Messeniaca of Pausanias* (diss. Johns Hopkins 1892: hereafter EBELING) 13–22 and 53–54, who argued that Pausanias depended on Myron for his entire discussion of causes and some of his account of Messenian prehistory as well.

in compensation for a corresponding death. This can only be the death of the Spartan maidens outraged at the sanctuary at Limnae, for in the version Pausanias gives (contrary to Ephorus' account) the Spartan girls are not only ravished, they commit suicide (4.4.1-2). Thus Myron opened his tale with a heightened version of the outrage of Limnae to prepare his climactic scene, to which I will return, the sacrifice of the daughter of Aristodemus. He has deepened the guilt of the Messenians by adding the maidens' suicide to the death of their defender, Teleclus.<sup>6</sup> The Roman legend of Lucretia is similar; her suicide reinforces the demand for vengeance against her ravisher and his kin. The Greeks took seriously the need to pay recompense for such outrages. In the Hellenistic period maidens of Locris were still sent annually to Troy to run a dangerous gauntlet and serve as temple servants in repayment for the rape of Cassandra by Locrian Ajax.<sup>7</sup>

While Myron's whole treatment of the Messenian war requires that the Messenians have tragically doomed themselves by initial wrongdoing, Pausanias' discussion of causes balances the war guilt evenly (4.5.1-5). Thus he adds a counter-version of the Limnae episode of Myron. The Messenians (perhaps his local informants), he tells us, deny their guilt as the invention of Spartan slander, and claim the "maidens" at Limnae were

<sup>6</sup>E. Meyer, "Messenien," *RE Suppl.* 15 (1978) 155-289 at 240, suggests that the killing of Teleclus was a historical event that lived on in memory. According to Strabo (6.1.6) one faction of the Messenians strove unsuccessfully to bring the malefactors of Limnae to justice. The righteous party did not prevail, was exiled, and helped to found Rhegium. F. Kiechle, *Messenische Studien* (Kallmünz 1959) 6-9, proposed Antiochus of Syracuse as the source of this story, while Meyer (241) preferred Timaeus. There is no indication Myron used this tale, although as another failed opportunity to relieve Messenian guilt it would fit well with his presentation.

<sup>7</sup>On the Locrian maidens see D. D. Hughes, *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece* (London 1991) 166-181, and F. Graf, "Die lokrischen Mädchen," *Studi storico-religiosi* 2 (1978) 61-79. An inscription from the third century B.C. found in western Locris (IG IX.1<sup>2</sup> 706) confirms the maidens' story in Lycophron *Alexandra* 1141-1173.

actually Spartan youths in disguise and up to no good. They attacked the Messenians and were killed (4.4.3).<sup>8</sup>

While I believe the Limnae incident was Myron's primary *casus belli*, he must have mentioned, at least parenthetically, a second of Pausanias' three causes, the trickery of Cresphontes. Just as the oracle demanding maiden sacrifice presupposed the outrage at Limnae, a second oracle composed by Myron corresponds to the Cresphontes incident. The Pythia tells the Messenians to dedicate one hundred tripods to Zeus of Ithome (4.12.7). To his doom Aristodemus fails to fulfill correctly the tasks set by either oracle, and the guilt of his people is not alleviated.

On the second occasion, a humble but wily Spartan, Oebalus, hears of the oracle and steals into Ithome with one hundred clay tripods (miniatures, presumably) concealed in a satchel, thus managing to anticipate Aristodemus' dedication (4.13.8–10). Delphi had predicted this outcome to the Messenians: "trickery raised you up and retribution is to follow" (4.12.7), while telling the Spartans, "The Messenian people hold their land by trickery, and will be taken by the same arts which they were the first to use" (4.12.1). This can only refer to the trick played by Cresphontes on his nephews.<sup>9</sup> In the opening sections of book four Pausanias informs us that the Dorian conquests were to be parcelled out by lot. Desiring Messenia, Cresphontes ensured that his lots were of fired clay, which bobbed out of the jar of water in which they were placed, while the unfired lots of his nephews dissolved (4.3.3–6). It is particularly appropriate that the trickster Oebalus outsmarts the Messenians with fired

<sup>8</sup>Like several earlier scholars, Meyer (*supra* n.6: 243–244) assumes that Pausanias did not consult Myron or Rhianus directly but relied on an intermediary source, a Messenian of Augustan date. He attributes the Messenian version of the Limnae incident to this intermediary. A convincing refutation of the intermediary thesis was presented by R. Laqueur, "Myron 6," *RE* 16 (1935) 1119–1123. Both Rickenmann (38–39) and Pearson (414 n.41) reject the need for an intermediary.

<sup>9</sup>Ebeling (16–17, 60) perceived this connection.

clay tripods to correspond to the clay lots of Cresphontes. Myron may not have invented the tale of Cresphontes' ruse,<sup>10</sup> but surely he used it to explicate Oebalus' corresponding ploy, perhaps *ad locum* rather than in his opening chapters.

As his third cause of the war Pausanias narrates the story of the Messenian Polychares, whose son was murdered by the Spartan Euaephnus. Polychares was driven mad, and slaughtered Spartans left and right (4.4.4–8). The tale of Polychares is a dramatic novella in itself. It appears also in a fragment of Diodorus (8.7.1–8). It shows a certain affinity with Myron's way of telling a story. His Aristodemus also goes tragically off his head in a crisis and becomes violent (Paus. 4.9.8). The Polychares story, however, would intrude on Myron's presentation, as it distributes the blame evenly. I believe it is not Myron's, but that Pausanias took it from a separate unnamed source, perhaps a rhetorical school exercise, which the episode resembles. Pausanias used the macabre tale to fill in a generational gap between the Limnae incident in the reign of Phintas in Messenia and the outbreak of the war in the time of his grandson Euphaes (4.4.1–4, 4.5.8).

Myron, unlike Pausanias, did not trouble himself about chronology, as his anachronistic use of Aristomenes shows. His history would have opened by announcing his theme of wronged maidens with the outrage at Limnae, the death of Teleclus, and a call for vengeance. Sparta's opening gambit in the war, the attack on Ampheia, would have quickly followed. The Cresphontes incident, centuries previous, could have been inserted parenthetically later to explain the aptness of Oebalus' clay tripods. Thus, as I reconstruct the work of Myron, a crime against maidens is heralded at the outset as the primary cause of Messenia's downfall.

<sup>10</sup>Soph. *Ajax* 1285–1287 has been taken to refer to Cresphontes' ruse (see Meyer [*supra* n.6] 235). Cresphontes is not, however, named in these lines referring to a water-logged lot.

In the early part of Pausanias' account of the *second* Messenian war are two episodes which parallel the Limnae incident. Messenians assault Spartan maidens dancing at the sanctuary of Artemis at Caryae (4.16.9–10), and attack Spartan women at the shrine of Demeter in Aegila (4.17.1). It is generally accepted that Myron is Pausanias' source for the first part of the second Messenian war.<sup>11</sup> Pausanias cites only Rhianus as his source for the second war, but tells us that the poet began *in medias res* after the battle of the Great Trench (4.6.2). Pausanias had omitted from his account of the first war those of Myron's episodes which anachronistically featured Aristomenes as the protagonist, but utilized them to create an account of the first part of the second war up through the battle of the Trench (4.15.4–4.17.9). The episodes at Caryae and Aegila fall within this section, and their resemblance to the outrage at Limnae reinforces the arguments for Myron's authorship of the whole section covering the battles at Deryae, Stenyclarus (Boar's Tomb), and the Great Trench.

At Caryae Messenian raiders led by Aristomenes capture Spartan maidens dancing in honor of Artemis. That night the raiders attempt to violate the girls. Aristomenes forbids them to act in so unhellenic a fashion, and finally is forced to kill the most unruly of his fellows. He ransoms the girls, still virgins (4.16.1–2).<sup>12</sup> The episode at Aegila follows. Aristomenes' men here attempt to steal matrons, but the women drive them off with knives and roasting spits (4.17.1). This demonstrates how

<sup>11</sup>The arguments were worked out by Ebeling 32–45 and Rickenmann 60–75. Pritchett (*supra* n.2) is apparently unaware of their thesis, which would validate the similar treatment he accords Pausanias' accounts of the first war and the early part of the second war.

<sup>12</sup>Jerome *Adv. Iovin.* 1.308 says Aristomenes carried off maiden dancers at the Hyacinthia. He may confuse this festival with that at Caryae. On the festival at Caryae see A. Brelich, *Paides e Parthenoi* (Rome 1969) 164–165. J. Auberger, "Pausanias romancier?: le témoignage du livre IV," *DHA* 18 (1992) 257–280 at 269–270, suggests that the picture of Aristomenes' courtesy was inspired by Alexander the Great's magnanimous treatment of women.



older women cope with attackers, while Caryae shows how a true Hellenic gentleman should act on a raid. Myron offers both episodes as behavioral contrasts to the fatality at Limnae. Aristomenes emerges as his paragon. His villain was the Arcadian king Aristocrates, who betrayed the Messenians at the battle of the Great Trench (4.17.2–9). He reappears in Pausanias' Arcadian book as the ravisher of a priestess of Artemis (8.5.11–12), an episode which fits very well with Myron's theme and probably comes from his history.

While Aristomenes was Myron's paragon and military hero, Aristodemus was his tragic protagonist. Aristodemus first appears in the reign of Euphaes, when he comes forward to offer his daughter as a sacrificial victim. Myron's tale of Aristodemus' daughter is largely or wholly fictional, but his understanding of the religious role of maiden sacrifice is insightful. He sees it as compensatory. The violence initially done to the Spartan girls at Limnae calls for redress. As the perpetrators are not brought to justice the Messenian people are imperilled by a Spartan war of vengeance. In such a situation, both among primitive peoples and in Greek legend, an attempt is made to divert the violence onto a single innocent.<sup>13</sup> By giving up one of their own to death, a girl of royal blood, expendable yet most precious, the Messenians hope to neutralize the deaths of the Spartan maidens and halt the course of a vengeance working inexorably against them.<sup>14</sup>

Fragments of the eighth book of Diodorus, who knew Myron's work, eke out Pausanias' summary of the episode. An epidemic rages amongst the Messenians, "like the plague, yet it

<sup>13</sup>On the nature of human sacrifice and parallels from primitive cultures see R. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore 1977), transl. P. Gregory of *La Violence et le sacré* (Paris 1972).

<sup>14</sup>On human sacrifice as an act of renunciation see W. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (Berkeley 1983, transl. P. Bing of *Homo Necans* [Berlin 1972]) 64–67, and H. S. Versnel, "Self-sacrifice, Compensation and the Anonymous Gods," in J. Rudhardt and O. Reverdin, edd., *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité* (Entretiens Hardt 27 [Vandoeuvres/Geneva 1981]) 135–185, esp. 159–185.



did not affect everyone" (Paus. 4.9.1)—perhaps it struck only those who had participated in the outrage at Limnae. The local seers propose a remedy but are denounced for unwisdom, and the Pythia is consulted (Diod. 8.8.1). Diodorus makes clear that the question posed to the Pythia was "how can we win the war" (8.8.2). The plague has alerted the Messenians to the gods' anger, but their greater problem is the war, and to obtain victory Delphi counsels maiden sacrifice. Tisis, the oracle expert, is ambushed and wounded by the Spartans on his return journey from Delphi. He delivers the oracle and dies of his injuries (Paus. 4.9.3–4). This is unfortunate, since the Messenians will be deprived of his advice on the correct interpretation of the prophecy. The oracle advises the Messenians to immolate a virgin to the infernal powers, chosen by lot from the royal clan of the Aepeytidae. If they are obstructed they should accept for sacrifice the willing gift of another (παρ' ἀλλοίου, 4.9.4). The daughter of Lyciscus draws the lot and the obstruction follows. The seer Epebolus reveals she is a suppositious child, not truly of Aepeytidae blood. Meanwhile Lyciscus absconds with the girl to Sparta (4.9.5).

Aristodemus now comes forward: "a man of the Aepeytidae family, of higher repute than Lyciscus in warfare as well as otherwise, he gave his daughter willingly for sacrifice" (4.9.6). There is an anomaly here. Once the lottery failed the donor was to be of another sort, ἀλλοῖος, not one of the Aepeytidae. Myron, who delighted in obscure oracles, has left open the possibility for a substitute animal sacrifice. This is too subtle for Aristodemus and the seer Epebolus, now Tisis is dead. Pausanias, although quoting the oracle verbatim, as is his practice, has also overlooked its ambiguities, while Diodorus cut the Gordian knot by a swift careless paraphrase, "a willing donor of the same family" (8.8.2). I prefer Pausanias' *lectio difficilior*.

The girl's fiancé opposes Aristodemus, arguing that by their betrothal agreement the father has given up any right to dispose

of his daughter (Paus. 4.9.7). This dramatic quarrel was doubtless inspired by a similar scene in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*.<sup>15</sup> Achilles, although not truly Iphigeneia's intended, adopts that role to defend her against the desire of her father and the army to sacrifice the girl (1346–1360). Euripides had popularized the theme of human sacrifice not only in his two *Iphigeneia* plays but also in *Heracleidae* and the lost *Erechtheus*, in which the king's daughter is immolated to enable an Athenian victory over Eleusis.<sup>16</sup> Pausanias makes the curious remark, "they do not give the name of the fiancé" (4.9.7). I offer, for what it is worth, the conjecture that Myron gave the suitor's role to his hero Aristomenes. Pausanias has had to cut all reference to Aristomenes from the first Messenian war, and his remark would mean that "they," his local Messenian informants, were unable to come up with an acceptable alternative name for the suitor.

Seeing the case going against him the suitor claims he is the girl's lover and she is pregnant. This obstructionism finally drives Aristodemus insane and in a rage he kills his daughter and cuts her open, demonstrating that her womb is empty (4.9.7–8). His macabre act of cutting open the girl to show whether she is pregnant is paralleled by a story Parthenius summarizes as his thirty-fifth example of tragic love (*Amat.narr.* 35 = *FGrHist* 697 F 1). Eulimene, the Cretan king's daughter, is chosen by lot as a pre-battle sacrifice. Her lover confesses their intimacy, but the crowd demands her death all the more. She is

<sup>15</sup>The similarity is noted by Nicole Loraux, *Tragic Ways of Killing a Woman* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1987, transl. A. Forster of *Façons tragiques de tuer une femme* [Paris 1985]) 78 n.16. On the Iphigeneia legend see A. Henrichs, "Human Sacrifice in Greek Religion: Three Case Studies," in *Le sacrifice* (*supra* n.14) 195–235, at 198–208, and K. Dowden, *Death and the Maiden: Girls' Initiation Rites in Greek Mythology* (London 1989) 9–19.

<sup>16</sup>On sacrificial maidens in Euripides see Loraux (*supra* n.15) 31–48. Hughes (*supra* n.7) 61–62 points out that the immolation of Polyxena on Achilles' tomb in *Hecuba* and *Troades* is more properly a revenge killing than a sacrifice. On the *Erechtheus* see Burkert (*supra* n.14) 147–149.

immolated and cut open by the priest. Indeed she is pregnant, and her fiancé takes vengeance by killing the lover. The tale is attributed to Asclepiades of Myrleia's *Bithyniaca*, a work of the first century B.C. If the attribution is correct this is later than Myron. Myron's account is closer to Euripides in its concentration on the father, while Asclepiades' tale, which follows up the fate of the fiancé, is more in the spirit of the ancient novel. This would suggest that Myron's is the original, Asclepiades' the derivative story.

Certainly Myron's is the more profound account, for Aristodemus' mad act is no religious sacrifice, and only confirms the doom of the Messenian people. He has added his own daughter to the tally of maiden victims. The seer Epebolus explains that "Her father has murdered the girl, not dedicated her to the gods whom the Pythia had indicated" (Paus. 4.9.8). This is the crux of Myron's tale—human sacrifice is nothing but murder, as the chorus in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* had proclaimed (218–227). Aristodemus was "out of his mind with anger" (4.9.8) when he butchered his daughter. Myron's reworking of the quarrel scene in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis* shows a sensitive psychological insight. Aristodemus volunteers to give his daughter to death when he has already lost her to a suitor. It is the fiancé's sexual claims which enrage him so that he kills her in a manner which makes the criminality of his act clear, disembowelling a girl who may be pregnant.<sup>17</sup> Iphigeneia's sacrifice worked—it allowed the Greeks to sail to Troy. In Myron's tale the sacrifice is voided. Possibly there was a legend of maiden sacrifice connected with a Messenian tomb, for the grave of Aristodemus' daughter figures later in Myron's story (4.13.5). Myron desired to work a Euripidean scene of maiden sacrifice into the Messenian war,

<sup>17</sup>Loraux (*supra* n.15) 49–65 demonstrates through her analysis of Euripides' plays that the "correct" way to sacrifice a maiden is to slit the throat.

but since the war was lost the sacrifice must be unsuccessful. As he tells it, the killing of the girl is both criminal and profitless.

Pausanias has understood the story in a simplistic way. Although he uses the word *miasma* of Aristodemus' deed (4.9.9) and tells us it was done in madness (4.9.8), he sympathizes with Aristodemus, undone by fate when he was only trying to save his country (4.9.6)—words that in Myron's original may have been spoken by Aristodemus himself. Pausanias seems to think all would have been well had the fiancé not intervened, and calls his lie that the girl was pregnant most shameless (4.9.7). Diodorus' reading of the tale is more sensitive. He preserves the argument that prophets are not always to be trusted (8.8.1), and when the seer Epebolus calls for yet another maiden victim,<sup>18</sup> since Aristodemus' sacrifice has miscarried, Diodorus sympathizes with the fathers who demur. They feel pity, they consider it treachery to give up a child, no glory is worth a daughter's life (8.8.3). King Euphaes brings the crisis to a close, saying the death of one girl is sufficient (Paus. 4.9.9). The crowd, however, admires Aristodemus' patriotism, for it is apparently on the strength of his willingness to slay his daughter that he is elected king on Euphaes' death. Pausanias tells us there were two other candidates superior in the arts of war and peace, and the seers warned against choosing a man tainted by *miasma* (4.10.5).

The dramatic potentialities of maiden sacrifice attracted a number of other Hellenistic historians. Phylarchus, the principal target of Polybius' tirade against tragical history, offered a particularly gruesome account. In Elaeus on the Thracian Chersonnese a noble girl was annually sacrificed. King Demiphon exempted his own daughters from the lottery. When Matusius objected Demiphon in anger killed the daughter of Matusius. In revenge Matusius slaughtered the king's girls and was flung into

<sup>18</sup>On the role of seers in this and other tales of human sacrifice see S. Eitrem, "Mantis und σφάγια," *SymbOslo* 18 (1938) 9–30, esp. 20–23.

the sea for his crime.<sup>19</sup> The story is similar to Myron's tale, with its quarrel, contrasting fathers, wrongful procedures, and punishment of the slayers. The tragedy of Polycrite unfolds in more romantic fashion. Parthenius took it from a local Naxian history. Polycrite is abandoned in a temple as an offering under the duress of battle. She attracts the desires of an enemy commander, and saves her people but loses her life.<sup>20</sup>

It is possible for such tales to have a happy rather than a tragic ending. Myrsilus and Anticleides, two historians of the third century B.C., the era of Phylarchus and Myron, incorporated the story of the daughter of Smintheus in their works. The colonists of Lesbos chose her by lot to be sacrificed to the gods of the sea. Dressed in finery she was thrown overboard. Her beloved Enalus plunged with her, and dolphins completed the rescue.<sup>21</sup> The beloveds of Eulimene and Aristodemus' daughter did more harm than good with their intervention, but in this case the rescue succeeded.

We have only synopses to indicate how these lost historians handled the human sacrifice theme. Pausanias' extensive retelling of Myron's history, however, indicates a central, pivotal role for the sacrifice scene, which connects both to the beginning of his history at Limnae and to the end, when we learn of the fates of Aristodemus and Lyciscus, the father who rescued his daughter. I suspect that in some of the lost histories as well maiden sacrifice was central to the work rather than an excursus.

Pausanias does not preserve fully the story of Lyciscus. In 4.10.1 he picks up his narrative with the words, "in the fifth

<sup>19</sup>Hyginus *Ast.* 2.40 (FGrHist 81 F 69). For a discussion of the Matusius legend see Burkert (*supra* n.14) 245–246.

<sup>20</sup>*Amat.narr.* 9 (FGrHist 500 F 1). W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley 1979) 72–73, interprets the Polycrite legend.

<sup>21</sup>Plut. *Mor.* 163 and 984E (Myrsilus FGrHist 477 F 14); Ath. 466C–781C (Anticleides FGrHist 140 F 4).

year after Lyciscus' escape from Ithome," although he had not been speaking just previously of Lyciscus at all. The adventures of Lyciscus and his supposed daughter must have once filled the five-year gap. Lyciscus, an intentional contrast to Aristodemus, saves his girl and is himself saved.<sup>22</sup> The stories of both fathers are interleaved with the military exploits which originally featured Aristomenes. We pick up Lyciscus' tale near the end of the war (4.12.5–6). His presumed daughter has died in exile and Lyciscus is captured by Arcadians while praying at her tomb—perhaps an actual monument which gave rise to his legend. The Arcadians, allies of the Messenians, hand Lyciscus over to his people for judgment as a traitor. In one of Myron's best-crafted scenes Lyciscus is saved from execution by the revelations of a priestess of Hera, the actual mother of the girl believed to have been borne by Lyciscus' wife. Since the girl was not one of the Aepytidae, Lyciscus is proved justified in rescuing her from the sacrificial blade. Unlike Aristodemus, he understood the oracle correctly and took warning from the seer.

Aristodemus, the tragic protagonist, plays almost no military role, except for once marshalling the line of battle (4.11.2–3). The engagement is a success (4.11.4–8), but we must reinsert where it belongs the defeat of Aristomenes at the Great Trench to understand fully the source of Aristodemus' growing despair.<sup>23</sup> Omens pile up against him. Oebalus outsmarts him with the dedication of the tripods (4.12.7–10), and a bronze statue of Artemis casts down its shield (4.13.1), a reminder, surely, of retribution to pay for the outrage at Artemis' shrine of Limnae.

Pausanias has said that Aristodemus' suicide marked the end of Myron's history (4.6.2). It must then have been the culminating scene of his work, although surely Myron covered the subsequent surrender of the Messenians, as does, very briefly,

<sup>22</sup>Pearson 415 notes the well-crafted contrast between the two fathers.

<sup>23</sup>Rickenmann 74–75 demonstrates the original position of the battle of the Great Trench in Myron's history.



Pausanias (4.13.5–7). Aristodemus' suicide is strongly linked to the central scene of his daughter's death. He dreams he is in armor, making the standard sacrifice of animal entrails before a battle. His daughter appears, dressed in black, still showing the wound he gave her, split open from breast to stomach. She casts down his offerings and garbs him in white, with a golden crown, as Messenian kings are laid out at death. Aristodemus now fully recognizes his tragic error. "He had become the killer of his daughter to no purpose." The spurned entrails are a graphic image of the wrongful death she suffered, and Aristodemus commits suicide (4.13.2–4).

It has long been recognized that Myron, either at the beginning or at the end of his history, referred to the battle of Leuctra in 371 B.C. when, centuries after Aristodemus' death, the Messenians were freed from helotry. Myron had shown the Spartan heroes, the Dioscuri, working against Aristomenes during and after the battle of Stenyclarus (4.16.5, 9), and in the context of the battle of Leuctra Pausanias tells us that the Theban commander Epaminondas dreamed the Dioscuri were no longer angry with the Messenians (4.26.6), and explains how their wrath was provoked before Stenyclarus (4.27.1–3). Another link between Myron's material and Leuctra is provided by the oracle Aristodemus received concerning the one hundred tripods, which included the phrase, "Retribution (ἄτη) falls on one side before the other" (4.12.7). This, Pausanias points out, referred forward to the eventual downfall of the Spartans at Leuctra (4.26.4).<sup>24</sup>

There is a third link also, which ties the battle of Leuctra to Myron's opening at Limnae and his theme of wronged maidens. Both Xenophon (*Hell.* 6.4.7) and Ephorus (Diod. 15.54.2–3) aver that the Spartans were fated to fall at Leuctra because on

<sup>24</sup>Ebeling 57–65 analyzes the references to the Dioscuri and the oracle concerning the tripods, showing that they indicate that Myron brought the battle of Leuctra into his history.

that spot in times past innocent maidens had been raped by Spartans and had killed themselves.<sup>25</sup> Myron reworked the incident at Limnae by adding suicide to the maidens' sufferings (4.4.2), thus bringing the episode into close alignment with the story of the maidens of Leuctra. Moreover, when Pausanias in his Boeotian book narrates the maidens' tragedy at Leuctra (9.13.5–6, 9.14.3) he adds that their father Scedasus also took his own life. I believe he is using Myron's version of Leuctra here, and the death of Scedasus balances that of Teleclus at Limnae. The retributions which the Pythia foretold would fall first on Messenia and then on Sparta thus take repayment for strictly parallel crimes committed against maidens at Limnae and Leuctra. Thus the theme of wronged maidens is intensified.

As I have reconstructed Myron's history it had a double movement. On the one hand it chronicled a series of battles, culminating in the subjection of Messenia, which Pausanias retells at wearisome length. Entwined with the battle scenes is a secondary movement, a series of episodes about wronged maidens. Here Pausanias is more succinct, but dramatic scenes such as the confrontation of Aristodemus and his daughter's suitor, or the trial of Lyciscus before the assembly, would originally have been heavy with speeches. In a similar fashion the second half of Xenophon's *Cyropaedeia* interleaves the tragic story of Panthea between scenes of battle, recounting her adventures as a captive, her reunion with her husband, her suicide.

The *Cyropaedeia* is recognized as one of the precursors of the Hellenistic novel.<sup>26</sup> Euripidean tragedy, New Comedy, Hellenistic poetry and travelogue all made their contributions to the genesis of the novel. The Hellenistic historians supplied the

<sup>25</sup>On the maidens of Leuctra see Burkert (*supra* n.20) 74–75. Jacoby, *ad* 70 (p.33) and *ad* 70 F 213, attributes Diodorus' coverage of Leuctra to Ephorus, following majority opinion.

<sup>26</sup>On the *Cyropaedeia* as a forerunner of the ancient novel see Perry 167–170 and Trenkner (*supra* n.4) 25–26.

novel with its narrative prose form and historical settings.<sup>27</sup> Lavagnini emphasized the importance of local histories to the novel's genesis, using examples such as Parthenius' tragic synopses of the abandonment of Polycrite and the sacrifice of Eulimene.<sup>28</sup> Pausanias' much more lengthy account of Myron's history should give us greater insight into the contribution of historiography to the novel, and elucidate the continuities and shifts of Hellenistic tastes and values.<sup>29</sup>

Myron's work, like that of Euripides, is transitional between tragic and romantic interpretations of maidens' perils. He rejects the self-sacrificing heroines of Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis* and *Heracleidae* as a means of mitigating the responsibility of the sacrificers, and instead balances the tragedies of Limnae and Leuctra with the preservation of virginity and life at Caryae, and pairs the immolation of Aristodemus' daughter with the rescue effected by Lyciscus. The novelists invented the device of the false death, whereby a single heroine can undergo tragic demises as well as attempts on her chastity, and yet be rescued inviolate in the end.<sup>30</sup> Myron's unnamed and silent maidens thus are replaced by resourceful female protagonists, whose stage is the wider world rather than an obscure corner of mainland Greece. Despite these dissimilarities Myron's work prefigures the novel in many ways. I will discuss parallels in historical and religious settings, in scenes of maiden sacrifice, and in the relationship of daughters and fathers.

Of the five fully extant Greek novels, the earliest, by Chari-

<sup>27</sup> Perry esp. 38–39 and 76–79.

<sup>28</sup> Lavagnini (*supra* n.4) 18–57.

<sup>29</sup> On the novelistic tendencies of Pausanias' fourth book see Auberger (*supra* n.12), concentrating on the sections Pausanias drew from Rhianus. The same author's "Pausanias et les Messéniens: une histoire d'amour!" *REA* 94 (1992) 187–197, argues that Pausanias himself melodramatized the war.

<sup>30</sup> On the mechanism of the false death see F. Wehrli, "Einheit und Vorgeschichte der griechisch-römischen Romanliteratur," *MusHelv* 22 (1965) 133–154 at 142–144, and J. Winkler, "Lollianos and the Desperadoes," *JHS* 100 (1980) 155–181 at 173–175.

ton, and the latest, Heliodorus', best preserve the historical settings and military episodes linking them to Hellenistic historiography.<sup>31</sup> Both take place in the time of the Persian Empire, and Persian satraps play a role. Chariton's heroine Callirhoe, the daughter of Hermocrates of Syracuse, is a historical figure; according to Plutarch she suffered a violent death (*Dion* 3). The novelist revives her in her tomb, to be carried off by grave robbers for further adventures (*Chaereas and Callirhoe* 1.4–10).

Sanctuaries of Artemis are settings both for Myron and the novelists. Myron's maidens are wronged and rescued in her sanctuaries of Limnae and Caryae; the great fane of the goddess at Ephesus is the setting for key scenes in several novels. There Anthia and Habrocomes first meet in Xenophon of Ephesus' *Ephesiaca* (1.2–3); there Achilles Tatius' lovers are reunited (*Clitophon and Leucippe* 7.16). In the late Latin novel *Apollonius of Tyre* (for my purposes more relevant than the Greek pastoral romance of Longus) it is in the Ephesian temple that Apollonius recovers his long lost wife, now high priestess (48–49). Heliodorus' heroine Chariclea is also a priestess of Artemis, at Delphi (*Aethiopica* 2.33). Thus Artemis, protector and avenger of maidenhood, begins her career in romance in Myron's history.

Equally striking are the maidens' tombs which appear in both the novels and in Myron's work. The Greek landscape was dotted with memorials said to commemorate maiden victims, such as the graves at Leuctra or the spring marking the sacrifice of Macaria at Marathon (Paus. 1.32.6). In Myron's history Lyciscus is captured at the tomb of his daughter, while Aristodemus kills himself at his daughter's grave. These episodes may well have been suggested by actual shrines to wronged maidens. Maidens' tombs abound also in the novels, and are sites for

<sup>31</sup>On Chariton's novel and its connections with historiography see Perry 124–148 and his "Chariton and His Romance from a Literary-Historical Point of View," *AJP* 51 (1930) 93–134. On the historical setting of Heliodorus' work see J. R. Morgan, "History, Romance and Realism in the *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus," *CA* 1 (1982) 221–265.

suicide attempts, although by the device of the false death the heroine is not truly buried therein. At Callirhoe's tomb, which may actually have existed in Syracuse, Chaereas is diverted from suicide by the discovery that her body is missing (3.3). A grave monument in Tarsus may have inspired the setting for episodes in two other novels. Apollonius of Tyre grieves at the tomb erected in Tarsus to his supposedly deceased daughter Tarsia (38), and in Tarsus also is the tomb where Anthia awakes from the dead (*Ephesiaca* 3.8). In Photius' summary of Iamblichus' novel *Babyloniaca* (cod. 94) the father of Sinonis, finding what he believes to be his daughter's body, erects a tomb for her and there commits suicide. Her husband is prevented from doing likewise by the revelation that the body was identified as Sinonis incorrectly (18). Wehrli has demonstrated that this episode reflects the process of a shift from tragic to romantic plot, mediated by the device of the heroine's false death.<sup>32</sup> I would add that we can also trace here a shift in interest from the father-daughter relationship which preoccupied Myron to the interaction between the young couple of the novel.

An even closer parallel to the situation of Myron's Aristodemus is provided by the novel of Achilles Tatius. His hero, Clitophon, believes he has witnessed the sacrificial immolation of his beloved Leucippe and plans to take his own life beside her coffin, but is prevented by the good news that Leucippe is alive (3.16–17). Three of the five extant Greek novels and a newly discovered fragment of Lollianus' lost *Phoenicica* include scenes of human sacrifice.<sup>33</sup> Petronius scoffs at such sacrifice scenes as melodramatic commonplaces (*Sat.* 1). In the earliest example, from the *Ephesiaca* (3.13), robbers plan to hang Anthia

<sup>32</sup>Wehrli (*supra* n.30) 145.

<sup>33</sup>Winkler (*supra* n.30) 166–175 analyzes the fragment of Lollianus and studies the scenes of human sacrifice in all the novels. The text of Lollianus is published in A. Henrichs, ed., *Die Phoinikika des Lollianos. Fragmente eines neuen griechischen Romans* (Pap. Texte Abh. 14 [Bonn 1972]). On Lollianus see also Henrichs (*supra* n.15) 224–232.

from a tree and cast javelins at her as an act of sacrifice to Ares. Rescuers arrive in the nick of time.

Achilles Tatius remodels this simple scene in a way which makes it likely that he knew Myron's work. As in the Messenian history, an oracle enjoins the sacrifice of a maiden to purify the army before battle (3.12). Leucippe is (seemingly) immolated in the same unusual way as Aristodemus' daughter, slit open from guts to breast (3.15).<sup>34</sup> In the novel this is necessary because the bandits intend to roast and eat her innards (3.19).<sup>35</sup> The mode of slaughter also makes her rescue possible, since Clitophon's friends can counterfeit the immolation with a trick sword and some pig guts (3.21), thus also reprieving Clitophon from Aristodemus' fate of suicide. Aristodemus had killed himself after an ominous dream showing his daughter with her wound still upon her (4.13.2). In the novel it is Leucippe's mother Panthea whose dream prefigures Leucippe's sacrifice (2.23), but it also alerts Panthea to Clitophon's attempt to seduce Leucippe. Thus the novelist makes clear the equivalency of sexual violation and ritual immolation. In Myron's tale this is expressed by the attempt to sacrifice a maiden in repayment for the rape of Spartan girls at Limnae.

Although no other scene in *Clitophon and Leucippe* offers such a close parallel to Myron's tale as the sacrifice episode, the two works share with Heliodorus' romance two further melodramatic devices, the chastity test and the rescuing intervention of a servant of the gods at the climax of a trial scene. Aristodemus disembowelled his daughter in a crazed attempt to placate the gods conflated with a desire to prove her chastity (Paus. 4.9.8).

<sup>34</sup>See *supra* n.17. P. Liviabella Furiani, "Religione e letteratura nel 'racconto' di sacrifici umani presso i romanzieri greci d'amore," *QuadIstFilPerugia* 3 (1985) 25-40, analyzes the sacrifice episodes of *Clitophon and Leucippe* and the *Aethiopica*.

<sup>35</sup>Cannibalism is also a part of the sacrifice in the Lollianus fragment; see the studies cited *supra* n.33.



Leucippe, who preserved her virginity as well as her life, proved her purity by a magical test in the cave of Pan (8.13–14). Clitophon had been saved at his trial (for murdering the allegedly deceased Leucippe) by the intervention of a priest of Artemis (7.16). In Myron's tale it is the righteous father, Lyciscus, who is brought to trial and saved by the testimony of the priestess of Hera, true mother of his so-called daughter (4.12.6).

In Achilles' novel, as in the *Ephesiaca* and the fragment of the *Phoenicica*, human sacrifice is the aberrant custom of outlaws. Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, however, returns to the pattern of the tragic histories, in which the maiden's father is determined to sacrifice his daughter for the good of the state. As in Myron's tale there are both menacing and rescuing father figures, for the heroine Chariclea has three surrogate fathers, the Ethiopian wise man Sisimithres, Charicles priest of Delphi, and Calasiris, Egyptian priest of Isis, as well as her biological father, the Ethiopian king Hydaspes, who is unaware of her existence until the end of the novel.

Heliodorus' final book opens with Chariclea and her beloved Theagenes captives in Ethiopia and about to be sacrificed to the sun and moon (10.4). Only in this novel is the parallelism between hero and heroine extended to make them both potential sacrificial victims.<sup>36</sup> Their chastity is tested by a curious gridiron which burns the feet of the impure; both pass unscathed (10.8–9). Chariclea is able to prove that she is the king's daughter with the help of Sisimithres' testimony, but Hydaspes remains ambiguously determined to sacrifice the girl until the crowd demands her reprieve (10.10–17). Theagenes and other potential victims are still in peril, however, and are only rescued by the unexpected arrival of Charicles, who reveals the love of Chariclea for Theagenes, and by the wise words of Sisimithres, who explains

<sup>36</sup>On the alignment of hero and heroine in the ancient novel see David Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry: Love in the Ancient Novel and Related Genres* (Princeton 1994) and his "Xenophon of Ephesus: Eros and Narrative in the Novel," in J. R. Morgan and R. Stoneman, edd., *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context* (London/New York 1994) 49–63.

that the gods have no wish for human sacrifice (10.34–39).<sup>37</sup> Parallels to Myron's story of Aristodemus are the father determined to sacrifice his daughter, the test of chastity, the lover unable to rescue his beloved. Parallels to Myron's story of Lyciscus are the reprieved girl, the surprise priestly witness, and the revelation of a girl's true parentage. For both authors, sacrifice is murder.

The pairing of wrongheaded and righteous father figures characteristic of Myron and Heliodorus appears also in the anonymous *Apollonius of Tyre*.<sup>38</sup> King Antiochus forces his daughter into incest and prevents her marriage by executing her suitors (1–3). King Archistrates of Libya, in contrast, grants his daughter's wish to learn the lyre from Apollonius, is willing to marry her to the suitor she prefers, and agrees to her choice of the apparently impoverished Apollonius (18–23). Like Myron this author is primarily interested in the father-daughter relationship. Apollonius himself in a fit of pique strikes Tarsia, who is then revealed to be his own long lost daughter. In this blow, so uncharacteristic of the gentle hero, the theme survives of the father's violence against the daughter. In other novels this feature has been displaced onto the lover. In Chariton's work Chaereas strikes Callirhoe with a blow seemingly lethal (1.4); in the *Aethiopica* Theagenes strikes Chariclea when she is disguised as a beggar (7.7). These surprising scenes are much easier to understand if we see melodramatic romance as the descendant of tragical histories of family violence. Most of the menacing figures of the novels are strangers or outlaws, but in earlier works such as Myron's they were kin, whether it be sacrificing fathers or the Messenians, Dorian kindred to the Spartans.

The comparison of Myron's early Hellenistic work with the

<sup>37</sup>On the suspenseful intricacies of Heliodorus' denouement see J. R. Morgan, "A Sense of the Ending: The Conclusion of Heliodorus' *Aithiopika*," *TAPA* 119 (1989) 299–320.

<sup>38</sup>On this novel's five fathers see E. Archibald, "Fathers and Kings in *Apollonius of Tyre*," in M. M. MacKenzie and C. Roueché, edd., *Images of Authority* (Camb.Phil.Soc. Suppl. 16 [1989]) 24–40.

novels which developed in later Hellenistic and Greco-Roman times elucidates a shift in the taste for melodrama from tragedy to romance. Both genres serve as catharsis, a lament for the wrongs against maidens, whether or not they survive the perils to their lives and chastity. In Myron's work crimes against maidens caused the downfall of whole peoples, first the Messenians, then the Spartans. The novels are concerned only with the fate of the young couple, and tolerate tragedy only in subplots.<sup>39</sup> The loss of tragic depth is offset by a gain in variety and color as the heroine moves from one triumph over danger to another, from one exotic port of call to the next. It is hazardous to theorize about social change on the basis of a shift in literary taste, yet we can know that the position of women improved over the Hellenistic centuries, and that some at least became readers.<sup>40</sup> The development of the novel, with its theme of love's triumph over the perils surrounding maidens, may be a surrender to romantic fantasy, as well as an indicator of increased interest in the domestic, the mysterious, and the exotic. It also suggests that the need to mourn maidens' wrongs has dwindled as the self-reliant, if menaced, heroine comes to the fore.

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<sup>39</sup> On tragic subplots in the ancient novels see Wehrli (*supra* n.30) 137–138.

<sup>40</sup> On the conditions of Hellenistic society which created an audience for the ancient novel see Perry 3–43, 46–49, 55–57, and Lavagnini (*supra* n.4) 12–17. On women and women readers of the ancient novel see B. Egger, "Looking at Chariton's *Callirhoe*," in *Greek Fiction* (*supra* n.36) 31–48, and her "Women and Marriage in the Greek Novels: The Boundaries of Romance," in J. Tatum, ed., *The Search for the Ancient Novel* (Baltimore/London 1994) 260–280. Also in *Search* are H. W. Montague, "From *Interlude in Arcady* to *Daphnis and Chloe*: Two Thousand Years of Erotic Fantasy," 391–401; S. A. Stephens, "Who Read Ancient Novels?" 405–418; E. Bowie, "The Readership of Greek Novels in the Ancient World," 435–459.