

Preface

This book has had a long gestation. It originated as a doctoral dissertation under the guidance of Prof. Suzanne Saïd at Columbia University. Parts of that dissertation became articles published in journals and other collections. The present book is a thorough overhaul of the original dissertation, enriched (I hope) by years of more or less autodidactic study of ancient Greek and Roman law. In a sense, it attempts to bridge the fields of Greek literature, Roman imperial history, and legal history. Each has its own jargon and ongoing controversies; I have endeavored to make this book intelligible to an audience with diverse interests. I am grateful to Gareth Schmeling and the editors of the *Ancient Narrative Supplementa* for their support of a book that, like the heroine of Heliodorus' novel, works hard to prove that hybridity is a virtue.

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