

ALLUSIONS TO GREEK NOVELS  
IN THE DESCRIPTION OF ELECTRA'S  
PALACE, IN NONNUS, *DIONYSIACA* 3.131–179

The long and elaborate narrative of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* begins with the abduction of Europa, and Cadmus' search for his missing sister (Books 1–3). The next major events are the founding of Thebes, the marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia (4–5), and the birth of Dionysus (7–8). The story of Ino, Athamas and Melicertes is recounted in Books 9 and 10, while Dionysus' discovery of the vine appears in 11–12. Dionysus' travel to India occurs in Books 13–17, and following the struggle with Lycurgus (20–21), the sojourn in India and the war there appear in Books 25–40. Thebes is the setting for Books 44–46, and Dionysus' apotheosis is recounted in the last book, 48.

The focus of this article is Book Three, which begins with Cadmus sailing around the Mediterranean Sea looking for Europa, who has been kidnapped. After a storm, Cadmus lands on Samothrace, where he meets Emathion, ruler of the island, and his mother, the Pleiad Electra. Following a lengthy depiction of the palace and its garden (3.131–179), the poet tells how Cadmus stays on the island, and how he is persuaded to abandon his search in favour of marriage to the local princess. In due course Cadmus and Harmonia are married, and they are destined to become the grandparents of Dionysus. Thus the story from Cadmus' arrival at Samothrace to his departure with Harmonia (3.35–4.248) forms a discrete and important episode in the poem.

In the Budé edition of the *Dionysiaca*, Pierre Chuvin observes<sup>1</sup> that the chief literary model for the account of Cadmus' arrival at Electra's palace in Dion. 3.131–179 is the narrative of Odysseus' visit to the palace of Alcinous in Od. 7.81–133; a lesser model is the story of Jason's arrival at the palace of Aeëtes in Arg.

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1) P. Chuvin, Nonnos de Panopolis. Les Dionysiaques. Tome II: chants 3–4 (Paris 1976) 4.

3.215–237.<sup>2</sup> The description of Electra's palace makes several references to that of Alcinous: the depiction of the threshold, pillars, double doors, and walls in Dion. 3.134–140 recalls that of similar architectural features in Od. 7.86–87. The four-acre enclosure containing an orchard of fruit-trees and a garden of flowers in lines 140–164 is modelled on the orchard-grove described in Od. 7.112–128. The central spring of water in Dion. 3.164–168 is a variation of Od. 7.129–132. The golden statues of torch-bearing boys in Dion. 3.169–171 is a close imitation of Od. 7.100–103, while the portrayal of the life-like watchdogs in Dion. 3.172–179 is an expansion of the portrayal of dogs in Od. 7.91–93.

Despite the clear verbal references in these sections, however, Neil Hopkinson rightly observes that “it does not seem that these parts allude significantly to Homer's poem”.<sup>3</sup> Nor do the references to the *Argonautica* appear to serve a particular purpose in the context of Dion. 3.131–179, other than to locate the passage in the tradition of epic palace-descriptions, and to suggest a parallel in the situations of Jason and Cadmus, both of whom are arriving at the homes of their future brides. In fact, several other features, not traceable to Archaic or Hellenistic models, are prominent. The first of these, in order of occurrence in the text, is the role of Peitho, the attendant of Aphrodite (Dion. 3.83–93; 112–114; 124–130). Another apparently unique feature is the recurring emphasis upon the amorous behaviour of the personified palm and myrtle trees growing in the enclosed garden (3.140–153). Then, in lines 153–163 near the centre of the description, the myth of Apollo and Hyacinthus is recalled by the aition of the leaf-pattern of the iris plant. Lastly, also not found in the poetic models, is the figure of the gardener who carves channels of water from the central spring (3.164–169).

As we shall observe, each of the non-epic features in the description may be traced to similar descriptive passages in Greek

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2) The behaviour and speech of the garrulous crow immediately before the palace description (3.97–124) is modelled on Arg. 3.927–938 and Hekale fr. 260 Pf. (= Hollis fr. 69–74). The influence of more recent literary precursors such as Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica* has been treated by R. Shorrock, Nonnus, Quintus and the Sack of Troy, in: Quintus Smyrnaeus. Transforming Homer in Second Sophistic Epic (Berlin 2007) 379–391. Chuvin (above, n. 1) 4–5 suggests that some elements in Electra's palace reflect the style of the palace of Diocletian at Split, and of Constantine at Constantinople.

3) N. Hopkinson, Nonnus and Homer, in: Studies in the Dionysiaca of Nonnus (Cambridge 1994) 18.

novels.<sup>4</sup> While some of the references serve to establish the Greek novels as significant literary models for this episode, others serve to infuse the epic with thematic elements normally associated with the novel-genre: love, romance, jealousy, and grief. By adapting features of the garden-scene that conventionally functions in the novel as setting and symbol for themes of love, Nonnus instils wide-ranging romantic tones into the story of Cadmus' visit to Samothrace. The romantic tone commences with the introduction of Peitho, whose actions presage the marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia. The poet goes on to explore the theme of male-female relations in the overtly sexualized representation of the trees growing in the garden. The inclusion of an extensively-recounted myth of love and loss further reinforces the romantic quality of the palace-description, and moreover foreshadows events in the subsequent narrative that lead to the marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia. This article will conclude that the extensive allusions demonstrate a greater complexity of literary models for the description in Dion. 3.131–179 and a broader literary milieu for the *Dionysiaca* than is recognized generally.

Let us begin with a simple but telling feature in the palace garden that appears also in the garden descriptions of *Leucippe and Clitophon* and *Daphnis and Chloe*, but not in Od. 7.111–131 which is their general model. On Electra's property a gardener is seen carving out a stream into many curving channels, bringing water from plant to plant: ἔνθεν ἄλωεὺς / ἐξ ἀμάρης ὀχέτευε πολυσχιδὲς ἀγκύλον ὕδωρ / εἰς φυτὸν ἄλλο μετ' ἄλλο (Dion. 3.165–167). At the beginning of Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*, in the programmatic description of the painting portraying the abduction of Europa (a subject-matter of obvious similarity to the plot of Dion. 1–3), a gardener is shown bending over a stream as he uses a mattock to open a pathway for the water: ὀχετηγός τις ἐγγράπτο δίκηλλαν κατέχων καὶ περὶ μίαν ἀμάραν κεκυφώς καὶ ἀνοίγων τὴν ὁδὸν τῷ ρεύματι (1.1.6).<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in the garden of Daphnis de-

4) The influence of the novel on the *Dionysiaca* both generally and in other specific episodes has been noted previously; for a recent review and new observations see L. M. Cavero, *Poems in Context. Greek Poetry in the Egyptian Thebaid 200–600 AD* (Berlin 2009) 172–175.

5) For a treatment of style in Nonnus' account of Europa's abduction see R. Schmiel, *The Style of Nonnos' Dionysiaca. The Rape of Europa (1.45–136) and the Battle at the Hydaspes (22.1–24.243)*, *RhM* 141 (1998) 393–406.

scribed in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* 4.1–4.4, in which the walls of the central shrine are painted with scenes from the legend of Dionysus (4.3.1–4.4.1), the character Lamon appears as the gardener who draws water from a stream into channels to nourish the flowers: τοῖς ἀνθεσιν ὕδωρ ἐπωχέτευσεν ἐκ πηγῆς τινός ἦν εὖρεν ἐς τὰ ἀνθη Δάφνις (4.4.1).<sup>6</sup> By incorporating the feature of the gardener in Dion. 3.165–167, the poet places the description within the tradition of other passages imitative of the Homeric scene, and so establishes a relationship with them that permits the exploration of other points of contact.

This brings us to an element in the description of Electra's palace that is modelled more explicitly upon precedents in the Greek novel, namely the prominent role of Peitho as Cadmus' guide as he approaches and surveys the scenes (Dion. 3.83–97; 112–114; 124–130). Peitho, whose name means Persuasion, is first introduced by means of the epithet θαλαμηπόλος, “attendant in a lady's chamber” (LSJ s.v.).<sup>7</sup> Though Nonnus' Peitho here is inspired by Athena disguised as a girl in Od. 7.18–78, the pitcher of water that she bears is different, an omen of things to come, ἄγγελος ἐσσομένων (Dion. 3.87). It is explained that hereby the wedding of Cadmus and Harmonia is meant, for it was customary to bathe a bridegroom with “life-giving ... waters” before marriage (3.89). And by inserting the garrulous crow of Argon. 3.927–938 into the narrative at this point to chide Cadmus for his slothful approach to the palace (Dion. 3.103–122), the poet makes it more clear that marriage is in the offing. The crow advises that Peitho, assistant to Aphrodite, will act as *praeceptor amoris* to Cadmus, who is new to love (νήις Ἐρώτων, 3.103): τερπομένην δὲ γάμοισι τιθηνήτειραν Ἐρώτων / Πειθῶ πομπὸν ἔχεις, οὐκ Ἄρτεμιν (3.112–113). Of relevance to the reading of the description of the palace

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6) It should be noted, as this journal's anonymous reader reminds me, that Longus, Achilles Tatius, and Nonnus may be alluding independently to the gardener-simile in *Iliad* 21.257–262. However, given the ekphrastic context of each passage in *Leucippe and Clitophon* and *Daphnis and Chloe* and the several allusions to them in Dion. 3.131–179, it seems likely that Nonnus obtained the image via the novel-writers.

7) The term is borrowed from Od. 7.8, whereby Eurymedusa, Nausicaa's nurse, is introduced. In Dion. 48.232 Peitho receives the epithet τελεεσίγαμος, “consecrating marriage”; at 48.110 Peitho's actions anticipate the union of Dionysus and Ariadne.

and its garden, it is stated explicitly that the scenes were pointed out from the perspective of Peitho: δάκτυλον ἀντιτύποι νοήμονα μάρτυρα φωνῆς / σιγαλέω κήρυκι δόμον σημήνατο Πειθῶ / ποικίλον ἀστράπτοντα (3.127–129).

It should be noted that the topos of the guide occurs repeatedly in literary descriptions of the Second Sophistic, as Shadi Bartsch has shown.<sup>8</sup> In Lucian's *Herak.* 5.4, for example, an informed Celt interprets the painting of Heracles for Lucian, the viewer and narrator of the scenes. Similarly, in Cebes' *Pinax* an old bystander provides an explanation (ἐξήγησις, 2.1) for the viewers.<sup>9</sup> In the prologue of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, the narrator reports that while hunting in Lesbos he saw in a paradise-like grove a painted picture that told a love-story. The narrator wondered at the many scenes in the painting, and therefore he carefully sought out an interpreter of the image, καὶ ἀναζητησάμενος ἐξηγητὴν τῆς εἰκόνοσ (1.1.3). Upon receiving what must have been a romantic explanation of the painting, the narrator states that the book he writes is dedicated to the god of love, ἀνάθημα μὲν Ἑρωτι (1.1.3), and to the nymphs and Pan. In Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*, an interpretation of the peacock's amorous intentions in the garden-scene is offered (1.15), in order to render Leucippe's disposition amenable to love: βουλόμενος οὖν ἐγὼ εὐάγαγον τὴν κόρην εἰς ἔρωτα παρασκευάσαι . . . (1.16.1). Thus the romantic interpretation informs the description with the narrative role of advancing the love interest in the novel. Modelling Peitho upon the same role of *praeceptor amoris*, Nonnus imports the theme of a developing romance from the Greek novel into the epic poem.

To advance this romantic theme further, several other features are adapted from the two novels also. The pathetic fallacy of the fruit trees in the palace garden (3.142–154) reinforces the change in the plot from Cadmus' search to his forthcoming union with Har-

8) S. Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel. The Reader and the Role of Description in Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius* (Princeton 1989) 31. Using the *Imagines* of Philostratus as a case-study, R. Webb underscores the importance of the sophist's role as guide, in *The Imagines as Fictional Text: Ekphrasis, Apatê and Illusion*, in: *Le Défi de l'Art. Philostrate, Callistrate et l'Image Sophistique* (Rennes 2006) 117–136.

9) Thus Bartsch (above, n. 8) 42. In similar fashion the viewers of the tableau of Charicleia and Theagenes in Heliodorus, *Aithiop.* 1.2.6–7 struggle to explain the scene.

monia, for the trees are represented in terms of male-female relations and sexuality in order to underscore the romantic tenor of the description and its place in the narrative context. Needless to say, the element of the intertwining trees, leaves and branches in language of sexual intimacy does not occur in the description of Alcinous' palace-garden in Od. 7.114–128 that forms the epic model. There the depiction of the trees, fruits, vines, and plants is employed to effect the sense of an other-worldly locus amoenus, in which flowers bloom year-round and fruits are ripe each season. In the description of the garden in Electra's palace, however, the trees and plants are personified, and given amorous intentions. There we read that the male palm-tree drew its leaves over the female, pledging his desire: Καὶ ἄρσενα φύλλα πελάσσας / θηλυτέρῳ φοῖνικι πόθον πιστώσατο φοῖνιξ (3.142–143).<sup>10</sup> The attribution of erotic desire to the palm tree occurs prominently in the illustration given by Clitophon of the power of Eros over animals and plants, as he walks with Leucippe in the garden (Leucippe and Clitophon 1.15–17). Clitophon explains that of the several kinds of plants affected by the power of desire, the palm tree is especially smitten, as the male palm lusts after the female: ἄλλο μὲν ἄλλου φυτὸν ἐρᾶν, τῷ δὲ φοῖνικι τὸν ἐρωτὰ μᾶλλον ἐνοχλεῖν· λέγουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν ἄρρενα τῶν φοινίκων, τὸν δὲ θήλυον. ὁ ἄρρην οὖν τοῦ θήλεος ἐρᾷ (Leucippe and Clitophon 1.17.3–4). The explanation and interpretation of the amorous behaviour of the male palm tree not only lends an erotic tone, but it also reveals Clitophon's intentions.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the palm's behav-

10) The palm tree is associated with Dionysus and his power to affect nature in Dion. 12.270; in 42.309 Dionysus boasts that he has power to join male palm to female. On palm trees and pathetic fallacy in earlier Greek poetry see J. M. Hurwit, *Palm Trees and the Pathetic Fallacy in Archaic Greek Poetry and Art*, CJ 77 (1982) 193–199.

The anonymous reader for this journal points out that by means of a play upon words Nonnus may be drawing a parallel between the desire of the palm-tree (φοῖνιξ) and Cadmus, the man from Phoenicia (Φοῖνιξ). For a discussion of such verbal playing on the multiple meanings of φοῖνιξ in the Greek novels, including *Daphnis and Chloe* to which Nonnus is alluding here, see E. Bowie, *Phoenician Games in Heliodorus' Aithiopika*, in: *Studies in Heliodorus* (Cambridge 1998) 1–18.

11) A similar explanation for the narrative function of the description of the garden-park belonging to Dionysophanes, in *Daphnis and Chloe* 4.2–4, is offered by F. Zeitlin, *Gardens of Desire in Longus' Daphnis and Chloe: Nature, Art, and Imitation*, in: *The Search for the Ancient Novel* (Baltimore 1994) 150. She suggests that the description occurs at a crucial moment in the narrative as model of the young pair's sexual development.

our is reinforced by that of the other plants, as the trees are interlocked, their branches joined, and their leaves caress one another: ἔθαλλον οἱ κλάδοι, συνέπιπτον ἀλλήλοις ἄλλος ἐπ' ἄλλον· αἱ γείτονες τῶν πετάλων περιπλοκαί, τῶν φύλλων περιβολαί, τῶν καρπῶν συμπλοκαί. Τοσαύτη τις ἦν ὁμιλία τῶν φυτῶν (1.15.2).

This motif recalls the portrayal of the trees at the beginning of the novel. In fact, several scholars have observed how prose literature in the Second Sophistic, and late antiquity generally, alters the descriptive mode from being an embedded 'digression' to being the interpretative key of, or frame for the narrative,<sup>12</sup> and I suggest that the description of Electra's palace carries out a similar function for the episode of Cadmus and Harmonia, recounted in Dion. 3.35–4.248. In *Leucippe and Clitophon* (1.1–2) the description of the meadow in the painting of Europa at the outset of the novel provides the interpretative key for the subsequent narrative by means of the sexual innuendo in the behaviour of the personified trees.<sup>13</sup> The culmination of the growing relationship between the main characters of that novel is thus foreshadowed by the trees, which clung together and interlaced their foliage, while a canopy for the flowers was created by the interlocking leaves: συνεχῆ τὰ δένδρα· συνηρηφῆ τὰ πέταλα· συνηῆπτον οἱ πτόρθοι τὰ φύλλα, καὶ ἐγένετο τοῖς ἀνθεσιν ὄροφος ἢ τῶν φύλλων συμπλοκή (1.1.3).<sup>14</sup> Thus like the description of the tree-behaviour in the garden, the depictions of the trees in the meadow in the painting whereby the novel commences are proleptic.<sup>15</sup>

By means of allusions to these allegorical and romantic adaptations of the *Odyssey*-inspired depiction of the flowers and the fruit trees in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, the description in Dion. 3 prepares the reader for the adjustment in the purpose of Cadmus'

12) Thus J. Kestner, *Ekphrasis as Frame in Longus' 'Daphnis and Chloe'*, *CW* 67 (1974) 166–171; S. Nimis, *Memory and Description in the Ancient Novel*, *Arethusa* 31 (1998) 108–110; and S. Bartsch (above, n. 8) 48–50.

13) Nimis (above, n. 12) 108, observes that following the description of the painting of Europa's abduction, the novel is "dominated by representations of eros and marriage".

14) A similarly amorous context is provided in the description at 1.15.2; R. Garson, *Works of Art in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon*, *Acta Classica* 21 (1978) 86, suggests that the luscious description of this scene anticipates Clitophon's frame of mind in 1.19.1–2.

15) Bartsch (above, n. 8) 51.

visit. The developed image of gendered trees which comprises eleven lines (3.142–152) infuses the description with a sexually-charged tone. Indeed, the imagery advances from statements of love (δηλυτέρω φοίνικι πόθον πιστώσατο φοίνιξ, 3.143; ὄγχνη ... ὄγχνη / ... ἐπιθύριζεν, 144–145) to movements evocative of sexual activity (παρὰ δάφνη / σείετο μύρσινα φύλλα, 147–148), and finally to depictions of fruits borne from procreation (καρπὸς ἐρευθιῶν ἐπεθύηλεν οἴνοπι καρπῷ / ἀγχιφύτῳ, καὶ μῆλον ἐπὶνῦθε γείτονι μῆλω, 151–152). Thus the passage anticipates the subsequent narrative of the courting and union of Cadmus and Harmonia, a narrative that culminates in the birth of their children (5.190–209).

Having established the allegorical function of the palm tree by means of allusion to the erotic interpretation of the trees described in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Nonnus develops the motif by means of the personified myrtle and laurel trees in Dion. 3.147–149, in order to foreshadow the different attitudes and reactions that will arise in response to the divinely ordained marriage of Cadmus and Harmonia, later in the episode. For Electra will have to be persuaded by Hermes to yield up her step-daughter (3.373–375; 425–444); and Harmonia, who disbelieves Electra’s recommendation and expresses deep reservations about marrying the homeless foreigner (4.36–63), must be convinced by a long speech of Aphrodite (4.67–176) to accept Cadmus as her husband. The hesitation by each party to the inevitable wedding is foreshadowed in the depiction of the personified laurel as “reluctant” towards the myrtle. For in the spring-breezes that waft through the palace garden it is by an unwilling laurel tree that the myrtle swayed his leaves: Εἰαρινοῖς <δ’> ἀνέμοισιν ἀνανιομένη παρὰ δάφνη / σείετο μύρσινα φύλλα ... (3.147–148). Like the palm tree, specifically the myrtle and laurel are chosen to convey attitudes towards marriage and sexual union that become explicit later in the episode. Elsewhere in the *Dionysiaca* the myrtle is linked to Aphrodite; in Book 32.38 the goddess of love binds this herb of passion about her hair, while in Book 42.301 the plant represents sexual union, and in 42.342–345 Dionysus sleeps near the myrtle to dream of marriage. The laurel, by contrast, is associated with celibacy and sexual innocence, especially via its association with Daphne who fled from the advances of Apollo and was turned into a laurel-tree (Dion. 16.179–180; 33.210–215; 42.383–390). First introduced as “shy of the marriage bed” (φυγόδεμος, 2.98), Daphne, like Cadmus in 3.103, receives

the epithet “inexperienced in love” (νήις Ἔρωτος, 2.108). Called “chaste” (σαόφρονος, 48.260) and one who despised the desire of the gods (42.255), Daphne is said to have become a tree because she hated the works of marriage (ἔργα γάμων στυγέουσα δέμας δενδρώσατο Νύμφη, 42.388). And Aphrodite, in her speech to convince Harmonia, echoes the diction of 3.147 (ἀναινομένη παρὰ δάφνη) when she refers to Daphne's reluctance towards Apollo: οὐ μὲν ἐγὼ ποτε Φοῖβον ἀναίνομαι, οἷά τε Δάφνη, / οὐ νόον Ἄρμονιῆς μιμήσομαι. 4.98–99). In the context of the Cadmus-Harmonia episode, then, the depiction of the laurel shrinking from the myrtle foreshadows antipathy towards marriage, especially that of Harmonia, expressed later in the episode.

This brings us to a final significant element in the description that is not borrowed from the literary model of Alcinous' palace-garden in *Od.* 7, namely the treatment of the myth of Apollo and Hyacinthus (*Dion.* 3.153–163). The description and aition of the iris-plant follows smoothly upon the depiction of the myrtle and laurel, with their mythical connotations (147–149), and upon the listing of fruit-trees associated with love and Aphrodite (150–152). According to the version of the myth followed here by Nonnus, Zephyr, the west wind, was jealous of Apollo's love for the youth Hyacinthus.<sup>16</sup> Redirecting a discus thrown by Apollo, Zephyr struck Hyacinthus and killed him; upon his death, the boy was metamorphosed into the iris-plant. The leaves of the iris display a pattern of letters forming the words αἶ αἶ (“alas, alas”) which express Apollo's sorrow at the loss of his beloved (153–154). And when the west-wind blew through the flower garden, Apollo would watch the plant closely, for fear that Zephyr's jealousy still remained (155–159).

Such inclusion of myth within description, and the technique of conflating the narrative and descriptive modes of communication, do not occur in *Od.* 7.111–131. However, they do appear within descriptions in the Greek novels, often to introduce certain themes, subjects, or narrative strategies. We have already noted how in the description of the garden of Electra's palace (*Dion.*

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16) The myth of Apollo and Hyacinthus appears in several sources that may have been consulted by Nonnus: Hyginus, *Fab.* 271; Ovid, *Met.* 10.162–219; Lucian, *Dial. deorum* 16; Pausanias 3.19.3–5; Apollodorus 1.3.3, Philostratus sr., *Imag.* 1.24; Philostratus jr., *Imag.* 14.

3.140–152) Nonnus alludes to the *Odyssey*-inspired presentation of the garden in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and in particular to the explanation of the palm tree's behaviour (1.17.1–5) and Clitophon's romantic interpretation of the peacock's amorous manners (1.16.1–3). It is in the description of this garden-scene that Achilles Tatius includes a significant reference to the myths behind the cicadas and swallows inhabiting the grove (1.15.8). The cicadas were singing of the love-bed of Eos, while the swallows sang of the feast of Tereus: οἱ ᾠδοὶ δέ, τέττιγες καὶ χελιδόνες· οἱ μὲν τὴν Ἥως ἄδοντες εὐνήν, αἱ δὲ τὴν Τηρέως τράπεζαν (1.15.8). The first mythical reference is to the goddess of the dawn, who was afflicted by a love-curse from Aphrodite for sleeping with her lover, Ares.<sup>17</sup> Foremost of the many beautiful young men with whom Eos fell in love was Tithonus. Eos prayed Zeus to bestow immortality upon him, but she neglected to ask for eternal youth, so that he aged and withered away until he was transformed into a cicada. In the context of *Leucippe and Clitophon*, this story is an illustration of the powerful and often tragic effects of Eros. The second allusion is to the myth of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela.<sup>18</sup> The swallows are a reference to Philomela, the wife of Tereus who was transformed into this bird when she fled her violent husband. To avenge his brutal rape of her sister Procne, Philomela had slain their son Itys and served him as dinner for Tereus, who thereupon pursued her also. Her metamorphosis into the bird provided her escape from his cruel clutches. This brief reference anticipates the extensive description of a painting that presents the story of Philomela later in the novel, in 5.3.4–8. Understood as an explicitly unfavourable omen (5.4.1), the myth in the painting is explained to Leucippe by Clitophon (5.5.1–5.5.9). As Garson observes,<sup>19</sup> with its elements of horror, violence, and strong emotion, the story portrayed in the painting anticipates the horrific rape and murder of Leucippe by Chaereas (5.7.1–5.7.9). As we shall observe next, Nonnus adapts this function of myth within description to anticipate plot development in the episode of Cadmus and Harmonia.

17) Apollodorus 3.12.4: 1.27. In Dion. 47.340 Eos is the mother of the winds, while at 4.193 (and 5.516) Harmonia refers to Orion's love for her.

18) This legend appears in Hyginus, Fab. 45 (Philomela); see also Ovid, Met. 6.412–674.

19) Garson (above, n. 14) 84.

Returning to the myth of Apollo and Hyacinthus that is included in the description of the garden of Electra's palace, I suggest that it is inserted in order to develop the narrative role of the description by introducing two discordant aspects of love, namely bitter-sweet love and grief at loss, and anxiety about a jealous rival – each of which is displayed or expressed later in the episode concerning the relationship between Cadmus, Harmonia, and Electra. To be sure, elsewhere in the poem Apollo expresses both the grief at losing Hyacinthus (2.81–83; 29.95–97), and anxiety about the jealous Zephyr's death-bringing breeze (10.253–255; 29.95–97), but it is in this description that these aspects of the legend receive extensive treatment. At the beginning of this description, the pattern of characters displayed on the iris' leaves expresses Apollo's mourning at the loss of Hyacinthus (3.153–154); also at its centre, the emphasis is on the crying by the usually tearless god: εἰ ἔτεόν ποτε κείνον ἐπισπαίροντα κονίη / ὄμμασιν ἀκλαύτοισιν ἰδὼν δάκρυσεν Ἀπόλλων (3.160–161). And at the end of the story, the account returns to the pattern on the leaves that figure the tears of Apollo: καὶ τύπος ἀνθεμόεις μορφώσατο δάκρυα Φοίβου / αἴλιον αὐτοκέλευστον ἐπιγράψας ὑακίνθῳ (3.162–163).

Apollo's grief and tears at the loss of his beloved foreshadows the repeated portrayal of the crying Harmonia later in the episode as she suffers under the power of Aphrodite. Addressed in Book Four as “love-afflicted exile”, λιπόπατρι δυσίμερε (4.222), Harmonia is torn between losing her step-mother and marrying Cadmus. When Electra begins to relate the message from Hermes that she marry Cadmus, Harmonia becomes sorrowful (4.22), and soon she is “bathed in tears” (δάκρυσι μυδαλέη, 4.35). Her step-mother must wipe the tears from her face (4.64–65). And in 4.199–200, following the speech of Aphrodite where after Harmonia changed her mind, it is with drops of grief upon her face that she kissed her step-mother and brother goodbye (καὶ κινυρῇ ραθάμιγγι διαινομένοιο προσώπου, 4.199). As she is led to Cadmus, Electra wipes the “shower of tears” from her face, χυτὸν ὄμβρον ἀποσμηξάσα προσώπου (4.209). Thus the bitter power of Aphrodite is felt in her heart, as Electra experiences the imminent loss of her beloved family.

The other prominent element in the Apollo-Hyacinthus myth as recounted in 3.153–163 is that of jealousy. Whenever he felt the west-wind blowing through the garden, the protective Apollo would turn his gaze to the plant; and if he saw it beaten by the

breeze he would remember the discus, and fear lest the wind, so jealous once about the boy, might hate him even as a plant: μή ποτε κούρω / ζηλήμων φθονέσειε καὶ ἐν πετάλοισιν ἀήτης (3.158–159). The jealousy of the wind and the ongoing anxiety of Apollo anticipate the rhetorical jealousy in the speech of Aphrodite, who, disguised as the neighborhood girl Peisinoë, pretends to have fallen in love with Cadmus, and seeks by means of her jealousy to arouse Harmonia's desire for him (4.77–176). In this lengthy speech Peisinoë draws an explicit parallel between the myth recounted in the description and the situation of Harmonia: she employs a verbal allusion to Apollo's jealous love for Hyacinthus in order to express her feelings for the handsome Cadmus. Lest she incite Phoebus by finding fault with the appearance of the Theraonian Hyacinthus, Peisinoë refrains from commenting on the beauty of Cadmus' hair: καλλείνω πλοκαμίδας, ὅπως μὴ Φοῖβον ὀρίνω / χροιῇ ὀνειδίζουσα Θεραπναίης ὑακίνθου (4.133–134). Peisinoë's speech culminates in the bold and improbable request to be granted one night with Cadmus, if jealousy does not prevent Harmonia from allowing her this remedy for her passion: εἰ μὴ ζῆλος ἔχει σε (4.171).

The two mythical allusions in the description, like the ones in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, introduce the element of the tragic effects of love into the narrative. In the broader context of the *Dionysiaca*, the allusions to Apollo, Narcissus, and Zephyr anticipate the sorrowful events that will befall the family of Cadmus and Harmonia, whose marriage begins on a note of sadness and grief. In Book Five, Hephaestus, still jealous of the affair between Aphrodite and Ares which produced Harmonia, presents a cursed wedding gift, the necklace of snakes (5.145–189). Also the image of the tears in the Apollo-Hyacinthus myth foreshadows the tragedy that will afflict the family; the subsequent suffering in the family is recounted by Cadmus himself much later. In Book 46.253–264 he narrates how Ino, Semele, Autonoe, Agave, Polydorus, Pentheus and Actaeon have all suffered death. In short, the themes of jealousy over love and the sorrow that is caused by bitter-sweet love, first introduced in the description of Electra's palace, become prominent throughout the entire history of Cadmus and his family.

Several conclusions may be drawn from this study of the description of Electra's palace in Dion. 3.131–179. The first one is that the literary models employed by the poet are not restricted to Homeric epic and its Hellenistic successors, but include the Greek

novels of the Second Sophistic, most notably *Leucippe and Clitophon* and *Daphnis and Chloe*. The extensive references to these works in the palace-description permit the introduction of features not found in the epic precursors, especially the themes of interpretation, pathetic fallacy, romance, jealousy, and sorrow. Moreover, the allusions to the descriptive passages in the Greek novels assist in promoting also their narrative function of anticipating subsequent events. The inclusion of mythical narrative within the descriptive mode further serves to set the tone for the narrative which follows it. By adopting the entire range of emotions associated with the descriptions in the novels, Nonnus creates a garden-portrayal that is more dynamic, complex, and realistic than the Homeric model could grant.

By integrating elements explicitly associated with the novel, the description also helps to shift the narrative focus away from Cadmus' search for the missing Europa to the imminent marriage with Harmonia. In fact, the palace-description performs a proleptic function for the entire narrative concerning the family of Cadmus and Harmonia, and so foreshadows also the subsequent suffering and grief that are associated with it. In sum, the extensive and meaningful allusions to descriptions in the Greek novels attest to a more complex poetics than is generally acknowledged, and manifest the inter-generic aesthetic qualities of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*.<sup>20</sup>

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20) A much earlier version of this article was delivered in a panel-session sponsored by the Society for Late Antiquity, at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association in 2009. I am grateful to the respondent, Robert J. Penella, and to the other participants for the valuable suggestions of improvement to the paper. I also wish to express my deepest gratitude to the anonymous reader of this journal for the many very helpful comments.